

Advances in Consumer Research

Volume
XXXIII



Editors
Cornelia Pechmann
Linda L. Price

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Cornelia Pechmann and Linda L. Price, Editors

Advances in Consumer Research, Volume 33

(Duluth, MN: Association for Consumer Research, 2006)

Preface

The thirty-third Annual Conference of the Association for Consumer Research (ACR) was held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in San Antonio, Texas, September 29th-October 2nd, 2005. This volume includes reports of the presentations made at the conference in special sessions, competitive paper sessions, the working paper session, roundtables and the film festival.

The theme for the conference was “For Consumers: Steps Toward Transformative Consumer Research.” Several special and competitive sessions offered stimulating perspectives and debate around the conference theme. In addition, the program offered the usual rich, diverse and high quality array of consumer research topics. This year, we accepted 41% of the 333 papers submitted for the competitive paper track, 48% of the 91 special session proposal submissions, and over 100 working papers. In addition, the program included a film festival debuting 11 films and 8 roundtable sessions. Seven hundred people attended the conference including 200 from outside the U.S. and over 230 students. Over 120 students signed up in advance for the doctoral symposium that preceded ACR.

We want to thank the generous donors who stepped forward to support the conference including the Marketing Department and the Terry J. Lundgren Center for Retailing at the University of Arizona, The Paul Merage School of Business at University of California Irvine, General Mills, The Labovitz School of Business and Economics at University of Minnesota Duluth, and the Marketing Department at The University of Texas San Antonio. We also want to thank the Kellogg’s Foundation and Cynthia Milligan, Dean of the College of Business, University of Nebraska and President of the Kellogg’s Foundation Board of Directors for a seed grant to fund research initiatives related to the conference theme.

Many people stepped forward to help us with this conference. We want to thank the ACR program committee, working paper reviewers, film festival reviewers and competitive paper reviewers. We also want to thank Loraine Lau-Gesk, University of California-Irvine and Patti Williams, University of Pennsylvania who co-chaired roundtables, Russell Belk, University of Utah and Robert V. Kozinets, York University who co-chaired the film festival, Carolyn Folkman Curasi, Georgia State University and Dan Freeman, University of Delaware for co-chairing the working papers poster session, and Rick Netemeyer, University of Virginia and Lisa Peñaloza, University of Colorado for co-chairing the doctoral symposium. In addition, we want to thank all of the student volunteers from University of Arizona, University of California at Irvine, University of Nebraska and University of Texas-San Antonio who helped throughout to make the conference go smoothly.

Some additional people deserve gratitude beyond measure. Alex Cherfas, University of Minnesota-Duluth and Lindsey Lambert, University of California Irvine both provided service to the organization that was nothing short of extraordinary. Tina M. Lowrey and L.J. Shrum took the job of chairing local arrangements to new heights. Mark Otnes stepped in at the last minute to create a fantastic cover design. Patty Solo Downs, ACR conference coordinator, was hired into an emergency situation and handled conference arrangements with grace and tireless resolve. Rajiv Vaidyanathan, ACR Executive Director was a remarkable support to us throughout the process, always available, and always happy to help. Foremost, we want to thank David Mick, President of ACR, for trusting us with the program, bringing vision and passion to the conference theme, and working tirelessly in the face of numerous emergencies to better the association and the 2005 ACR conference experience.

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ASSOCIATION FOR CONSUMER RESEARCH 2005 ACR NORTH AMERICAN CONFERENCE

FOR CONSUMERS: STEPS TOWARD TRANSFORMATIVE CONSUMER RESEARCH

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2005

SCP Executive Committee Meeting

Friday Sept. 30
7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.

JCR Associate Editors Meeting

Friday Sept. 30
7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Keith Hunt Newcomers' Breakfast

Sponsored by



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GENERAL MILLS

Film Festival

Friday Sept. 30
8:00 a.m.– 12:00 p.m.
and
2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Saturday Oct. 1
8:00 a.m.– 12:00 p.m.

Saturday Oct. 1
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

SPECIAL SHOWING OF
2005 PEOPLE’S CHOICE AWARD FILM
FOLLOWED BY DISCUSSION WITH FILMMAKER

Chairs:

Russell Belk, University of Utah
Robert Kozinets, York University

(15-minute filmmaker discussion followed premier showing of each film)

FILM FESTIVAL SUMMARY

ACR 2005 North American Film Festival Overview 5
Russell Belk, University of Utah
Robert Kozinets, York University

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Yu Chen, HEC, Paris

8:29 *Not Desperate Housewives: Turkish Housewives’ Consumption Practices at “Money Day” Gatherings* 5
Ebru Ulusoy, Istanbul University

9:05: *Headbanging: As Resistance or Refuge* 6
Marylouise Caldwell, University of Sydney
Paul Henry, University of Sydney

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Sven Bergvall, Royal Institute of Technology
Jacob Ostberg, Stockholm University

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Jeff B. Murray, University of Arkansas
Molly Rapert, University of Arkansas

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Session Chair: Julie L. Ozanne, Virginia Tech
Discussion Leader: Marvin Goldberg, Penn State

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Wändi Bruine de Bruin, Carnegie Mellon University

At Risk or Out Front? Understanding the Women of the Future
Linda M. Scott, University of Illinois

The Cyborg Teen: Identity Play and Deception on the Internet
Laurel Anderson, Arizona State University
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Session Chair: Stacy Wood, University of South Carolina
Discussion Leader: Chris Janiszewski, University of Florida

Conscious versus Nonconscious Detection of Product Attribute Change
Stewart Shapiro, University of Delaware
Mark T. Spence, Southern Connecticut State University

Conscious and Nonconscious Elements in Habitual Consumption Behavior
Stacy L. Wood, University of South Carolina
Kelly L Haws, University of South Carolina

Goals in Conflict
Tanya Chartrand, Duke University
Amy N. Dalton, Duke University

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Session Chair: Athinodoros Chronis, California State University, Stanislaus

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Session Chair: Vanitha Swaminathan, University of Pittsburgh

Discussion Leader: Stijn Van Osselaer, Erasmus University

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Session Chair: Cristel Antonia Russell, San Diego State University

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 Antronette K. Yancey, University of California at Los Angeles

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 Martin Fishbein, University of Pennsylvania
 Amy Jordan, University of Pennsylvania

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 Cristel Antonia Russell, San Diego State University
 Dale W. Russell, University of Amsterdam
 Joel Grube, Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation

Session 1.7 Exploring Masculine Ideologies

Session Chair: Gokcen Coskuner, University of Wisconsin, Madison
 Discussion Leader: Craig Thompson, University of Wisconsin, Madison

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 Linda Tuncay, Loyola University Chicago

The Challenge of the New Masculinity: Conservative Reactions to a New Consumption Ethos
 Jacob Ostberg, Stockholm University School of Business

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Debra Stephens, University of Portland
Gary Bamossy, University of Utah and Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam
Gulnur Tumbat, University of Utah
Stacey Menzel Baker, University of Wyoming
Jim Burroughs, University of Virginia
David Wooten, University of Michigan
Jeff Wang, University of Arizona
L.J. Shrum, University of Texas, San Antonio
Annamma Joy, Concordia University
Roz Galtz, Miami University

SESSION 2
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10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Session 2.1 Living Legacies: Exploring Influences on Family Consumption Behavior

Session Chair: Eric J. Arnould, University of Arizona
Discussion Leader: Suraj Commuri, University of Missouri

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Maybe It IS Your Father's Oldsmobile: The Construction and Preservation of Family Identity through the Transfer of Possessions

Carolyn F. Curasi, Georgia State University

Money and Meaning: The Role of Social Bonds and Capital in Inter Vivos Gifting

Tonya P. Williams, Northwestern University.

Session 2.2 Prediction, Postdiction and Preference in Hedonic Experience

Session Chair: Leif D. Nelson

Discussion Leader: Dan Ariely, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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Leif D. Nelson, New York University

Tom Meyvis, New York University

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Dan Ariely, MIT Sloan School of Management

Shane Frederick, MIT Sloan School of Management

Leonard Lee, MIT Sloan School of Management

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Carey K. Morewedge, Harvard University

Daniel T. Gilbert, Harvard University

Timothy D. Wilson, University of Virginia

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Allan Kimmel, ESCP-EAP

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Mahesh Gopinath, Old Dominion University

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 Ashesh Mukherjee, McGill University

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Session Chair: Nancy M. Ridgway, University of Richmond
Discussion Leader: April L. Benson, creator of Stopping Overshopping Program

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Monika Kukar-Kinney, University of Richmond
Kent B. Monroe, University of Richmond

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Elizabeth C. Hirschman, Rutgers University

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Productions, Products and Process**

Session Chairs: Cristel Antonia Russell, San Diego State University
Barbara Stern, Rutgers University

Discussion Leader: Marilyn Lavin, University of Wisconsin

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Product Placement in Brazilian Telenovelas: Selling Soaps and Social Causes
Antonio C. La Pastina, Texas A&M University

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Cristel Antonia Russell, San Diego State University
Barbara Stern, Rutgers University

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Eric Greenleaf, New York University
Katrin Harich, California State University, Fullerton
Deborah D. Heisley, California State University, Northridge
Vicki G. Morwitz, New York University
Debra Lynn Stephens, University of Portland

ACR Luncheon and Presidential Address

Friday Sept. 30
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Meaning and Mattering Through Transformative Consumer Research
David Glen Mick, University of Virginia

SESSION 3
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2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Session 3.1 Understanding Our Behavior As We Age: Effects of Memory and Time Horizons on Beliefs, Preferences and Choices

Session Chair: Ian Skurnik, University of Toronto
Discussion Leader: Cathy Cole, University of Iowa

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Ian Skurnik, University of Toronto
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Norbert Schwarz, University of Michigan

Age Differences in Consumer Decision Making

Sanjay Sood, University of California, Los Angeles
Loraine Lau-Gesk, University of California, Irvine
Aimee Drolet, University of California, Los Angeles

Modeling Long-Term Determinants of Brand Choice by Older Consumers

Raphaëlle Lambert-Pandraud , Négocia
Gilles Laurent , HEC School of Management, Paris

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Sympathy and Callousness: The Impact of Deliberative Thought on Donations to Identifiable and Statistical Victims
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George Loewenstein, Carnegie Mellon University
Paul Slovic, Decision Research

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Session Chair: Rebecca Hamilton, University of Maryland
Discussion Leader: Eric Greenleaf, New York University

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Anne L. Roggeveen, Babson College
Lan Xia, Bentley College
Kent B. Monroe, Richmond University

Transaction Bundling: Effect of Price Presentation on Consumer Perceptions

Joydeep Srivastava, University of Maryland
Dipankar Chakravarti, University of Colorado

Session 3.5 Information Overload: When Less is Better Than More

Session Chair: S. Adam Brasel, Boston College

Effects of Amount of Information on Overconfidence

Claire Tsai, University of Chicago
Joshua Klayman, University of Chicago
Reid Hastie, University of Chicago

Bringing Cognitive Load to Daily Life. Cognitive Demand has Negative After-Effects on Consumer Decision Making

Siegfried Dewitte, University of Leuven
Barbara Briers, University of Leuven
Luk Warlop, University of Leuven
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Tillmann Wagner, Texas Tech University

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For Consumers: Steps Toward Transformative Consumer Research**

Organized by: David Glenn Mick

Co-chairs: Cornelia (Connie) Pechmann
Linda Price,

Panelists: Ron Faber, University of Minnesota
Marv Goldberg, Pennsylvania State University
Ron Hill, University of South Florida
Julie Ozanne, Virginia Tech
Simone Pettigrew, University of Western Australia
J.B. Steenkamp, Tilburg University
Brian Wansink, Cornell University

Session 3.7 Coming Home: The Role of Consumption in the (Re)Construction of Heritage Among African Americans

Session Chair and Discussion Leader: Laura Oswald, ESSEC Business School

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Benét DeBerry-Spence, University of Illinois at Chicago
Elif Izberk-Bilgin, University of Illinois at Chicago

How African Americans Use Relationships with Kenyan Immigrants in the Heritage Quest
L. Wakiuru Wamwara-Mbugua, Wright State University

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Discussion Leader: Eric J. Arnould, University of Arizona

Participants: Melanie Wallendorf, University of Arizona
Amber M. Epp, University of Nebraska
David Crockett, University of South Carolina
Carolyn Curasi, Georgia State University
Chuck McMellon, Hofstra University
Jianfeng (Jeff) Wang, University of Arizona
Karen Fernandez, University of Auckland
Hope Jensen Schau, University of Arizona
Fleura Bardhi, Northeastern University

<p>SESSION 4 Friday Sept. 30 4:00 p.m. -5:30 p.m.</p>
--

Session 4.1 Understanding and Interpreting Consumer Vulnerability

Session Chair: Ron Hill, USF St. Petersburg
 Discussion Leader: Lisa Penaloza, University of Colorado

Consumer-Driven Definition and Model of Consumer Vulnerability
 Stacey Menzel Baker, University of Wyoming
 Jim Gentry, University of Nebraska

Intimate Partner Violence and the Damaged Self: How Can Service Providers Facilitate Reconstruction?
 Debra Stephens, University of Portland
 Ron Hill, USF St. Petersburg

The Role of Personal Uncertainty and Product Involvement in Consumer Vulnerability
 Marlys Mason, Oklahoma State University
 Debbie Scammon, University of Utah

Session 4.2 Understanding Consumer Enjoyment and Happiness

Session Chair: Tonya Williams, Northwestern University
 Angela Y. Lee, Northwestern University
 Discussion Leader: Dipankar Chakravarti, University of Colorado, Boulder

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Discussion Leader: Michel Pham, Columbia University

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Session Chair: Katherine Sredl, Univ. of Illinois
Discussion Leader: Russell Belk, Univ. of Utah

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- Carolyn Curasi, Georgia State
- Kent Grayson, Northwestern
- Susan Kleine, Bowling Green State University
- John Lastovicka, Arizona State
- James McAlexander, Oregon State
- Radan Martinec, London School of Communication
- Americus Reed, University of Pennsylvania
- Marsha Richins, University of Missouri
- Shay Sayre, Cal State Fullerton
- Michael Solomon, Auburn University
- Darach Turley, Dublin City

JCR Editorial Review Board
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 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Working Paper Session and Reception
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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2005

JCP Board Meeting
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 7:30 a.m.- 9:00 am

SESSION 5
 Saturday Oct. 1
 8:30 a.m.- 10:00 am

**Session 5.1 The McDonaldization of Enchantment and Consumers Practices of Re-enchantment:
 A Dialectic View of Transformative Consumption**

Session Chair and Discussion Moderator: Craig Thompson, University of Wisconsin-Madison

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 Per Ostergaard Southern Denmark University
 Christian Jantzen, Aalborg University

Politicized Consumption Community and Consumers' Practices of Enchantment
 Craig Thompson, University of Wisconsin- Madison
 Gokcen Coskuner, University of Wisconsin- Madison

New Religions, Temple Burns, and the Reenchantment of Belief
 Robert V. Kozinets, York University
 John F. Sherry, Jr., University of Notre Dame

Session 5.2 What’s On Your Mind? Neuroscientific Approaches to Studying Consumer Choice

Session Co-Chairs: William Hedgcock and Akshay Rao, University of Minnesota
Discussion Leader: Eric Johnson, Columbia University

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The Neuroscience of Trust
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Brain Activation: Shedding Light on the Decoy Effect
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 Torsten Ringberg, Vanderbilt University

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L.J. Shrum, University of Texas, San Antonio
Robert Wyer, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

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Session Chair: Siegfried Dewitte, Catholic University, Leuven

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Session Chair: Eric M. Eisenstein, Johnson School of Management, Cornell University

Discussion Leader: Andrew Gershoff, University of Michigan

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Suzanne B. Shu, Southern Methodist University

Bursting Another Financial Bubble: The Influence of Ability Perception on Choice Satisfaction

Katherine A. Burson, University of Michigan
Simona Botti, Cornell University

Session 5.7 **Lost in the Story: Factors that Affect Narrative Transportation and Advertising**

Session Chair: Jing Wang, Northwestern University
Discussion Leader: John Deighton, Harvard University

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 Joel Huber, Duke University

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Discussion Leader: Yun-Oh Whang, University of Central Florida

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Hans Baumgartner, Penn State University
Miguel Brendl, INSEAD
Susan Grant, University of Colorado
Shailendra Pratap Jain, Indiana University
Punam A. Keller, Dartmouth College
Junyong Kim, University of Central Florida
Angela Lee, Northwestern University
Sunghwan Yi, University of Guelph
Charles Lindsey, Indiana University
Kyeong Sam Min, University of South Dakota
Connie Pechmann, University of California, Irvine
Terry Zhao, University of California, Irvine

SESSION 6
Saturday Oct. 1
10:30 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.

Session 6.1 A Sociocultural Investigation of Consumer Credit and Consumer Debt

Session Chair: Craig Thompson, University of Wisconsin
Discussion Leader: Eric J. Arnould, University of Arizona

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Consumers and Credit Cards: Building “The Good Life” with Plastic Tools
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Randall L. Rose, University of South Carolina

It’s Not Who You Owe That Counts: Social Relationships and Consumer Debt
Jianfeng (Jeff) Wang, University of Hong Kong
Melanie Wallendorf, University of Arizona

Credit Card Advertising and Revolving Debt Management: A Poststructuralist View
Nina Diamond, DePaul University
Suzanne O’Curry, DePaul University

Session 6.2 Goal Distance and Consumer Choice

Session Chair: Ran Kivetz, Columbia University
Discussion Leader: Drazen Prelec, Sloan School M.I.T.

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Ran Kivetz, Columbia University
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Mindset over Matter: The Interplay between Goals and Preferences
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Ravi Dhar, Yale University

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Session Chair: Rohini Ahluwalia, University of Minnesota
Discussion Leader: Deborah John, University of Minnesota

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Consumer Evaluation of Brand Extensions: Role of Cultural Orientation
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Consumer Heterogeneity in Brand Relationships: An Attachment Perspective
Susan Fournier, Boston University
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Session Chairs: Simona Botti, Cornell University,
 Tom Meyvis, New York Univeristy

Discussion Leader: Rik Pieters, Tilburg University

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Cenk Bülbül, New York University
Tom Meyvis, New York University

Choosing Inside The Box: When More Choice Narrows Our Thinking
On Amir, University of California at San Diego
Sheena S. Iyengar, Columbia University

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Session Chair: Julien Cayla, Australian Graduate School of Management
Discussion Leader: Fuat Firat, University of Southern Denmark

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Angela Y. Lee, Northwestern University
David Luna , Baruch College
Durairaj Maheswaran, New York University
Cristel Antonia Russell, San Diego State University
Sharon Shavitt, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Robert S. Wyer, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

ACR Luncheon and Business Meeting

Saturday Oct. 1
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

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OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

SESSION 7

Saturday Oct. 1
2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Session 7.1 Children's Obesity: Is Consumer Research Relevant?

Session Chair: Elizabeth S. Moore, University of Notre Dame
William L. Wilkie, University of Notre Dame
Discussion Leader: Jerome D. Williams, University of Texas, Austin

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Researching the Link between Food Advertising & Childhood Obesity

Debra M. Desrochers, University of Notre Dame
Debra Holt, Federal Trade Commission

A Model of Children's Preventive Health Behavior: Understanding the Role of Individual, Contextual, and Attitudinal Determinants

Kathleen Seiders, Boston College
Elizabeth G. Miller, Boston College
Maureen E. Kenny, Boston College
Mary E. Walsh, Boston College

Session 7.2 Thinking About the Future: Positive and Negative Effects on Consumer Judgment and Well-Being

Session Chairs: Cecile Cho, Columbia University
Gergana Yordanova, University of Pittsburgh
Discussion Leader: Peter Gollwitzer, New York University/University of Konstanz

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Motivated Expectation Setting and its Unintended Consequence on Satisfaction
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Discussion Leader: Ian Skurnik, The University of Toronto

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Christina L. Brown, University of Michigan

Session 7.7 Transformative Consumer Culture Theory

Session Chair: Julie L. Ozanne, Virginia Tech

Susan Dobscha, Bentley College

Discussion Leaders: Eric J. Arnould, University of Arizona

Craig Thompson, University of Wisconsin

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Session Chair: Rebecca Ratner, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Discussion Leader: Don Lehmann, Columbia University

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 Michelle Lee, Singapore Management University
 Barbara E. Kahn, University of Pennsylvania
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Session 8.2 Motivational Influences in Consumer Behavior: The Role of Regulatory Focus

Session Chairs: Rongrong Zhou, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
 Jaideep Sengupta, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
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Pankaj Aggarwal, University of Toronto
Ann L. McGill, University of Chicago

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Elise Chandon, University of Florida
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Session Chair: Nina Mazar, MIT Sloan School of Management
Discussion Leader: Joel Cohen, University of Florida

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Barbara E. Kahn, University of Pennsylvania
Mary Frances Luce, Duke University

Social Psychological Motivations in Nonprofit Marketing

Jen Shang, University of Pennsylvania
Rachel Croson, University of Pennsylvania

Session 8.7 Word-of-Mouth and Word-of-Web: Talking About Products, Talking About Me

Session Chair: Andrea C. Wojnicki, Harvard University
Discussion Leader: Robert V. Kozinets, York University

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Viral Marketing Mavericks: Capturing Word-of-Web
Janghyuk Lee, HEC School of Management, Paris & Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST)
Judith Lynne Zaichkowsky, Simon Fraser University

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 Fuat Firat, University of Southern Denmark
 Sven Bergvall, Royal Institute of Technology
 Detlev Zwick, York University, Canada
 Marie-Agnes Parmentier, York University
 Jean-Sebastien Marcoux, HEC Montreal
 Jacob Östberg, Stockholm University, Sweden
 Susan Dobscha, Bentley College

ACR 2006 Program Committee Meeting
 Saturday Oct. 1
 4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Dinner Event
Institute of Texan Cultures
 Saturday Oct. 1
 6:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2005

SESSION 9
 Sunday Oct. 2
 8:30 a.m.- 10:00 am

Session 9.1 Marketplace Motives and Consumer Skepticism

Session Chair: Barbara Bickart, Rutgers University – Camden
 Discussion Leader: Connie Pechmann, University of California-Irvine

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 Priya Raghubir, University of California at Berkeley
 Margaret C. Campbell, University of Colorado at Boulder

Does it Pay to Beat Around the Bush? Salesperson Motives and the Effects of Obfuscation versus Honesty in Communications
 Barbara Bickart, Rutgers University-Camden
 Maureen Morrin, Rutgers University-Camden
 S. Ratneshwar, University of Missouri

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Session Chair: Ran Kivetz, Columbia University
 Discussion Leader: Klaus Wertebroch, INSEAD

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 Nira Liberman, Tel-Aviv University

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Determinants of Justification and Self-Control
 Ran Kivetz, Columbia University
 Yuhuang Zheng, Columbia University

The Conscious and Nonconscious Use of Self-Control for Emotion-Regulation
 Yael Zemack-Rugar, Duke University
 James R. Bettman, Duke University
 Gavan J. Fitzsimons, Duke University

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Session Chair: Susan Hogan, Emory University

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Session Chair: Rashmi Adaval, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
Discussion Leader: Robert S. Wyer, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

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Culture and Cognition: The Case of Irrational Beliefs about Luck 623
Rashmi Adaval, Hong Kong University of Science & Technology

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Peter Darke, University of British Columbia
Donnel Briley, University of Sydney

Priming Lucky Numbers: Effects on Attributions and Performance
Yuwei Jiang, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
Angela Cho, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
Rashmi Adaval, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Retrospective Evaluations: Will Chance Versus Luck Oriented Individuals Select Different Moments of an Experience?
Elizabeth Cowley, University of Sydney
Colin Farrell, University of Sydney

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Anu Sivaraman, University of Delaware

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Hakkyun Kim, University of Minnesota
Akshay R. Rao, University of Minnesota

Session 9.6 New Advances in Mental Accounting: Underlying Mechanisms and Resultant Biases

Session Chair: Gülden Ülkümen, New York University
Discussion Leader: Eric Johnson, Columbia University

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

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Vicki G. Morwitz, New York University

Breaking Open a Pot of Money: The Effect of Transgression Costs on Spending From Open and Closed Pots

Amar Cheema, Washington University in Saint Louis
Dilip Soman, University of Toronto

Happiness Pump

Yan Zhang, University of Chicago
Christopher K. Hsee, University of Chicago

Session 9.7 Pushing the Frontiers of Decision Making Neuroscience to Help Consumers Adopt a Healthy Lifestyle in Our Modern Society of Plenty

Session Chair: Laurette Dube, McGill University
Antoine Bechara, University of Iowa
Discussion Leader: Barbara Mellers, University of California, Berkeley

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Pushing the Frontiers of Decision Making Neuroscience to Help Consumers Adopt Healthy Lifestyle in Our Modern Society of Plenty 636

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Julie C. Stout, Indiana University
Eldad Yechiam, Indiana University

Dynamics and Temporal Dimensions of Cognitive-Affective Integrative Processes Underlying Decision Making

Lesley K. Fellows, McGill University
Martha Farah, University of Pennsylvania

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Lu Ji, McGill University
Zhenfeng Ma, McGill University
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 Carolyn Curasi, Georgia State University
 Stacey Menzel Baker, University of Wyoming
- Participants: Russell Belk, University of Utah
 Melanie Wallendorf, University of Arizona
 John F. Sherry, Northwestern University
 Eric J. Arnould, University of Arizona
 John Lastovicka, Arizona State University
 Hope Schau, University of Arizona
 Robert V. Kozinets, York University
 Kent Grayson, Northwestern University
 Radan Martinec, The London Institute, School of Media
 Stacey Menzel Baker, University of Wyoming
 Ron Hampton, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

SESSION 10
 Sunday Oct. 2
 10:30 am - 12:00 p.m.

Session 10.1 An Examination of the Concept of Postmodern Home and the Role of Consumption in Home-making Practices

- Session Chair: Fleura Bardhi, Northeastern University
 Discussion Leader: Julie L. Ozanne, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

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Making a Home on the Road: A Mobile Concept of Home among Transnational Mobile Professionals
 Fleura Bardhi, Northeastern University
 Eric J. Arnould, University of Arizona

From a Diner to a Home: Understanding How Customers Find Home in the Marketplace
 Mark S. Rosenbaum, University of Hawaii

Designing the Family Portal as Home Information System and Home Networking
 Alladi Venkatesh, University of California, Irvine

Session 10.2 Dynamics of Self-Regulation

Session Chair: Suresh Ramanathan, University of Chicago
Discussion Leader: Tanya Chartrand, Duke University

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Brandon Schmeichel, Texas A&M University
Sabrina Bruyneel, Katholik University Leuven

Moment-to-Moment Pursuit of Hedonic Goals

Suresh Ramanathan, University of Chicago
Geeta Menon, New York University

Attention Mechanisms in Goal Management

James Shah, Duke University
Shawn Bodmann, University of Wisconsin-Madison

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Hilary Downey, Queen's University Belfast
Miriam Catterall, Queen's University Belfast

Session 10.4 Cultural Variations in Brand Extension Evaluations and Brand Dilution Effects

Session Chair: Zeynep Gürhan-Canli, University of Michigan
Discussion Leader: Sharon Shavitt, University of Illinois

The Impact of Self-Concept, Self-Constraint and Country-of-Origin on Brand Dilution

Vanitha Swaminathan, University of Pittsburgh
Karen L. Page, University of Pittsburgh
Zeynep Gürhan-Canli, University of Michigan

The Impact of Cultural Cognitive Style and Brand Extension Information on Brand Extension Evaluation

Pragya Mathur, New York University
Durairaj Maheswaran, New York University

Cultural Differences In Creative Thinking and the Effect on Brand Extension Evaluations

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Session Chair: Selin Malkoc, The University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill
Discussion Leader: Drazen Prelec, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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

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Gal Zauberman, The University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill
James R. Bettman, Duke University
Selin A. Malkoc, The University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill

Session 10.7 Investigating Neural Correlates of Consumer Judgments

Session Chair: Carolyn Yoon, University of Michigan
Discussion Leader: Richard Gonzalez, University of Michigan

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Angela H. Gutchess, University of Illinois–Urbana Champaign	
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Session Chair: Douglas Hausknecht, University of Akron

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Meaning and Mattering Through Transformative Consumer Research

David Glen Mick, University of Virginia

The Association for Consumer Research was born in 1969 and is now approaching middle age. As with most of us personally, this stage of life often provokes introspection about our past and present, our values, and the extent to which our remaining words and actions can make any worthwhile difference in the world. Today I am asking you to pause with me and consider the meaning and mattering of ACR.¹

But before proceeding, we know as earnest scholars that it is imperative to define our central constructs. In the view of some notorious researchers, middle age is defined as when you no longer care about where you are particularly going, so long as you are back home by nine p.m.

Back to the meaning and mattering at hand, our founders undoubtedly had differing opinions about ACR's objectives and operations. Two of their statements, however, I will draw attention to. Bill Wells (1995, p. 562) has written that the "great hope" for ACR was that "Unlike the older other professional disciplines, *consumer research would solve real problems.*" [emphasis added] Jerry Kernan (1979, p. 1) proclaimed that the association's penultimate goal was to "orchestrate the natural talents of academia, government, and industry so as to *enhance consumer welfare.*" [emphasis added] Accordingly, the earliest ACR conferences often involved not only academics, but also administrators from consumer-oversight organizations, such as the Consumers Union and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Ideals and expectations were high, that ACR *could and should* solve legitimate problems and augment consumer welfare.

How do you feel about that vision? If you agree with it—even if only moderately—how would you grade ACR's related performance over the last 36 years? Where are we today?

One thing we all know for sure: in the arc of time, consumer behavior and the ideology of consumption have diffused across the world to every corner, to virtually every individual, to such an astonishing scale, that living and consuming are more complexly interdependent than at any other time in human history. Both the serious problems and the genuine opportunities of consumption, for billions of people and other living entities, have never needed ACR and our collective talents more than now.

There are many riddles, many stresses, and much suffering in our world. And so many of these conditions are instigated or aggravated by consumer behaviors, or could be alleviated by new and different consumer behaviors. The statistics are numbing, but let's consider a few to assist us in our middle age, self-analysis of ACR.²

In terms of one particular disease, 19 million people worldwide have died of AIDS, and about 35 million are currently infected. In terms of one particular handicap, internationally over 160 million people are visually impaired, of whom about 37 million are blind. What has our organization done about diseases and handicaps that consumer research could tend to?

On a seemingly more mundane topic—television—the average child in America will have watched 100,000 acts of televised violence, including 8,000 murders, by the time he or she finishes the sixth grade. By the age of 65, the average American will have spent nine years watching television. Television is now the most globalized form of entertainment, and yet how little we understand about the effects of TV. But it doesn't need to be this way.

And then there is food. Between 1962 and 2000, the percent of obese Americans rose from 13% to 31%, with childhood obesity tripling in the past two decades. The cost of overweight conditions in the U.S., through effects on health, has been estimated at \$117 billion annually. In the meantime, ACR has been mostly speechless about this tragedy of indulgence.

And, of course, there is tobacco. Diseases from smoking cause an estimated 430,000 deaths per year in the U.S. alone. And, as you all know, the incidence of smoking in developing economies has skyrocketed. Tobacco consumption has been a focus of some consumer researchers over the years, but we need more, following in the footsteps of Pechmann and Knight's (2002) award-winning *JCR* article on advertising, peer influences, and adolescent smoking.

And there are thousands of consumers harmed each year through product use and misuse. For example, in 2003 U. S. children were involved in over 200,000 toy-related injuries treated in hospital emergency rooms. Some of us study children, but rarely about their susceptibility to product injuries, and the related role and responsibility of their caregivers.

And lastly, but perhaps most alarming, there are the widespread environmental concerns. We know almost certainly that this planet cannot reasonably sustain the world population forecasted for mid to late 21st Century if current consumption activities keep mounting. Looking just at the U.S., the Environmental Protection Agency has recently estimated that 40% of U.S. waterways remain too polluted for fishing or swimming. Sadly, in several parts of the world, where consumption levels are rapidly rising, airway pollution and waterway pollution are already worse than in the U.S. But it doesn't need to be this way. These trends, epidemics, and pandemics—and so many more I have overlooked here—are not solely for politicians, engineers, and health specialists to address, to ease, or to remedy. Where is ACR?

It is important to be balanced, however. There is much contentment and joy, and many marvels and triumphs in our world. Consumer behaviors particularly have the capacity to support and enhance life. These include reading, exercise, many outdoor activities, hobbies of numerous kinds, festivals and celebrations, and an array of artistic endeavors such as music, painting, and sculpting. There are also caring for and maintaining possessions, gift giving, sharing, donating, and recycling. These and many other consumer behaviors, when conducted in sensible amounts, with conscientiousness or flow, can undeniably contribute to well-being, including physical health, authentic personal efficacy and human potential, social justice and social integration, community networks, family coherence and legacies, child nurturance and growth, ecological stability, and so on. On the whole, there are many affirmative consumer behaviors and related dimensions of life that consumer researchers could not only derive deeper understanding of, but also share the insights with the people who would most benefit from them.

¹I thank Jim Burroughs, Rich Lutz, Ed McQuarrie, Mary-Ann Twist, and Brian Wansink for commenting helpfully on a prior draft of this address.

²The statistics reported were gathered from a variety of governmental and non-governmental sources, mostly from associated websites.

So, am I intimating that our modestly-sized, non-profit association of loosely organized members, who serve mostly as volunteers, can positively impact millions of consumers? Absolutely. Of course, it won't be easy. As E. B. White once confessed, "I get up every morning determined both to change the world and to have one hell of a good time. Sometimes this makes planning the day difficult." This is the sort of difficulty that is good. It is good for the world, good for ACR, good for us and our children.

I feel sheepish, though, standing before you today. My own research has been as inconsequential to consumers' well-being as anyone else's in this field. Yet, when I received the honor of being elected president of ACR, I felt it was time for me and for ACR to revisit the meaning and mattering of our lives' work. As I thought more about the unrealized potential of ACR in the contexts of consumer suffering as well as consumer enrichment, I thought more about our association's great hope. And as I did, an exhortation from Eleanor Roosevelt kept haunting me. She said quite simply, "Do the thing you think you cannot do."

This means, of course, that we must do more than just think or converse about consumer welfare. As one Chinese proverb states matter-of-factly: "Talk doesn't cook rice." We need to take some actions. And another Chinese proverb reminds us, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step."

A first step was actually taken a year ago when Debbie MacInnis and several others worked diligently to redesign the ACR website into a more contemporary, sophisticated, and multi-functional resource. This included planning a subsection titled "For Consumers." Today it includes consumer-friendly summaries of relevant research as well as numerous links to other organizations and publications that can aid consumers. We need more ACR members to assist the website editors in developing this subsection. Please contact the chief editor, Vanessa Patrick, or me if you wish to contribute.

Taking a second vital step, I asked four respected members of ACR—Connie Pechmann, Linda Price, Rick Netemeyer, and Lisa Penaloza—to organize this conference around a theme of consumer welfare. An immediate stumbling block was figuring out what to label this theme. So we generated and reviewed over 50 possibilities. For example, we considered calling it Positive Consumer Research. But that seemed too derivative from the movement of positive psychology (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000). Besides, positive contrasts with negative, and it wasn't negative consumer research we were up against, but rather that which was ineffectual for social and personal well being. We felt we needed something fresh and stirring.

Ultimately, we all agreed on *Transformative Consumer Research*. By transformative research we mean investigations that are framed by a fundamental problem or opportunity, and that strive to respect, uphold, and improve life in relation to the myriad conditions, demands, potentialities, and effects of consumption. Though transformative consumer research has an immediate practical orientation, it does not forsake scrupulous methodology or perceptive theory. In fact, it is mostly—if not only—through meticulous description and compelling explanation that the findings can lead to constructive, actionable implications. The word 'transformative' also carries the additional meaning of an inspired summon to researchers themselves, who might be newly considering this genre of work or who would like to recharge their long-time faith in applied consumer research via ACR.

The organizers of our conference and I have been gratified by the response of ACR members who submitted papers and session proposals around the theme of transformative consumer research. Hopefully, future ACR conferences, including those in Europe, the

Asia-Pacific area, and Latin America can build upon these initial efforts. I respectfully urge the program committees and the organizers of these conferences to not only include transformative consumer research as a content code in the submission page of research topics, but also to extend and mature this endeavor in their own ways through the conference plans they make.

Before announcing further steps, I want to stress and clarify two essential issues. First, we have by no means intended for transformative consumer research to become some overarching or predominant orientation for ACR. Our association is characterized by broadminded and mutually respectful members. ACR will continue to welcome all researchers who have keen interests in consumer behavior, regardless of their topic or research paradigm.

Secondly, transformative consumer research is not something new, nor has it been dormant. More than one past presidential address at ACR has pointed in this direction. Also, occasional articles in the *Journal of Consumer Research* have looked at transformative consumer research topics. The *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, the *Journal of Research for Consumers*, the *Journal of Macro Marketing*, and the *Journal of Consumer Affairs* have also published many related papers, and some special issues are now forthcoming at those journals that fit under the rubric of transformative consumer research as I have outlined it today.

This brings me to my precise point. I am not insinuating that few ACR members care about or have published research that deals with consumer welfare. That would be patently false, though as my remarks intend to advocate today, we categorically could do much, much more. Ten years ago at this conference, the honorable Bill Wells alleged that our field was rife with irrelevance. I agreed then, and I still mostly do. But over the last decade during which I have pondered Bill's indictment, I have come to believe that our irrelevance is ironically most situated in the association itself. ACR has made little systematic effort to draw together the resources and skills of members who wish to work on consumer welfare, little systematic effort to encourage and reward more of this sort of research, and little systematic effort to inform either the public, consumer advisors, or policy administrators who would most gain from learning of the research and its implications.

It is critical, therefore, that additional concrete steps be taken. Otherwise, transformative consumer research via ACR will risk being never more than just kindly thoughts and ambiguous aspirations. With the devoted input of several of you in the audience today, I have worked during this last year to move transformative consumer research beyond our three-day gathering in San Antonio.

As you have probably noted, there was included in your conference registration packet a short report on an ad hoc Task Force. With the support of ACR's Board of Directors, I recruited through email 46 individuals who have strong interests in consumer welfare, to brainstorm ideas on a small set of key issues that will be crucial to the viability and success of transformative consumer research.

I will not take much time or space here to convey the task force results, since you have already received the summary report. In brief, the task force members identified some of the most pressing research topics, including

- vulnerable consumer groups (such as the poor, children and adolescents, and the illiterate),
- tobacco, alcohol, and drug consumption,
- gambling,
- nutrition and obesity,
- violence in movies and computer games,
- financial and medical decision making,

- product safety,
- environmentally protective behaviors, and
- organ donations.

Among the most mentioned barriers were motivating and valuing transformative consumer research. Other challenges were the need for explicit funding and for increased publication opportunities, especially in the leading outlets. Advice for addressing these crucial issues included:

- enlisting ACR opinion leaders to be decidedly involved,
- obtaining earmarked research funds for ACR members,
- working with journal editors to find new or increased means to publishing related research,
- arranging for ACR to provide outgoing communications that are widely accessible and understandable, both to the public and policy administrators, and, finally,
- developing doctoral seminars that can encourage and train new scholars in conducting, publishing, and publicizing transformative consumer research.

Taking these insights as a springboard, immediately following my remarks today there will be a special session on the task force report that will feature a select panel of the task force members. A sizeable period of this session will be open discussion between the panel and audience members, as moderated by our conference co-chairs, Connie and Linda. I invite all of the task force members to attend, and I hope that several others of you, who have curiosity or interests in the promise of transformative consumer research, will participate vigorously as well.

I am additionally pleased to announce that the ACR Board of Directors has endorsed a proposal I made to form an ongoing Advisory Committee on Transformative Consumer Research. The committee will report to the Board, and it will work side-by-side as needed with the ACR president, executive director, website editors, and others to invigorate and carry on transformative consumer research. I have volunteered to chair this committee at the beginning, and its membership will rotate on a regular basis. Its first duty will be to review the task force report and underlying data, as well as the feedback during the special session following this luncheon, and to begin to prioritize and implement the best recommendations. I am delighted to name the charter members of this advisory committee. They are:

Steve Burgess, University of Cape Town, South Africa
Marv Goldberg, Penn State University
Ron Hill, University of South Florida at St. Petersburg
Eric Johnson, Columbia University
Punam Keller, Dartmouth College
Connie Pechmann, University of California, Irvine
Simone Pettigrew, University of Western Australia
Joe Plummer, Chief Research Officer, Advertising Research Foundation
Linda Price, University of Arizona
Brian Wansink, Cornell University
Rick Wilk, Indiana University

I am also very excited to reveal a new source of ACR research support. To my knowledge, it is the single largest monetary donation to our association in our history, for any purpose. With the assistance of Linda Price, ACR has received a \$30,000 fund of seed support from the Kellogg Foundation to provide for research expenses associated with transformative consumer research. This

support has been made most directly possible by Ms. Cynthia Milligan, who is the Dean of the University of Nebraska School of Business and the President of the Board of the Kellogg Foundation. We owe immense gratitude to Cynthia and the Kellogg Foundation for this generous and uplifting support.

The distribution of the Kellogg Foundation funds over the next two to three years will be managed by the ACR Advisory Committee on Transformative Consumer Research. The first call for research proposals will be made soon via the ACR website and the ACR listserv. Proposals will be reviewed by the committee and the recipients will be announced shortly thereafter. The committee will also seek additional funds to replenish and build upon the initial Kellogg Foundation monies.

Among the most emphasized concerns by the task force was the need for research on consumer welfare to be more welcomed at our top academic journals. To this end, I am pleased to acknowledge that John Deighton, the new editor of the *Journal of Consumer Research*, has offered to develop a special issue of *JCR* in the spirit of transformative consumer research. This effort will fit soundly with the philosophy John espoused in his first editorial (Deighton 2005), namely that consumer research should be “useful” by “illuminating a real-world consumption phenomenon” and harboring “implications for practice.” The call for submissions has just recently been posted on the *JCR* website, and will soon appear on the ACR listserv and elsewhere. I thank John and the *JCR* Policy Board for making a higher priority of pragmatic studies of consumer welfare. What is also prospectively satisfying about this special issue is that, over the last two years, *JCR* has had tremendous success in getting the news media to notice and incorporate more of its research into a variety of journalistic articles and stories on consumer behavior. Thus, there is opportunely an increased likelihood that the public at large will be exposed to the insights and implications of this special issue.

I hope these opening steps for developing transformative consumer research will usher in a renaissance of an original mission of ACR, namely, to conduct and impart outstanding research in the service of quality of life.

In closing, I want to go back to 1969. Not to ACR’s genesis, but to another event occurring independently, which surprisingly paralleled the founding dreams for ACR and the re-envisionment I have called for today. That event in 1969 was the presidential speech given before the American Psychological Association by the renowned psycholinguist, George Miller. Here are some of his sentences stitched together from across his address. As you hear the word “psychologist,” think “consumer researcher.” Miller (1969, p. 1063, p. 1074) said:

The most urgent problems of our world today are the problems we have made for ourselves....Our obligations as citizens are broader than our obligations as scientists....If we have something of practical value to contribute, we should make every effort to insure that it is implemented....I recognize that many of you will note these ambitions as little more than empty rhetoric. Psychologists will never be up to it, you will say....On the other hand, difficulty is no excuse for surrender. There is a sense in which the unattainable is the best goal to pursue. So let us continue our struggle to advance psychology as a means of promoting human welfare, each in our own way. For myself, however, I can imagine nothing we could do that would be more relevant to human welfare, and nothing that could pose a greater challenge to the next generation of psychologists, than to discover how best to give psychology away.

Several of our founders intended ACR to be a principal channel for giving consumer research away. Inviting, as I have today, a middle age, self-analysis of ACR, how do you feel about giving consumer research away? If you agree—even if only moderately—how would you grade ACR’s performance? Where are we today?

There will be plentiful doubts about transformative consumer research, and more than enough impediments. But we should all feel buoyed by someone who knows a lot about resilience and noble goals. “Our deepest fear,” Nelson Mandela said, “is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that frightens us.”

How true of ACR as well! Let’s not be deterred. Together we can raise the meaning and mattering of our scholarship in this world. ACR can still become the brighter beacon it was conceived to be.

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ACR 2005 North American Film Festival Overview

Russell Belk, University of Utah
Robert Kozinets, York University

SUMMARY

This year marked the fourth consecutive North American ACR Film Festival. This year's offerings continued the strong momentum established in prior years in terms of quality and representation of topics and nations. The ten films shown at the festival came from eight different countries: France, Turkey, Australia, Sweden, Japan, USA, Canada, and India.

The films ranged in tone from the light and humorous ("Burning Bock") to the heartbreaking ("Erasing Futures"). They offered a wide variety of topics, but some definite themes were apparent. First there were films that looked at particular regional consumption rituals, or at regional or national inflections of global consumption rituals or holidays. In this category were Scandinavian inflections of Christmas rituals ("What do Consumers Consume in Santa?"), the burning of a straw goat in a Swedish village ("Burning Bock"), the tradition of "money day" gatherings in Turkey ("Not Desperate Housewives"), and the no-holds-barred capitalism of charismatic churches in Ghana ("The Gospel of Prosperity").

Second were films that examined fan culture and subcultures. These ranged from films about of heavy metal fans ("Headbanging"), fans at a comic, horror, and science fiction convention ("There & Back, Again"), to a gathering of fans of the Indiana Jones films ("Gearhead Pilgrimage"). Finally, there were two films that examined consumption-related topics of social importance, one that revealed the plight faced of Cuban women who worked as prostitutes in order to escape oppression ("Las Cubanitas") and another that brought us into the world of homeless Indian children who survive by begging and sniffing intoxicants ("Erasing Futures"). These films, and the three categories we have grouped them into here, continue and contribute to important substantive traditions in the field of consumer research.

As always, the films inspired considerable discussion. The question and answer periods often had to be cut off short due to the lengthy and detailed discussions with the filmmakers that followed the premiere exhibition of each film.

Quality was high due to the strong rejection rate. This year's film festival had a 33 percent rejection rate—by far the highest historical benchmark. Not coincidentally, this was also the first year that we used a cadre of reviewers to assist us in reviewing and offering comments upon the Film Festival submissions. We owe each of them a debt of gratitude, and acknowledge them here.

2005 ACR Film Festival Reviewers

Stacey Baker, University of Wyoming
Rita Denny, Practica Group
Eileen Fischer, York University
Markus Giesler, York University
Mel Halbach, Independent filmmaker
Angela Hausman, University of Texas-Pan American
Eileen Fischer, York University
Jean-Sebastien Marcoux, HEC, Montreal
Laurie Meamber, George Mason University
Albert Muniz, DePaul University
Laura Oswald, Marketing Semiotics
Lisa Peñaloza, University of Colorado
John Sherry, University of Notre Dame
Scott Smith, Central Missouri State University
Patricia Sunderland, Practica Group

Norlaine Thomas, University of Manitoba
Gülünur Tumbat, San Francisco State University
Alladi Venkatesh, University of California, Irvine
Joel Watson, Rockhurst University
Xin Zhao, University of Hawaii

SHORT ABSTRACTS

"The Paradox Between Only Looking and Possession"

Yu Chen, HEC, Paris

The "only looking at" or the "just seeing" is a quite frequent reaction of beholders vis à vis an aesthetic object, especially in visual artistic experience. According to the anthropologists as Maquet (1992) or Rothko (1970), it is "a mental deconditioning" and a state of "bare attention". Three specific traits of the "only looking" attitude- attention, nondiscursiveness, and disinterestedness- are found in the previous literature (Maquet 1986, Wagner 1999). These traits reflect a different logic from that of materialistic personality -jealousy, possessiveness and envy (Belk, 1988, 1996) and make us investigate the effect of this experience on human behaviours in general and consumer behaviours in special.

In this video essay, other than studying about the consumers, we would investigate how the artists- the 'producers' of artworks react to these two different attitudes and behaviours. The main question will be what the artists desire for actually, and for what reasons.

The video edition is organized as: firstly the openness of the scenario by a piece of installation works of the artist that we interview—the bubble machine. The camera then follows the bubbles and shows the enjoyment of people inside the parachute- the exhibition centre of this artist. Thirdly we show the "producer" of the works- artist Chris Coleman. His speech followed two main logics: his proud about his exhibition and his deception about the non purchase. His desire to show his artworks to the public—confused with that to sell his artworks to be able to continue the creation- is then shared by other three artists of contemporary art.

From their expressions, we could learn that the *desire* of artists is that people appreciate their art, while they have certain kind of *need* to be financially supported. The only manner of this support that they are expecting is the purchases of artworks, and in the video we could learn that they express their deception of consumers because of the lack of purchase. However, at the same time, they show their happiness that people love, look at and appreciate their works. We think that this paradox would continue if purchase were always the only way for artists to rely on for survival.

The understanding of the artists' desire for "high art" and need for "low money" and the gap between the number that they created and that they sold helped us investigate whether there would be another modality for consuming artworks. This video is thus a window for us to see an interior world of artists and to consider the necessity and the feasibility of another modality of art consumption experience- access to artworks without acquisition.

"Not Desperate Housewives: Turkish Housewives' Consumption Practices at 'Money Day' Gatherings"

Ebru Ulusoy, Istanbul University

This film is about Turkish housewives' consumption related practices in social gatherings with friends and relatives that are

generally named as “money day” gatherings in respect to money collecting tradition. In these systematically scheduled gatherings there are some practices that are related to consumption. In this work these are classified as spending for one’s self, time and food consumption and direct marketing of products that women make by themselves or of the companies they become distributors of.

“Money Day Gatherings” has been an important practice in Turkish housewives’ daily lives. These days refer to the very small friend or relative communities’ (approximately 5-10 housewives) social gatherings. Each gathering or shortly “day” mostly take place once a month in one of the community member’s house, but rarely out at a restaurant or cafe. A woman might be a member of different communities and attend different gatherings. There are two main characteristics of these community gatherings: systematical scheduling and money collecting.

In respect to systematic scheduling, every community decides when and where to gather every month at the beginning of the year which is mostly by September-October. And, at the last gathering of the year which happens mostly in the beginning of the summer, it is decided when and where to start the next year’s gatherings.

The most important aspect of these gatherings is that housewives in the community collect money (most accepted money currencies are Turkish Lira, Dollar, Euro or Gold) among themselves and give it to the host housewife in whose home the “Day” takes place. Or even if the day takes place outside, the collected money is given to the members of the community in a turn. Each community decides the amount of the money that will be collected and this amount differs from group to group. Due to this money collecting practice, these days are known as “Money Days”. But despite the ‘money’ aspect, these days are considered far from being materialistic among Turkish housewives. Being together is told to be the most important reason for these gatherings. The most important proof of this is that even sometimes there can be members who are not willing to pay money and welcomed in these gatherings and also welcomes guests once a year like all other community members. Being together, visiting friend’s home or receiving guests are very important for housewives in the community. Gift (for the house) –giving by the guests to the owner of the house, or serving to the guests throughout the day are some of the most important and common traditional behaviors in these days.

These gatherings have some aspects that are related to consumption. These can be generally classified as 1) enabling to spend for one’s self, 2) time and food consumption, 3) direct marketing.

Enabling to Spend For One’s Self. Generally, housewives who don’t have an income take money from their husbands mostly for the needs of the house, especially for the kitchen spendings, so mostly this money is for the spendings of the family. But these “days” enable them to label the money they get from these days “their own money”, and even though sometimes they spend it to make a contribution to home budget, most of them spend it for themselves. Clothes, jewelry and shoes are the things that this money is mostly spend for. Other than these, another place they spend this money for is “trips”.

Time and Food Consumption. Preparing for these gatherings happen like a ritual especially for the host housewife like most of the guest receivings in Turkey. The host housewife tries to get ready for receiving her guests in her best, so she puts a lot of time, money and effort into preparations. Preparations mostly begin a few days ago, the home is cleaned, the host decides which food to bake or cook and go for shopping. Mostly, food such as borek (kind of salty pastry made of thin sheet of dough mostly with meet, cheese or potatoes), corek (kind of bun), cake, desserts and other traditional dishes such as kisir (made of boiled and pounded wheat) are prepared (every housewife has her own recipe and way of doing them) one day ago

to be baked in the morning of the gathering to be served hot or fresh. These prepared food is mostly the most time consuming and talent expressing ones. And doing as much as one can is also a symbol of showing how much the host housewife cares for her friends.

Direct Marketing. Women sometimes sell their friends the things they make themselves such as bracelets, necklaces or the clothes they knit or sew. Other than selling the things they make, they sometimes become distributors of companies that prefer direct marketing and market their products to their friends. This is also an example of the micro economical aspects of these gathering for the housewives.

As a conclusion, these gatherings suggest how some communities negotiate consumption and production practices. But regardless of all these practices, the most cared aspect by housewives attending these gatherings is “being happy of being together” with friends.

“Headbanging: As Resistance or Refuge”

Marylouise Caldwell, University of Sydney

Paul Henry, University of Sydney

Heavy metal music (HMM) participants are often characterized by wider society as simply angry, aggressive, and aberrant, but is this the reality? Are they predominantly engaged in acts of social resistance in which they consciously reject mainstream social values, or are they primarily seeking a place of refuge amongst an accepting social group? This video explores formative experiences that have shaped their self identity, and how (successfully) they negotiate the dual worlds of HMM subculture and place in wider society.

The literature informing these research questions is drawn from work on the nature and functions of (apparent) consumer resistance (e.g. Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Holt 2002; Kozinets 2002; Ozanne and Murray 1995; Thompson 2003) and subcultures (e.g. Kozinets 2001; Schouten and Alexander 1995),

The HMM scene in Sydney, Australia was described by one industry figure as “hardly breathing.” The number of participants is small and the limited number of promotions at tiny venues reflects the interest. Our informants were certainly not conforming to the predominant youth trends in music or fashion. They had been long term adherents of HMM. One informant noted that “metal is generally rejected in Australia.” They suffer negative effects of being stereotyped as a pack of misfits. Adding to this disadvantage informants were from working class backgrounds with low incomes, barriers to good jobs, and limited economic resources.

In addition to the disempowering effects of socio-economic position (Henry 2005) and stigmatization as HMM adherents (Walser 1993), informants also report lack of fit with peer group norms especially in their teenage years. These memories reflected feelings of being different to others, experiencing rejection, and loneliness. Many informants were self-professed “geeks”, tending toward books, study and music. Working class attitudes to these types of interests typically range from ambivalence to derision (Bourdieu 1984). Informants also displayed a complete lack of interest in sports. In working class groups, since other forms of power are often denied, physicality and brute strength as exhibited in playing sport is highly valued (Bourdieu 1984). Furthermore, Australian culture is ‘sports-mad’ with sporting affiliations contributing to social acceptance.

These experiences of disempowerment have shaped informant’s sense of self, values, priorities and preferences. Recurring values articulated by informants revolved around the importance of open-mindedness and acceptance of different people, ideas, and music. This appeared to be a reaction to the closed-mindedness they have faced and the desire to distinguish them-

selves from the mainstream oppressors. Informants see themselves as individualists, free from mainstream social pressure. One cited as evidence their ability to discern good music independently: “you don’t go with the crowd. HMM makes us feel different and superior to the other people who are sheep and fed mainstream stuff . . . (and) we can have a laugh at the world coz we know better.”

In HMM informants had found an enclave of like-thinkers from which they derived (previously denied) social acceptance, a source of identification, and enhanced self-esteem. However, their broader aspirations throw continuing sense of disempowerment into sharp relief. When asked about the future, all informants expressed the desire to own their own homes, pay off debts, attain financial stability and bring up children in a secure manner. The statement “I’d like the whole wife, kids and white picket fence thing” is typical. Perceived difficulty in aspirational attainment was evident across informants as exemplified by the quote about financial advancement: “I’ve had a lot twists, turns and dead ends.”

Coping responses to the simultaneous desires to maintain their HMM identification as well as broader aspirations vary across informants. Some tended to be more adept at balancing participation in both HMM and mainstream worlds. Others withdrew almost exclusively into HMM subculture, often to detriment of their wider aspirations. They typically employed fantasy and escapist coping, with fascination in books like “The Lord of the Rings” or medieval themes depicting powerful archetypes. Those that more successfully balanced multiple worlds employed shielding techniques. For example, one described “work people are a whole different set of relationships, a different wardrobe, a different way of talking and acting. A different person walks out of here on Monday morning.” This shielding approach also had a cost in that these informants described a dissatisfying lack of fit with others in the workplace: “I just don’t feel I’ve found my niche in life.”

This surfaces the conundrum for all informants. They have all found refuge and strength in the HMM scene. Yet in order to obtain their wider aspirations successful engagement with the mainstream is required. This is where the economic and material resources lie. Oppositional actions and symbols stereotypical of HMM works against the social acceptance necessary for such engagement. So something has to give.

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“Burning Bock”

Sven Bergvall, *Royal Institute of Technology*
Jacob Ostberg, *Stockholm University*

The straw goat (*bock* in Swedish) in the town of Gävle, a predecessor to Santa Claus with connotations ranging back to the pagan Viking traditions of Scandinavia, is the largest in the world. Its fame stems, however, from its almost annual burning. Standing as a symbol of both sacred and profane aspects of the Christmas celebration it has become the target of dark forces spreading fire and destruction. This videography explores the Gävleners relation to Christmas, the bock and its destruction.

“What Do Consumers Consume in Santa? A Comparative Study of Santa Claus in Scandinavia”

Junko Kimura, *Hosei University*

We investigate the reactions of consumers toward Santa Claus and the ways Santa satisfied them. Since Clement Moore wrote a storybook of Night Before Christmas in 1822, Santa lives in Arctic Circle. It is because wild reindeers can live only in the Arctic Circle. We see many motion films and children books of Santa living with elves and working for preparing Christmas in either polar or Arctic Circle. Not only in the imaginary stories, but also in the real world we can visit “real” Santa in Scandinavia. In Denmark, there is a Santa Claus meeting in every July, and over 100 official Santa from all over the world gather. In Tomteland in Mora, Sweden, 40,000 guests visit a year. 400,000 guests visit Santa Claus Village in Lapland, Finland. In Norway, there is Christmas House and Post Office and 80,000 guests visit a year.

For the present study, we choose Finnish and Norwegian Santa Villages. Santa has different meaning to consumers. In Finland, Santa is realization of people’s image. People come to see him in order to confirm that the constructed image is true. He need to be as same as the image people see in the motion films and books. Visitors are too eager to see him and do not mind waiting in line for two hours outside the building. For the memory of him, visitors do three things. First, they are taken in photo with Santa. Taking photo with their own camera is prohibited and they need to buy the photo which is taken by the cameraman there. Secondly, they write postcards to their friends and family from Santa Village Post Office. Each postcard and mail will be stamped with Santa postmark. Thirdly, visitors buy souvenirs at the shopping center. On the contrary, in Norway, Santa is media of Christmas spirit. He is a missionary who conveys people, especially children, the true meaning of Christmas: the importance of family bond.

These differences are created not only because Finnish Santa and Norwegian Santa are different in their figures, costumes, and stories but because marketers have different philosophy and strategy. In Finland, Santa Village insists that Finnish Santa is the genuine and original, even though the country adopted image of Santa from the US.

There used to be Tonto, a gift bringer, in Finnish folklore. Village downgraded Tonto to Santa’s helper. In order to distinguish Finnish Santa from other Santa, such as Coca Cola Santa and those

in motion films, Santa Village changed his costume. He used to wear red costume from his head to toe. About ten years ago, Village renewed his costume to the one with less red color because they did not prefer the fact that red costume reminds people of Coca Cola Santa. Other workers, such as Tonto and Country Elf, play their roles at any moments. Even though the researcher told them that they did not need to play their roles while talking to her, they kept acting the characters of Santa's story. These strategies make it possible to turn the imaginary world into the existing world, which attracts and satisfies visitors. On the contrary, in Norway, the director of Christmas House tries maintaining and reinforcing the original story of Norwegian folklore. It is why she insists calling a gift bringer Nisse instead of Santa Claus. When a Japanese marketer visited her for searching a business chance, the director scolded her explaining that Christmas is not a business chance but an opportunity people pile their family history. Some companies in Japan are moved by this Christmas spirit and invite Nisse as a missionary. We do not try deciding which Santa is superior. It is useless to compete to decide who is genuine because each has different meaning and different way to satisfy consumers.

“Gearhead Pilgrimage: The Queen Mary Summit of Indiana Jones”

Scott Smith, Central Missouri State University
S. Jason Cole, University of Kansas
Dan Fisher, University of Tulsa
Jeff B. Murray, University of Arkansas
Molly Rapert, University of Arkansas

A pilgrimage is one of the most widespread rituals found in religious, and now secular, culture. The term pilgrimage refers to the ritual of a journey to a specific place. It is based on the belief that certain places are more powerful than others, and that this power can be experienced, and even taken home, in the feeling of a spiritual renewal, the transformation of social status, or embodied in an artifact or relic from the journey (Dubisch 1995: 35). Although there is an emphasis on materiality in pilgrimage, as a ritual it is understood to be both a real journey and a symbolic or metaphorical one. Taking a pilgrimage is not about escaping reality, but about stepping into reality (Delahanty 1997).

The concept of the “symbolic pilgrimage,” or even “fan pilgrimage,” has been explored at various levels (Kozinets 2001; Kozinets 2002; Aden 1999; O’Guinn and Belk 1989; etc.), but it is often seen as nothing more than textual representation, devotion and status (Aden 1999). This film argues that, within fandom, the pilgrimage often holds a more illuminating sacredness than the traditional meanings attached to a place and journey. It is often a culmination of the affective experience of fans, actually mapped into the physical geography (Hills 2002). For the fan, a touristic pilgrimage does not merely represent a communal ritual with semiotic effects, but also a clarifying-experiential process that is inextricably linked to and helps to define actual material spaces as well as denote a capstone to years of fandom. A familiar rite of passage for a “religious” believer (Turner 1974), O’Guinn and Belk (1989) apply this concept in a consumer context in their examination of the religious theme park, Heritage Village, extending the application of a previously, strictly religious notion to consumption.

To investigate this conceptualization, fans of Indiana Jones and his costume, or “gear,” and their congregation at the RMS Queen Mary Transatlantic Ocean Liner Facility were explored. The Queen Mary, a former ocean liner, has been permanently docked in Long Beach, California and serves as a hotel, shopping center, and entertainment hub. These fans congregate at the Queen Mary due to

rumors its venue was used for a portion of Raiders of the Lost Ark, the first in the Indiana Jones trilogy, as well as for its historical background.

For the Indiana Jones fan, media reception is simply one point within an array of practices that enhance the original connection to the Indiana Jones trilogy. Participation in real and virtual communities, the obtaining of artifacts, or the creating of fan productions are just a few of the ways that Indy fans participate and are metaphorically linked to their passion. The traveling to symbolic locations is often seen in the same fashion and is reduced metaphorically, but similarly to creative fan productions, a symbolic pilgrimage goes beyond simple semiotic value, and helps to link iconic events to individual experience and creates a new way in which fans can engage and break through cultural structures

Within a religious context, the “journey” is traditionally a penance and involves sacrifice. Secularly, the pilgrimage is voluntary and based on individual choice. Yet for the Indiana Jones gear fans, known as “Indy Gearheads,” the trip is a direct link to the travels of their favorite adventurer, a suspected sight of filming for the first movie in the trilogy, a destination to a mode of transportation similar to one the fictitious adventurer might have used, and a first-hand moment connecting with history.

Within the common constructs of a pilgrimage, Indy Gearheads experience a state of “liminality” or “separation” as they prepare for the trip, preparing and packing their favorite gear. Additionally, the entire trip, a period of gear wearing, whip cracking and movie quoting can be considered “liminal” as they travel to a special location physically and transcendently. Participants of the Queen Mary Summit “become a privileged class” with abundant opportunity to learn and speculate about what the group and its members considers its “ultimate things” (Turner 1974: 259).

These sacred symbols operate culturally as mnemonics, or as ‘storage bins’ of information, not about pragmatic techniques, but about cosmologies, values and cultural axioms, whereby a society’s deep knowledge is transmitted from one generation to another (Turner 1974: 239). As Indy gear is the focus of thrust for these enthusiasts, the liminal stage of pilgrimage is obligated to continue to encompass the discussion of all aspects of movie costuming and props. Pilgrims leave behind the structures and obligations of home and the conventions and concerns associated with daily life. In the Company of others like themselves they become aware of their allegiance to a larger community beyond their local sphere (Turner 1974: 168), including favorite aspects of the movie’s main character and its artifacts.

What especially depicts this group is the concept of “communitas” and spirit of community. This quality of communitas in long established pilgrimages becomes articulated in some measure with the environing social structure (Turner 1974: 166). People from all levels of society and walks of life may form strong bonds, free from the structures that normally separate them. This potent and distinctive form of social community emerges in what Turner refers to as the liminal stages of pilgrimages and refers to, “jointly undergoing ritual transition” through which they experience an intense sense of intimacy and equality. All of the participants in the Queen Mary Summit are members of the online Indiana Jones gear forum Club Obi Wan, named after a dinner club that appears in the beginning of Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, the second movie in the trilogy.

For fans, the pilgrimage often holds a more illuminating sacredness than the traditional meanings attached to a trip. These pilgrimages allow fans to inhabit the world of the fan text in an affective, liminal and experiential way and to legitimate and ground textual geographies of fandom.

“There and Back Again: A Consumption Journey”

Robert Kozinets, York University

Consumption is a complex act: part pragmatic economization, part mystical conjuration. A consumption journey to a convention that unites comic book, anime, horror, and science fiction fans is the launch point for an exploration of consumers’ popular fascination with entertainment culture. Is entertainment culture harmful to society, as Frankfurt School theorists and other cultural critics assert? Drawing on ideas, concepts, and theories from Debord, Baudrillard, Postman, and others, this video seeks to embody consumption experiences such as celebrity-worship, mass media hyperbolization, collecting, and shopping, as practices shaped by the institutions of contemporary consumer society.

Or is it a playful expression of fun and *joie de vivre*, a source of community and creativity celebrated by cultural studies scholars such as John Fiske? This video attends to the combination of commercialization and sacralization that is the modern entertainment marketplace. The videography begins an exploration of comic book collecting, gaming, action figure collection, and other entertainment paraphernalia-related practices that brings into relief some of the key concerns

This film employs ethnographic and cultural studies frameworks to examine consumer cultures and communities. In the process, it will seek to educate about the characteristics of consumption-oriented communities and social formations. In terms of direct benefits, it seeks (1) to help de-stigmatize, where necessary, social groups that are often portrayed as “fringe,” “cult-like” or “fanatical,” (2) to study and explicate important relations of social power that corporations exercise through their control of consumer cultures and communities, (3) to point out the social benefits and risks of cultures and communities of consumption to their members, and to society, and (4) to provide new and useful ways of conceptualizing cultures and communities of consumption that are accessible to the public, to educators, and the members of the culture at large.

The central focus of the film is to enhance our understanding of market-oriented or consumer cultures and communities as they manifest in celebratory consumption gatherings such as the one studied here. This research provides an “inverted lens” look at commonplace consumer behaviors that seeks to defamiliarize and “re-strange-ify” the ordinary-yet-remarkable worlds of consumers.

The film uses linear narrative in part, but also draws upon a quick-cut, transformative, unsteady lens to portray the shifting psychedelic sense of the reality of modern consumer society. The film’s final section offers a new theorization of connectedness with entertainment consumption as driven by four essential factors. First are Dimensions, the extent to which there is complexity and depth to the created world(s) that consumer experience. Next is Desire, the extent to which the created world is one in which the consumers’ fantasy is engaged. This type of engagement takes the form of two elements: morality/heroism and admiration and personal power. The next factor is Division, a social capital related construct in which levels of hierarchies exist (such as those between producers and fans, between stars and producers, and between those who are knowledgeable and those who are not), which serve as strong motivation for going deeper into the community and the entertainment property. Finally, there are Doorways, such as occur at the convention. Doorways are the moments when a consumer gains entrance through breaches between the worlds, where immersion can be attained, where communities form, where a liminoidity pertains that allows trespass between the dimensions. The film theorizes that the greater the potential for Doorways, the greater the potential for consumer attractedness. Conventions such as this one

fulfill the popular and commercial need for Doorways to exist, which deepen entertainment experiences and provide financial and consumption opportunities.

“The Gospel of Prosperity: Charismatic Churches in Ghana”

Samuel K. Bonsu, York University

Russell W. Belk, University of Utah

Two quotations highlight the subject of our video. The first is by an anthropologist who has been studying Ghanaian religion for a number of years:

Nothing can better evoke what is at stake than the salience of the contrast between the familiar image of the African prophet from Zionist, Nazarite, or Aladura churches, dressed in white gowns, carrying crosses, and going to pray in the bush, and the flamboyant leaders of the new mega-churches, who dress in the latest (African) fashion, drive nothing less than a Mercedes Benz, participate in the global Pentecostal jetset, broadcast the message through flashy TV and radio programs, and preach the Prosperity Gospel to their deprived and hitherto-hopeless born-again followers at home and in the diaspora...the emergence of these figures [and their consumption lifestyles] suggests that the appropriation of Christianity in Africa has entered a new phase (Meyer 2004; p. 448).

The second quotation is by the founder of the church that is the primary site of our research. It is part of a sermon (later turned into a book), like many of those heard at Lighthouse Church International:

One facet of being successful is being prosperous. Poverty does not help anyone. The devil has made us believe that a spiritual person is a poor person. The fact that some priests take oaths of poverty only goes to emphasize the notion that there is some virtue in abject poverty. When I read the Bible, I do not see any such doctrine. Infact, the people God walked with often turned out to be rich. It is obvious that Satan has done a good job in making us all believe that poverty is more spiritual than prosperity... God wants to give you more money than you can use, but He wants you to love Him more than money. Money is not evil! It cannot be evil! It is when you love money more than God, that you are in danger of backsliding... God wants us to be successful. He wants His children to be rich and prosperous. God wants His people to build houses and to own cars. God’s will for you is to have an abundance of all things...what do you lose by believing this? Nothing! ...He wants you to be a millionaire, and even a billionaire... There will always be poor people amongst us, but it is our duty as preachers to speak the general truth of the Word of God. The general truth of God’s Word is explicitly and implicitly prosperity, riches, breakthrough, happiness, peace and success. Receive it because that is God’s desire for you...Decide today for prosperity and riches. Decide today that you will accomplish something in this life. God does not want you to borrow money; He wants you to be a giver. Don’t believe the lies of the devil...I am saying this because I want to help you. I am saying this because God has sent me into your life to help you climb out of darkness. God is telling me to tell you that prosperity is for you now! No matter who you are or where you live in this world, prosperity can be yours by faith. I see you having a breakthrough in your financial life. I see you living long and prospering. I see you without debt. I see you with

great riches...I see you owning many cars. That is God's plan for you! (Heward-Mills 2000a, p. 6-8; emphasis in original).

LCI is one of the leading charismatic churches in Ghana, which describes itself as a mega-church. The Church has at least 23 franchises in the USA alone, and more than 300 others in over 30 countries around the world (www.lighthousechapel.org). The materialistic focus of the sermon, along with Meyer's (2004) observation in the epigraph points to the pervasive nature of consumer culture and the inroads that it has made into contemporary African Christian doctrine and practice. The theology represented in the quotations challenges some of the core foundations of traditional Protestant Christianity such as denial of the flesh, inner asceticism, and the preferential option for the poor (Weber 1958). Clearly, the sermon was designed to disabuse audiences of the traditional beliefs that sustain the view that Christian religious piety and the aggressive pursuit of wealth cannot be bedfellows. Drawing on his interpretation of the Bible, Heward-Mills and his team of preachers offer hope that all children of God are guaranteed extreme wealth as long as they commit to God. This commitment and accompanying financial rewards, as he noted in the broader context of the excerpt above and in numerous other sermons elsewhere (e.g., Heward-Mills 2000b, 2002), derive in significant part from a conscientious giving of tithes and offerings to the Church. He guides his flock into compliance through teachings on loyalty and obedience to God and Church (e.g., Heward-Mills 2000c).

Based on a year of participant observation and depth interviews, this video explores both the positive and negative aspects of church-promoted materialism in a poor nation. On one hand, the Gospel of Prosperity offers hope and encourages entrepreneurship, investment, and generosity. On the other hand, for many this may be a false form of hope founded on greed, encouraged by displays of conspicuous consumption, and demanding donations that may make the church and its clergy wealthy at the expense of its credulous congregation. We show both sides of this movement and allow the audience to reach its own conclusions about whether the rapidly spreading Gospel of Prosperity is more of a blessing or a curse for Ghana.

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"Las Cubanas: An Exploration of Life in Cuba"

Sindy Chapa, University of Texas-Pan American

The purpose of this work is to explore the life of "las Cubanas" (Cuban Ladies) in la Havana Cuba. First, in an attempt to explore the life of "las Cubanas," the author looks at the life in Cuba in general; its culture, history and government. Second, the video focuses on the life of the Cuban ladies who are involved in prostitution. Finally, the relationship between "las Cubanas" and the tourism is exposed. In conclusion, this video shows a general vision

of the life of "las Cubanas" by exploring how the necessity is what makes them to become prostitutes.

"Erasing Futures: Ethics of Marketing an Intoxicant to Homeless Children"

Ram Manohar, Vikas Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur
Rohit Varman, Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur

In the recent times, marketing has emerged as one of the most important of the business functions with marketers catering to the needs of customers. Good marketing managers identify problems of customers and fulfil them, which lead to higher levels of customer satisfaction. This, in turn, increases sales and profitability of firms, which results in greater benefits for employees and more dividends for stockholders. The other side of the argument, however, is that marketing is essentially profit oriented and is not concerned about consumer welfare. This conflict of interests between internal and external stakeholders leads to moral dilemmas for business. In this video we describe a case of consumption of correction fluid in India by homeless children. The correction fluid is being commonly used by these children as a drug. Our case study draws upon the classical works and addresses the issue of business ethics involved here.

The research was conducted at a railway station in the city of Kanpur in North India. The main actors of this study are homeless children who stay at a railway station. These boys in the age group of 5-15 have torn clothes, dishevelled hair and are looked upon as thieves and vagabonds by most of the passengers and the railway officials. There are around 150 kids on any given day at the station. These children make their living by begging, cleaning trains or by selling water. Most of the children told us that they earned more than two dollars a day which was higher than the minimum wages fixed by the Government. These children eat left over food which is given to them by passengers or coach attendants in lieu of cleaning train compartments.

The product consumed by these children is correcting fluid, which is used to erase typographical errors. Correcting fluid can be either water based or organic solvent based chemical. Latter is used by these children as an inhalant because it is highly intoxicating. Water based product is not available in India and is only meant for exports. This product is available in a glass bottle containing 20ml of liquid and is sold with a bottle of diluter. We talked to several typists about the consumption of correcting fluid and they informed us that on an average they consume one bottle in six months. In the recent times, with the advent of computer based typing, office usage has further declined. Many informants have also started using correcting fluid in pen form in place of the liquid version consumed by children. Erazex,¹ produced by Coral, is the most widely used brand in offices and at the railway station. Coral is a business group which prides itself as an Indian company with an International outlook. In 2004 it had sales turnover of 90 m USD and the profit after tax doubled to 10m USD from the previous year (Source-Capital Online).

Unit price of a pack varies from 40-50 cents at the retail stores near the station. Interestingly, this product is also available in small food stores near the railway station and is openly sold in the retail stores around the station. Despite awareness about the product abuse, retailers and the manufacturer have not taken any corrective steps to put a check on these sales. Correction fluid is being distributed through the outlets around the station to effectively target these children. The heavy usage by this consumer group offers a lucrative market, which is being exploited by the firm and

¹Names of the brand and the firm have been changed.

its retailers. These commercial establishments refused to speak to us about the product. Our interviews with these children indicated that easy availability contributed to their addiction.

In a capitalist system any compromise with the profit making agenda meets with resistance. Profit based system frequently thrives at the cost of vulnerable stakeholders like workers and consumers. The dilemma to continue marketing correcting fluid in the same form or to withdraw it from the market is a reflection of this problem. The firm does not find it wrong, although it has come to know that the bulk of product is (mis)used by homeless children. In the Consequentialist framework of Bentham and Mill, marketing managers can pursue their own interest of maximising sales. It can be argued that these managers are pursuing their own pleasure, which is central to this line of philosophy. Here, maximisation rule of Consequentialism, is also quite limiting because human lives are at stake. Even if the number of the children is lower than the number of the shareholders of the firm, profit cannot be made at the cost of the lives of these children. In pursuit of pleasure, Consequentialism as a system of ethics is, however, closed to this universalistic interpretation of human values. Virtue ethics which gives the manager his/her personal space, also gives him/her opportunity to be whimsical. Interpretation of the problem cannot be left at an individual level as it is evident in this case that the manager as an individual has failed to take corrective action. Aristotelian system of virtue ethics is open to acceptance of inequality and to differential treatment of less privileged population. Here, managers from more elite background can view these homeless kids as inferior beings, who do not require any special attention.

The above mentioned limitations with the framework of Consequentialism and Virtue Ethics lead us to the third classical approach proposed by Kant. Kantian ethics operates with a universal notion of fairness and justice. Here, Kant's categorical imperative, which emphasises certain actions as objectively necessary, without regard to any end, leads to a more just resolution of the problem. The drug abuse by children is clearly problematic and marketing managers have to put an end to it by restricting sales around the railway station. Their duty is to re-visit marketing strategy and make amends to discourage these users. This can happen by changing constituents of the product e.g. in the US, mustard oil is mixed in solvent based correcting fluid to discourage abusers. Kantian emphasis on the usage of correct means ensures that these children are not discriminated against. Further, Kant's stress on man being an absolute end strongly reinforces this solution. Here, children are used as means for the benefit of the retailers and the firm. Kant's emphasis on absolute end vehemently rejects this possibility. In summary, our research demonstrates that restrictions on unfair and unjust system of profit generation require a universal approach to ethical behaviour. Kantian emphases on duty, morality and obligations are essential to resolve the ethical dilemma presented in this case.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

In Harm's Way? The Turbulence of Adolescence

Julie L. Ozanne, Virginia Tech
Laurel Anderson, Arizona State University

SESSION SUMMARY

No longer children but not yet adults, teenagers have earned a reputation for inflicting pain on themselves and anyone within range. Adolescence is a period of experimentation and risk taking. Consumer research traditionally views adolescence as one stage in a series of progressive stages and has examined the socializing influences of family, peers, and media (Roedder John 1999). However, recent research in neuroscience raises questions about this framework. Massive changes are occurring in teen's synaptic reorganization, with millions of neuro-connections being erased and created, at a rate only matched during infancy. This recent research documents that a growth spurt occurs in teens' frontal lobes, the area of the brain that is responsible for planning, reasoning, and controlling inhibitions (Giedd, Blumenthal, Jeffreis et al. 1999; Strauch 2003). Rather than one stage in a series of progressive stages, adolescence is a period during which teens' brains quite literally get redesigned. Moreover, teens are managing this inner turbulence during a time of unprecedented social change, such as the increasing ambiguity of gender roles, the dizzying speed of technological innovations, media pervasiveness and interactivity, the global AIDS epidemic, and the spread of new designer drugs, to name a few. Teenagers are coming of age during an increasingly dynamic socio-historical context.

The objective of this special session is to take a multi-paradigmatic, multi-method approach to adolescence and focus attention on both the problems and opportunities facing contemporary adolescents. We seek to move beyond stage theories of development and research that only emphasizes the vulnerabilities of adolescents. We hope to begin building a more comprehensive understanding of teenagers that considers how they make decisions, assess risk, explore conflicting roles, play with gender expectations, assert their identity, and develop new norms and forms of communication within a socio-cultural-historical context.

Parker, Fischhoff, and Bruine de Bruin employ a behavioral decision-making approach to understanding teens' decision-making through the analysis of field data. They explore the problem of overconfidence in some of the most risky decisions made by teenagers. Scott approaches the challenges of adolescents using a socio-historical approach and bases her findings on in-depth analysis of video interviews. Her provocative thesis is that the seemingly shocking consumption behavior of contemporary young women is a continuation of decades of progressive social change. Anderson and Ozanne take a socio-cultural approach and utilize a range of data: metaphor, essays, collages, and web diaries. They examine the way that teens engage in identity play in cyberspace and explore the potential dangers and benefits of a plastic self during what was traditionally conceptualized as a period of identity solidification. These papers all focus on consumer research that is in the interest of consumers.

The likely audience for this session should include researchers interested in the substantive areas of adolescence and social issues. People who are interested in theories of risk, identity formation, and socialization will also find this session relevant. Marvin Goldberg has studied youths for decades and is one of the most well respected experts. He will be the discussant for this session. However, rather than playing the traditional discussant's role, he will offer advice on

the most fertile areas in which to do research for anyone considering work in this area.

"Who Thinks They Know More—But Actually Knows Less? Adolescent Confidence in their HIV/AIDS and General Knowledge"

Andrew M. Parker, Baruch Fischhoff, and Wändi Bruine de Bruin

Decisions regarding health-related behaviors are among the most important ones we make in our lives. Decisions about health checkups, sexual behavior, exercise, and diet affect our future health and well-being. In order to act effectively on their beliefs, individuals need to know how far to trust them. Undue confidence (i.e., thinking they know more than they do) can lead to capricious actions, failure to seek missing information, and inadequate sensitivity to signs that choices were wrong. Inadequate confidence (i.e., thinking that they know less than they do) can lead to unwarranted paralysis, needless worry, procrastination, and reliance on others. One group whose health-related decisions raise particular concern is adolescents, whose growing emancipation gives them the power to make choices that can dramatically affect their current and future well-being. The appropriateness of their confidence in their health-related beliefs is the subject of this paper. In it, we ask how much do teens know, and how aware are they of the extent of their knowledge? We contrast teens with high and low levels of self-reported risk behaviors, as well as parents of the low-risk teens.

One hundred and eleven teens (median age 16, 59% female) were recruited from community organizations in a large urban area, identified as having relatively high- or low-risk participants. Data were also collected from one parent for each of 38 of the low-risk teens (median age 42, 76% female). Teen respondents from the two populations differed markedly in their prevalence of self-reported risky behavior, for themselves and their peers, regarding sex, alcohol, smoking, and drugs. Respondents answered 100 true/false questions regarding HIV/AIDS and 30 questions regarding general knowledge. For each item, respondents then judged the probability that they had selected the correct answer (on a 50%-100% scale), as a reflection of confidence in their answer. Design of the HIV/AIDS knowledge test drew on mental-models research, designed to select questions in an ecologically valid way, focusing on key concepts, and formulated in terms recognizable to lay people (Fischhoff et al. 1998; Morgan et al. 2001). Demographics and reading comprehension (as measured by the Nelson-Denny Verbal Comprehension Test) were also measured.

Teen respondents were assigned individual risk-index scores, determined by their reported behavior, as well as peer social norms, as evident in the self-reports of the participants recruited through the same community organization. Specifically, the risk level of a community was determined by the self-reports of all respondents at that location. A median split across locations was used to label locations as high or low risk. By a variety of measures, the high-risk teens' performance was considerably poorer, even on a subset of HIV/AIDS items related to drug and sex risks, domains where they had much greater experience. In particular, the high-risk teens knew less, but were more confident than the low-risk teens. Additional analyses suggested that teens in both groups could reflect their

knowledge in their confidence judgments, giving higher probabilities with correct items. This meta-cognitive ability (to know what one knows) was equivalent to that of parents. However, the high-risk teens showed dramatically greater overconfidence (i.e., confidence judgments were high relative to percent correct).

Confidence showed signs of being socially influenced. Although parents-teen pairs' actual levels of knowledge were unrelated, their confidence judgments were highly correlated. Furthermore, the risk index, which reflects the reported risk behavior of teens and their peers, predicted the appropriateness of teens' confidence much more for the HIV/AIDS questions than for the general-knowledge questions. Regression analyses, predicting confidence and accuracy with risk status, literacy, and gender, showed that accuracy was most strongly predicted by literacy, whereas confidence was more strongly predicted by risk status, as was overconfidence (and calibration).

We found that teens from locations with higher amounts of sexual activity and drug use (tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine) were much more overconfident than were teens from less risky environments—reporting higher confidence, even while exhibiting lower knowledge. To the extent that such overestimation of their knowledge affects information search, vigilance, and rash action, it could increase the chances of ill-considered behaviors. In addition, confidence is related to social influences, such as peer risky behavior and parental confidence, while accuracy (i.e., percent correct) is not. If confidence is socially constructed, as supported by the parent-teen correlations and differences across the social group-based risk index, then effective interventions may require group-based interventions, such as social skills training programs tailored to teens of different backgrounds (DiClemente 1990; Downs et al. 2004). Speculatively, one secret to the success of such programs is creating a shared sense of the limits to teens' knowledge of risks, even where they have direct experience.

“At Risk or Out Front? Understanding the Women of the Future”

Linda M. Scott

The starting point for this presentation emerges from Scott's recently-published history, *Fresh Lipstick: Redressing Fashion and Feminism*. This book documents a 150-year period in which dress, sex, recreation, and feminism have been contested among various subgroups of American women. One of the key points of struggle, consistently, is the generational conflict between the “mothers” and the “daughters” of an era about respectable dress and chaste behavior. Scott argues that this persistent conflict is not only a function of normal identity development, but is also directly attributable to a long-term trend in American history. With each successive generation, American women have shed more of the restrictions that attend gender. Since patriarchal order is built on identifiable “cornerstones,” such as sex, kinship, work, warfare, spirituality, and consumption, it's predictable that this trajectory in gender relations would periodically result in “shocking” behavior, especially in terms of sexuality, dress, and recreational consumption.

Interestingly, there also appears to be a pattern in which those generations who most shock the “establishment” in their youth are also those who make the most significant and lasting gender breakthroughs. One example is the New Girls of the Jazz Age, whose penchant for “necking,” alcohol, cigarettes, jazz, and the movies shocked their parents easily as much as today's girls drugs, rap, porn, Internet, and “friends with benefits” dismay current observers. In their teen years, the “flappers” were dismissed as shallow, sinful, and dissipated. Yet they became the young mothers

of the Depression and the home front workers of the war years—the cohort Tom Brokaw called “the Greatest Generation.” Clearly, the vagaries of their youth were no index to what their ultimate historical contribution would be.

Similarly, the “let it all hang out/if it feels good do it” generation of the 1960s challenged gender restrictions, not only by ushering in the “sexual revolution” but also by their theatrical and often “gender-bending” modes of dress. In the arena of consumption and recreation, too, we see the hallmarks of rebellion: from marijuana brownies to rock concerts, the Baby Boomer girls were just as outrageous as the flappers before them and the generation that now follows. And, though their parents despaired of their demise through the years of their youth, these women ultimately contributed more to the equal rights of women than any previous generation, chalking up a staggering number of “firsts” and pushing back boundaries on a range of fronts from work to kinship to church.

Today's young women are the daughters of that historic cohort. They are the first generation born after the “Second Wave” (the name usually given the women's movement of the 1970s). They are the first children generally raised by women who worked (though the majority of American women, contrary to popular belief, have always worked, what is significant about the shifts of recent years is the huge increase in the percentage of married women and, especially, mothers who work). They are also the first generation of teen-agers to be reared in the relatively more relaxed environment created by the very “sexual revolution” their own mothers instigated.

When we look today at those “cornerstones” that mark the gender structure, we can see the cracks wrought by thirty years of rapid change—and the many ambiguities of gender that have resulted. Marriage, motherhood, and the family are radically different than they were a generation ago. Women are in combat and become ministers. Females head corporations and smoke cigars. The bugaboo of the last generation—premarital sex—remains only for the young (in the form of the “abstinence” campaign). Given all this, we might expect the morals, norms, and dreams of the next generation to differ enough from their parents to shock the most liberal among them. And, indeed, that is exactly what we're seeing.

Scott's current research project picks up where *Fresh Lipstick* left off—with the current generation. She has interviewed, so far, 60+ young women between 8 and 23 about marriage, motherhood, sex, and careers, as well as media influences, consumption habits (especially pornography), and spirituality. Her findings are beginning to emerge in a picture very different from the hand-wringing consternation typical of pundits and parents. Instead, she argues that the behavior observable in today's young women is a continuation of two hundred years of history: they continue the efforts of their mothers and grandmothers, as well as generations before them, to break down the barriers of gender across a number of fronts—and they are shocking the socks off the older generation in the best tradition of American girlhood. Unlike so many who have berated the present generation of girls as slutty, shallow, and stupid, she finds them respectful, thoughtful, ambitious, and creative—an offer of hope for the future.

“The Cyborg Teen: Identity Play and Deception on the Internet”

Laurel Anderson and Julie L. Ozanne

Adolescence is widely recognized as an important period during which far ranging changes take place, such as the formation of identity and gender roles (Arnett 1995). Despite the significant changes that are occurring, adolescence is a time when the family's influence on socialization diminishes and the role of media in-

creases (Larson and Richards 1994). Among teenagers, the force of media is strong and growing. A recent study by the Kaiser Foundation (2005) found that by multi-tasking with different media children and teens cram 8 _ hours of media viewing into 6 _ hours each day. Among teens, Internet use was 18 hours per week, more than TV viewing time (Born to be Wired 2003). The relatively recent influence of the Internet is poorly understood and potentially more influential. In the case of the Internet, this media socialization often goes on behind the backs and over the heads of many parents who often have less expertise than their offspring and find the new "net lingo" unintelligible (e.g., PIMP—peeing in my pants). Teenagers have greater access and control over this media and are using it as an important source of self-socialization. Whether this self-socialization is good or bad is largely an empirical issue.

In this study, 150 thirteen and fourteen year olds articulated their relationship to the computer by developing metaphors and creating collages. These data were interpretively analyzed for themes (Thompson 1997). The findings support that the teens used their computer to create and explore multiple identities. For most of the teens, these different cyber identities spanning school, friends, and family cohered and were connected to their real lives away from the computer. The computer was an external "brain" that facilitated schoolwork; it was a "fraternity house" where they could engage old and new friends and stay current on gossip and fads; and it was a "carnival" full of bright lights, music, and fun. The computer was largely a positive influence, except within the family, where "WW III" raged and battles erupted over use and access.

These teens were too young to drive, but their computers were like their driver's license to go anywhere, with "no speed limits" posted, and no need to "borrow the keys!" For the most part, the teenagers perceived the computer to be a safe, non-evaluative setting in which no one "tells me its bad" and the computer "never complains." While they often traveled to inspiring destinations (e.g., the speech of Martin Luther King Jr. and the London Museum), dangers and opportunities existed.

The computer provided a unique social opportunity for teens to explore *publicly* private aspects of identity. Some teens complained about privacy within the family and longed for a computer in their own room where they would have their "friend and keeper of secrets." But for many of the teens the anonymity of the computer made it an ideal place to explore alternative identities and this exploration was liberating. As one youth said: "The Internet taught me that I can be anyone on the Internet not my old boring self."

The teens were generally unreflective about the ramifications of exploring cyber identities far removed from their real lives. A few teens stressed the potential dangers in this identity play. The teens used metaphors and images of "make up" and "masks" to capture the computer's potential complicity in more negative aspects of this identity play, such as cyber deception. In a few cases, teens lost their sense of time and space; they spent "hours staring at the computer as if it were a god." Cyber reality was a different reality: they likened it to a reality that was apart from normal life. "You can get swept up in the computer, just as if you got lost." The most ominous metaphors used by some of the teens involved the computer as an addictive drug. While on this drug, judgment may be poor and they travel to unsafe destination and engage in risky behavior.

The hazard of sexual predators on the Internet is well publicized. We ponder less about teens being the architect of new cyber identities and realities. What happens when teens explore an identity that cannot be integrated with their real identities? What occurs when a profound gap exists between their cyber and real identities (Turkle 1995)? These social fledglings are evolving new norms for

conduct. How do they develop and negotiate these norms and are cyber norms transferred back to real life? What traditionally private aspects of identity do we see presented in these anonymous but public forums? Do the cyber identities help them work out problem in real life and when do the cyber identities become problematic? To delve more deeply into these questions, we are currently analyzing data from a website of teenagers web blogs (cyber diaries) and will use these results to address these questions.

(References available upon request.)

Emancipation Through Modernist Pursuits: The Discipline of Running

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"It's the art of taking more out of yourself than you've got"
(Roger Bannister).

In the early 1950s, English-born runner Roger Bannister set out to run a mile in under four minutes. This unprecedented feat was thought by many to be physiologically impossible. Nonetheless, on a windy day in 1954, Bannister crossed the line in 3:59.4. Two months later, Australian John Landy surpassed Bannister's record. At the time, commentators noted that in breaking the four-minute mark, Bannister not only broke a physical record but also burst through the psychological barrier surrounding the mystique of the four-minute mile. The interactions between the body and mind of distance runners (referred to solely as runners in this article) form the research site for this study. In particular, the manner in which runners utilize their bodies and the precision of the sport of running to achieve psychological emancipation is presented. This expands the current perceptions of emancipation as evidenced in marketing and consumer behavior literature.

The concept of emancipation is presented extensively in a myriad of academic areas. Each discipline removes the concept from its original theological or philosophical underpinnings and applies it to discipline-specific contexts. Consumer behavior and marketing researchers have examined emancipation from perspectives such as branding techniques (Holt 2002), postmodern ideals (Firat and Venkatash 1995), and consumer resistance (Geisler and Pohlmann 2003). This research typically presents emancipation as the disavowment of modernist tendencies. That is, emancipation is viewed as stemming from the removal of modernist constraints like competition, achievement, measurement, and progress that enslave individuals in their everyday lives. While this view is both enriching and informative, other manifestations of emancipation are also relevant to consumer research. This study focuses on the running subculture and presents a view of emancipation that, rather than opposing modernist elements, embraces them.

This paper outlines the key elements of the conceptualization of emancipation across academic literature, followed by a brief discussion of the methodology employed in the study and a discussion of findings related to a re-conceptualization of emancipation. It concludes with a discussion of how these findings expand upon and benefit marketing and consumer behavior researchers and proposes avenues for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review briefly outlines the philosophical views of emancipation. This is followed by a discussion of how emancipation is presented in consumer behavior literature.

Perspectives on Emancipation:

Emancipation is defined as the process of being set free from constraints—deliverance from physical, intellectual, moral or spiritual fetters. Consistent with this definition, Alvesson and Willmott (1992), critical theorists, provide a conceptual synthesis of the theoretical underpinnings of emancipation: "Emancipation describes the process through which individuals and groups become freed from repressive social and ideological conditions, in particular those that place socially unnecessary restrictions upon the development and clarification of the meaning of human need and expansion of autonomy in personal and social life" (432). This definition states the premise of emancipation, however, the process through which emancipation occurs and the nature of the shackles from which one is to escape is hotly debated.

Implicit in the preceding definition of emancipation is freedom from constraints. Originally, emancipation referred to freedom from constraints of slavery and religious persecution. Marxist emancipation entails overcoming the capitalist ethos and is fully realized "with the suppression of the capitalist mode of production" and the removal of obstacles imposed by the conditions of wage labor (Lukes 1983; McGowan 1991). Since Marx, however, the focus has been on how modern society and consumer society constrain individual autonomy and freedom.

Critical theorists, represented by scholars such as Horkheimer, Habermas, and other representatives from the Frankfurt School, in an attempt to explain inadequacies in Marxist emancipation, express an alternate view of emancipation. They argue that emancipation lies in escaping the false consciousness imposed by society through self-knowledge and understanding of constraints inhibiting personal freedoms (Agger 1991; Fay 1987; Kilbourne 1987). One such constraint, consistent with the views of Marx, is wage labor enterprises, encompassing such practices as Fredrick Taylor's scientific management. Critical Theory tends to "dismiss modern management theory as an expression of technocratic thinking that seeks to manipulate human potential and desire in order to bolster a falsely naturalized status quo" (Alvesson and Willmott 1992, 436).

The arguments surrounding emancipation are complex and heterogeneous, but in simplified form, the focus of many of these arguments is that modernist pursuits focused on competition, achievement, measurement, and progress entrap and enslave individuals, resulting in a feeling of being 'slaves to the clock and performance.' Hence, these modernist pursuits are those from which individuals are thought to seek emancipation.

Emancipation in Consumer Theory and Research:

In the context of consumer research, emancipation has taken a particular focus on freedom from the totalizing constraints of the marketplace. Theory and research has taken to addressing three issues relating to consumer emancipation. The first question is whether and under what conditions consumers can be emancipated. In general, research suggests that consumers can only be emancipated by escaping the totalizing logic of the marketplace—a logic that is bound with the modernist pursuits described above. For example, Firat and Venkatesh (1995) note that even modernist views of emancipation serve to further ensnare individuals in an unemancipated existence. These theorists, building upon the work of Murray and Ozanne (1991), believe that emancipation occurs when consumers place themselves outside of the totalizing logic of the marketplace. Further, Firat and Dholakia (1998) advocate "theatres of consumption" as emancipatory spaces where consumers can escape the marketplace.

Contrary to the aforementioned orientation, some argue that an escape from the marketplace is illusory and impossible, and that even those attempting escape are caught up in the pursuit of brands. Holt (2002), utilizing an extended case method approach to examining the experiences of individual consumers, finds inconsistencies between his analysis and the ideas set forth by Murray and Ozanne (1991) and Firat and Venkatesh (1995). Specifically, he finds that even those individuals seeking to escape the totalizing logic of the marketplace end up making meanings with brands such that even these consumers further the traditional marketplace rather than being emancipated from it.

Still other researchers argue that escape from the marketplace is temporary and spatially constrained. Kozinets (2002) is an excellent example of research on consumer emancipation that

highlights the abandonment of modernist pursuits as a vehicle for experiencing temporary emancipation. In his ethnography of the Burning Man Festival, Kozinets describes a process in which consumers engage in a hyperreal temporally constrained event to achieve emancipation. He posits that by removing the totalizing elements of the marketplace and creating an environment that is free of modern constraints, consumers are able to free themselves from the totalizing logic of the marketplace. In this context, emancipation is set up as oppositional to daily life, the marketplace, and the rules of time, measurement, progress, and achievement.

In a similar vein as Kozinets (2002), Geisler and Pohlmann (2003) look at emancipation in terms of opposition in a dichotomous power relationship. They present the notion of a social form of emancipation. This social form of emancipation “is engaged in a permanent process of ensuring a social distinction between itself and its environment” (94). Central to their thesis is that consumers place themselves in direct opposition to mainstream corporate society and, through this, achieve emancipation from the marketplace.

The second inquiry, stemming from the presentations of emancipation described in the preceding section, asks whether other types and variants of consumer emancipation are possible. Specifically, researchers have questioned the underlying assumptions of some conceptualizations of consumer emancipation—resulting in the question, “if not this, what?” Murray and Ozanne (1991) provided a crucial impetus for debate related to consumer emancipation. For example, Hetrick and Lozada (1994) critique the work of Murray and Ozanne (1991) outlining discrepancies in the critical approach utilized in the original analysis. They argue that, in the Murray and Ozanne (1991) conceptualization, the purpose of critical analysis is not directed to the purpose of freeing individuals from a false consciousness to enable the emancipatory potential that flows from this.

Additional critique of conceptualizations of emancipation is presented in Thompson (2004). The author, making specific reference to Holt (2002), Kozinets (2002) and Firat and Venkatesh (1995) note that in their attempts to describe emancipation as freeing from modernist elements, they create a dichotomy between ‘within’ and ‘outside’ the marketplace: a dichotomy which is very ‘modern’ in orientation thereby negating elements of their ‘postmodern’ analysis of emancipation.

These critiques bring to light the third question entrusted to consumer researchers: whether or not consumers’ feelings of emancipation are always oppositional to daily life, the marketplace, and modernist pursuits. The purpose of this paper is to focus on a venue where modernist pursuits are valued in order to examine where and how opportunities for emancipation exist, thus exploring this third question.

In this paper, I take a critical approach to the notion of emancipation in an attempt to uncover new, previously underrepresented, processes through which emancipation can occur. While this does not fall into the category of a true ‘critical research project’ as I do not attempt to provide any form of emancipation for my audience (Handelman 1999), I do propose an expanded view of emancipation that is counter to traditional thinking. This view combines philosophical underpinnings and allows consumer narratives and experiences to drive the interpretative findings (Hirschman 1986).

METHODOLOGY

An existential-phenomenological analysis (Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989) of the distance running subculture is used to uncover the experiences and motivations of runners. Semi-structured depth interviews were conducted with twelve distance

runners with various levels of running involvement. Purposive sampling and snowballing techniques were used to recruit participants from the local running community, university running associations, and personal contacts. The sample was limited to those individuals who have competed in at least one race.

The final sample for this study consisted of five elite runners, four non-elite runners, two transitional runners, and one young elite runner. Elite runners, representing hard-core members of the subculture, are differentiated from other runners as running is the dominant aspect of their lifestyle. Three of the five elite runners were males (aged 23, 31, 40) and two were female (aged 22, 29). Non-elite runners are those who are actively involved with running, but consider it to be a non-dominant part of their lifestyle. Four non-elite runners were interviewed (two males aged 33 and 42 and two females aged 23 and 27). Transitional runners are those individuals who were formally elite runners but, for various reasons (usually injury related), are no longer as involved in running and now identify themselves as non-elite. Two male transitional runners (aged 22 and 24) were interviewed. Finally, one young elite runner (male aged 11) was interviewed. Runners were categorized into the aforementioned levels using self-report descriptions (Donnelly 1981) that were verified through screening questions asked during the interviews. The appendix provides a brief description of the interviewed participants.

The interviews were conducted over a period of three months (May-July 2004), with an average interview time of 1.5 hours for elite runners and one hour for non-elite runners. The difference in interview length for elite and non-elite runners is attributed to the dominant nature of running in the lifestyle of elite runners and the resulting multiplicity of meanings associated with running for these individuals. Naturally, more time was required to uncover the depth of these meanings. The interviews resulted in a total of 128 single spaced pages of interview data. Interview data was analyzed using a ‘back and forth’ reading process to uncover emerging themes and patterns both within subjects (idiographic analysis) and between subjects (nomothetic analysis). A draft of the analysis was given to participants to ensure that their interviews were appropriately interpreted. All of the participants were satisfied with the interpretations.

FINDINGS

The analysis of the interviews revealed several interesting aspects of the running subculture and the mentality of runners. Specifically, a powerful emergent theme relating to the core values of the running subculture is a seemingly paradoxical phenomena experienced by subculture members in that they achieve emancipation through the self-induced imposition of the modernist constraints of measured distance and time. Consider this quote from Bryan (Elite M 40):

“I approach it as sport and I think that has its own appeal. Even just chasing time and all that, subjecting yourself to the discipline of the clock and measuring the success in those terms. I think that has its own appeals and I think the whole faith and religion and spirituality aspect of [running] appeals more to people who do it as sort of a lifestyle kind of thing. And also, another one of the ways in which the running habit is dismissed is that it’s sort of like we’re addicted to it or something like that, or it’s a substitute for something or another. And I don’t like thinking of it as a substitute for something: either a substitute for religion or drugs or alcohol. I like to think it has its own appeals with the discipline of the watch, and distance, and intervals and just all those measurement elements of it that actually give it its appeal. And not in

a way that's sort of enslaving. The kind of the thing that you use to measure how well you're doing, how much better you're getting, for its own sake."

As Bryan describes the appeal of running, it becomes clear that runners achieve a kind of secular emancipation through the imposition of modernist elements that are traditionally thought to be enslaving. The two key elements of this process, modernist pursuits and emancipation, will be discussed separately and then in combination below.

Modernist Pursuits:

The preceding quote from Bryan describes the modernist aspect of the emancipation process and the running subculture. Runners derive a sense of fulfillment and pleasure from measurable success. The types of measures most frequently noted by runners as salient to them are time and distance. This creates an almost Frederick Taylor-like addiction to the 'discipline of the clock.' This 'addiction,' however, is not enslaving or negative as it contributes significantly to the emancipatory appeal of running.

The enjoyment of these modernist elements of running takes on several manifestations. First, the objectivity of time and distance is appealing to runners. Tyler (Elite M 31) states: "I like the preciseness of it. You have a set distance. I have a set time and go out and run another 1500 meters and if you run a couple of seconds more, you see that." The objectivity of these kinds of measurements is closely tied to the second manifestation of modernist characteristics: the desire to continuously improve, achieve, and progress. Both elite and non-elite runners express these sentiments. Lyndsay (Elite F 22) captured this when she said, "I think part of it is that it's just the challenge of it. Every time you run a certain time you want to go faster... 'Oh I ran that but I can go faster' so...and you keep training." All of the runners, when talking about their running goals, expressed a desire to perform better in some measurable way. For example, Jessica (Non-elite F 23) talks about how she would like to better her marathon time and qualify for the Boston Marathon and Aaron (Non-elite M 42) states, "My goal as far as pace goes is to do a sub five minute kilometer."

The third manifestation of the modernist focus on measurable performance is the ability to easily see and measure improvement, achievements, and progress. Runners find the objectivity and clarity of measured performance rewarding as it shows that the training efforts are worthwhile. Dylan (Elite M 23) says: "In running its clear how you're progressing. If you run everyday you know you're going to get better. It's without question. You're going to get better. It's just simple." Runners are propelled by the ability to clearly see improvement in themselves.

The ultimate appeal of the objectivity of running is that, in its purest form, it is free of ambiguity. With objective measurement of performance, it is impossible to question how well a person is doing. Furthermore, it allows an individual to receive recognition and credit for his or her performances. This is not something that is always accomplished in other sports, as some individuals may not feel comfortable talking about how well they performed. This clarity and lack of ambiguity is discussed by Dylan (Elite M 23):

"Success meant a lot and I started to realize how good I was. And then I started to realize how fast I could run. And going fast, and blazing, that's what I love. So realizing that I could do a 400m interval workout in 53 seconds. At the end of a workout, wow, that I loved. And the intensity of being on the track and the pressure. There's no hiding. There's nowhere to hide. That's what I love about track."

Thus, recognized (public and private) achievement, is an important element of running.

Emancipation:

The feeling of freedom and emancipation truly enriches those who run. Maxine (Elite F 29) articulates this freedom:

"I like it when you can just go out and run and your thoughts are free and you feel really good afterwards and at the time it's just time set apart for yourself—you're not going to do anything else for this hour. Everything else is so hectic and busy, once you fit it in and you're out there, you're relaxed and calm."

Maxine talks about the freedom that occurs when she is emancipated from a hectic, busy lifestyle. This is not uncommon among the participants in this study. Kyle (Elite M 11), the youngest member of this sample, best shows the intrinsic value of this to the running subculture as he (arguably) has the fewest demands made on his time. He says, "I usually run by myself. It's good: some time to be alone. To think about things." Sonya (Non Elite F 27) takes a somewhat different approach to the escape elements of running. She does not view it as a time to think, but more as a time to not think:

"When you're running that's the only thing you're thinking about. You're not thinking about your groceries or what you're going to do tomorrow or your work...you're just thinking about the next two strides. I think that's another reason why running appeals to me—it's like meditation because I find my mind going blank and I just have peace and I'm just running."

In addition to being able to free one's mind, Bryan (Elite M 40) discusses another element of the emancipation experienced by runners that relates to modernist measures. Bryan talks of how running is an element of life that can be controlled, whereas most elements cannot: "In a world where it's difficult to find a sense of control and mastery. In a world like that, it's a place to feel like there's at least one thing in your life that you can control and you can actually improve yourself." Thus, runners articulate a distinct feeling of emancipation from their everyday lives resulting from the running activity.

Emancipation Through Modernist Pursuits:

Through reliance on measurable performance and 'enslavement' to the clock, runners are able to achieve emancipation derived from self-actualization. The discipline of the clock is integral to emancipation for runners as it creates a concrete and objective measurement of performance. The constant measurement of distance and time against the performances of an individual's body results in a measurable mastery over oneself. This is accompanied by a sense of freedom (and control) from the constraints of everyday life.

The importance of the emancipatory feeling experienced by runners is captured in the manner in which runners describe the running emancipation. One way in which this is expressed is in comparisons to running versus other sports. Bryan (Elite M 40), in an attempt to explain why running is special when compared to other sports, states:

"It's partly physical, partly emotional, and partly psychological...it's all three of those things. People will stick at it to get back to that moment [where they feel a perfect sense

of self-mastery] just one more time in their life. I've seen it over and over again. People go through all kinds of injuries, break up with spouses, raising children. Everything. They will fight through all that stuff just to get back to that one moment."

It is "that moment" of ultimate emancipation that serves as the driving force behind runners. As Geoff (Transition M 22) states: "Its just sort of a high you get when you finish a really tough workout or when you've run a new [personal record]. It's just a good feeling it keeps you going back." The feelings that Geoff and Bryan refer to are those resulting from being emancipated through modernist pursuits, the importance of which is articulated by Dylan (Elite M 23):

"Runners will miss events. If people are partying, they go to a party late because they have to run. Or they'll do whatever they have to do to run on a day where they're supposed to run and if they've already done other exercise, it's not an excuse not to run. They're not like, 'oh I've already exercised today I don't have to run.' So when I was a runner, I could play two hockey games and still have to run. I could be playing ultimate frisbee, or doing two other events and I would still have to run, because nothing could replace it. That's exactly it, nothing can replace it."

An additional element of the runner emancipation is the evangelical tendencies of runners to help others achieve emancipation through modernist pursuits. Overall, what emerged from the interviews is a sense of cooperation and respect across all levels of the running subculture with elite members expressing a desire to share their knowledge and love of the sport with those who have not yet experienced emancipation through running. The emancipatory nature of running, therefore, includes an almost evangelical desire to help others achieve this kind of freedom.

Bryan (Elite M 40): "Because my own performances, I've trained so hard for so long, I realize that I'm just, my personal bests are so fast now that I'm going to have difficulty and I'm never actually going to beat some personal bests, but I can work with people who can achieve personal bests. So I enjoy that process. The process of preparing someone to run faster, do something that they've never done before. So it's a bit of a way of keeping in touch with that side of the sport. And also, I really get a kick out of watching people who don't think they ever had any ability or talent, and in some cases didn't think they had any athletic ability at all, actually discover running and do quite well and start winning...So I guess yeah, just passing on the torch to other people and prophesizing about the benefits [of running] and stuff like that [is what I want to continue doing with running in the future]."

To summarize the theme of emancipation through modernist pursuits, the core characteristic of the running subculture is that members seek emancipation and freedom from everyday life. This is achieved through a commitment to modernist concepts of objective measurement, time, distance, and achievement.

DISCUSSION

Emancipation through modernist pursuits is extremely interesting as it combines both modern and non-modern mentalities. The notion of embracing modernist elements to achieve emancipation contradicts traditional thoughts on emancipation. Emancipation is typically thought to be something that occurs when modernist principles of time and control are abandoned so that individuals can

take a more enlightened and liberated view of their world and their lives. In the case of runners, however, they abandon their 'work clock' for the 'running watch.' The running watch is a time keeper that they can control and turn off whenever they choose, but this choice is rarely made. The reason for the perpetual power of the running watch: emancipation. In the case of the running subculture, the mechanism through which emancipation occurs contradicts traditional thinking. Runners do not escape modernist elements; they choose to constrain themselves with specific modernist elements (competition, achievement, measurement, and progress) so that they can escape the constraints of everyday life. These individuals tradeoff different forms of modernity so that they can better control the constraints of their lives: it is empowering to enslave oneself but demoralizing to be enslaved by others. Runners are emancipated through their choice of enslavement, that they control, and that cannot be corrupted by outside forces. An enslavement that does not feel enslaving.

This research serves to enhance the current perceptions of how individuals can achieve emancipation. Generally speaking, consumer researchers are concerned with how consumers can emancipate themselves from the marketplace. While this is most certainly an important element of emancipation, the singular focus on one kind of emancipation has resulted in a view that is not holistic and does not fully appreciate the nuances of individuals and emancipation. Thus, an alternate view of emancipation is revealed through this examination of achieved emancipation that occurs within a less 'marketplace' (or anti-marketplace) sphere of consumption.

This alternative view presents an emancipation that is not temporally bound but instead takes place within the confines of everyday life. Furthermore, unlike many forms of consumer emancipation that are conceptualized as resistant to dominant entities, this emancipation does not rely on a dichotomized power relationship and bridges the tensions of modernist thinking contradicting emancipatory thought espoused by Thompson (2004). This form of emancipation depends upon individual autonomy in taking control of emancipation. This emancipatory control relies upon the imposition of modernist constraints to achieve liberation.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to present an alternative and complementary view of emancipation to enrich the discourses of consumer researchers. Motivated by the singular and somewhat contested views of emancipation in consumer literature, I undertook an existential-phenomenological analysis of the distance running subculture. In doing so, I discovered that these runners achieve emancipation through the imposition of modernist pursuits and an exploitation of these modernist elements to conform to the will of the runner.

The process through which runners achieve emancipation diverges from the mechanisms outlined in previous work in that it is not temporally constrained, it takes place within the confines of ordinary life, it is not opposed to a dominate power force, and, most interesting, it occurs through a systematic imposition (not removal) of constraints characteristic of the modern ethos: time, distance, and performance.

It is my hope that this research will stimulate interest in the various and abundant ways that individuals can achieve emancipation. Furthermore, I urge researchers to seek out this understanding in common areas of life as opposed to only exceptional life experiences. Researchers should also seek to uncover the complexities of how emancipatory activities fit into and interact with everyday life. The implications of this type of research are far reaching as it will bring to light fundamental functionalities and motivations of consumers functioning within society, hopefully

APPENDIX
PARTICIPANT SUMMARY

Tyler	Male, Aged 31; Elite; Running for 20 years. Tyler is a highly competitive runner. He started running and competing when he was in grade six. After high school he took two years off, but has since returned, running 40-80 miles ¹ per week.
Bryan	Male, Aged 40; Elite; Running for 29 years. Bryan competes at the masters level. He started running when he was 11 years old and competing year round at 16. He is one of the top runners in the country, competes nationally and internationally, and coaches highly competitive runners. He runs 70-95 miles per week.
Dylan	Male, Aged 23; Elite; Running for 12 years. Dylan was an elite level runner who experienced a career ending injury at age 20. He started running in grade two and competed nationally and internationally as one of the top junior runners in the country until the end of his first year in university, running 35-60 miles per week.
Lyndsay	Female, Aged 22; Elite; Running for 8 years. Lyndsay started running when she entered high school at the age of 14. She is one of the top university runners in the country and the world. She runs approximately 50-60 miles per week.
Maxine	Female, Aged 29; Elite; Running for 15 years. Maxine started running in elementary school and moved on to compete seriously in high school, university, and now independently. She currently competes in marathons and is one of the best marathon runners in the country. She runs 60-80 miles per week.
Geoff	Male, Aged 22; Transition; Running for 9 years. Geoff started running when he was in grade eight. He competed throughout high school and for three years at university, after which he suffered an injury that caused him to stop competing. He now competes as a non-elite. He runs 50 minutes a day, five days a week.
Wayne	Male, Aged 24; Transition; Running for 11 years. Wayne started running in grade three and competed seriously throughout high school and his first year of university when he suffered a serious injury. He has recently started running again, but only recreationally. He currently runs about 30 km a week.
Aaron	Male, Aged 42; Non-elite; Running for 20 years. Aaron started running in his early twenties. In recent years he has started taking it more seriously and regularly competes in local road races. He currently runs approximately 20 km per week.
Christopher	Male, Aged 33; Non-elite, Running for 1.5 years. Christopher started running 1.5 years ago with a group of people from work. He recently competed in his first race (10km) and is training for a half marathon. He runs 30-35 km per week.
Jessica	Female, Aged 23; Non-elite; Running for 4 years. Jessica used to compete in triathlons but found it to be logistically difficult so she switched to only running. She has competed in five marathons. She runs between 60-70 km per week.
Sonya	Female, 27; Non-Elite; Running for 1 year. Sonya has been running for 1 year. She started running with a group from work and has competed in one race (10km) and is training for a half-marathon. She runs between 15-21 km per week.
Kyle	Male, 11; Young Elite; Running for 4 years. Kyle started running when he was in grade three. He runs with his school and trains with an independent track club. He competes in both cross-country and track, and is currently the county champion in the 1500m. He runs for approximately 20-30 min everyday.

¹Participants differed in their use of miles versus kilometers. I present the units used by each participant.

leading to a more enriching experience for consumers and researchers alike.

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Brand-Personal Values Fit and Brand Meanings: Exploring the Role Individual Values Play in Ongoing Brand Loyalty in Extreme Sports Subcultures

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ABSTRACT

We examine whether value fit—the degree to which brands reflect core motivating values attracting individuals to join subcultures—is associated with brand loyalty. We also examine how the core value driving involvement in a sub-culture influences the way consumers respond to social pressures exerted on it namely increased commercialisation and mainstreaming. We identify freedom, belongingness, excellence and connection as core values driving involvement in a sub-culture. Results are based on 19-depth interviews of consumers in the surf, snowboarding and skate subcultures.

INTRODUCTION

The plethora of brands, brand communications and brand meanings that typify developed economies has resulted in a ‘culturally competent consumer’ (Holt 1997, 1998; Kates, 2002a). In contrast, there is mounting evidence that most brand strategies fall short when it comes to understanding consumer values or the broader cultural contexts that shape them. Academics and managers of some of the largest global brands (eg. IBM, Coca Cola) have called for a consumer-centric view of brand management, including a better understanding of consumer values and the socio-cultural contexts in which brands are consumed, and the application of this knowledge to brand building (Rust et al 2004, Kates 2004; Thompson 2004). However, despite explicit calls (eg. Thompson 2004) for a cross over from consumer research to brand management, this area has remained unexplored.

Studies have revealed a deep and at times unconscious connection that binds some buyers with the brands they favour or indeed may become fanatical about (Fournier 1998; Thompson 2004). Some consumers congregate around brands towards which they exhibit a socially motivated attachment, in what has been coined ‘brand communities’ (Brown, Kozinets and Sherry 2003; Muniz and O’Guinn, 2001; McAlexander, Schouten and Koenig, 2002), interpretive communities (Kates 2002a, 2002b), and/or consumption sub or micro-cultures (Celsi 1992; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Sirsi, Ward and Reigen 1996; Kozinets 1997). While related, some of these constructs are subtly distinct. According to Shouten and Alexander (1995) for example, a subculture of consumption, such as their Harley Davidson study group, is a “distinctive subgroup of society that self-select on the basis of a shared commitment to a particular product class, brand or consumption activity” (p 43). Brand communities, on the other hand, comprise “a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand” (Muniz and O’Guinn, 2001, p 412). More flexible and less codified than subcultures of consumption, brand communities are able to ‘negotiate’ the meaning of the brand(s) they admire as part of a process of social interaction. Furthermore, brand communities do not typically stand aside from (or against) society at large, as subcultures of consumption may do, but rather, evolve in its midst, allowing for more flexible boundaries between those members inside of it and those individuals outside.

Consumers in these groups or subcultures often respond to marketing communications about their loved/hated brands through

a ‘values lens’ (Holbrook 1999). For example, consumers of natural drug therapies became more attached to alternative therapies after scientific reports questioned their veracity, because of a value system that was both anti-science and anti-modernity (Thompson and Troester 2002).

However past research on brand communities has focused on shared community values and how they impact brand preference, and has tended to relegate differences in individual values to the background, despite the fact that these differences are likely to have a major impact on how members of the same subculture perceive the brands on offer (see for example, Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Kates 2002b).

The aim of the study is to tentatively explore a number of issues. First, that a core or predominant individual value can be identified that explains why consumers attach themselves to a subculture, and that this may be one of a number of different values held by individuals of the same subculture. Similar to Mick and Buhl’s (1992) life themes, or to what Fournier (1998) called central life theme, these core values are the fundamental motivators shaping individuals’ decisions in life, including which sports they may choose to engage in and which lifestyle they choose to lead. Second, we expect that consumers’ core values drive their brand choice, and influence their ongoing perceptions of the brand within the subculture. Third, we anticipate that the core value held by consumers, as well as their brand preference, will be impacted by two other key dynamics, namely whether they have close or loose ties to the subculture (i.e. whether they are at the core or the periphery of the subculture), and how they respond to pressures experienced by the subculture itself, such as increased commercialisation or ‘mainstreaming’.

METHODOLOGY

Given the exploratory and qualitative nature of our enquiry, interpretive interviews were judged to be the best way to capture the complexity of consumers’ personal values, embed these values within a sub-cultural context, and uncover the values behind consumption choices and reactions to brand-marketing communications (Kates 2002a, 2004; Strauss and Corbin 1998). We selected consumers involved in three sporting subcultures—surfing, skating and snowboarding. These sports have identifiable communities in Australia, and several Australian brands such as *Ripcurl* or *World* actively target these communities, and have expressed concerns about mainstreaming in recent years.

Consistent with theory building research and our discovery-driven purpose, our sampling technique sought to generalize to theory rather than be statistically representative. Therefore, a convenience sample was used with interviewees contacted through a market research agency. The agency was asked to provide interviewees from a diverse demographic background who stated they were actively involved in at least one of the aforementioned sporting activities. Importantly, these respondents represented varying levels of sub-cultural involvement, from periphery to core, as illustrated in Table 1. A total of 19 in depth individual interviews were conducted with consumers actively engaged in surfing and other extreme sports.

TABLE 1
Profile of Respondents

Name	Age	Gender	Occupation	Subculture	Status
Brandon	27	M	Public Servant	Skate	Core
Ryan	20	M	Student	Surf	Core
Mark	28	M	Customer Service & Artist	Skate; surf	Core
Marcio	27	M	Project Manager	Snow	Core
Sam	22	M	Snowboard Instructor	Skate; snow	Core
Anthony	24	M	Real Estate	Surf	Core
Christie	29	F	Account Executive	Surf	Core
Steve	21	M	Personal Trainer	Surf	Core
Joshua	20	M	Musician	Surf; snow	Core
Ashleigh	18	F	Student	Skate	Periphery
Jason	31	M	Police Officer	Surf	Periphery
Justin	22	M	Snowboard Instructor	Snow	Core
Wesley	14	M	Student	Snow	Periphery
Kieran	15	M	Student	Skate	Core
Kerry	26	F	Personal Assistant	Surf	Periphery
Hamish	28	M	Management	Surf	Core
Andrea	33	M	Personal Trainer	Surf	Periphery
James	19	M	Student	Surf	Periphery
Fiona	24	F	Student & Customer Service Agent	Surf	Periphery

The interviews were conducted by a trained assistant and supervised by two of the authors. To probe consumers' attachment to the sport and reasons for engaging in these activities, general questions were asked to allow respondents to tell their story in their own terms (McCracken 1988).

More direct questioning and floating prompts were also used to explore consumers' responses and issues of interest as they arose throughout the interview. Questions focused on specific activities of brands such as sponsoring events or high profile sportspeople within the sport, or on critical incidents relating to perceived breaches or reinforcement of the brand's values (cf: McCracken 1988). Paraphrasing was also used to clarify interviewees' responses, and to ensure the interviewers understood the consumer's response and allow for any follow up questions (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Interviews lasted one hour on average and were all audio-taped and then transcribed by an assistant.

Analysis occurred after each interview to allow the responses to influence subsequent interviews. After an initial careful reading of the transcripts, open coding took place whereby text from each interviewee was classified into emerging categories. This was followed by axial coding, whereby categories were related to sub-categories and categories were linked at the level of properties and dimensions, and then by selective coding for further integration and refinement of theory (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Dialectical tacking occurred throughout these two later stages whereby emerging concepts from the data were connected to, and enriched by, prior research (Spiggle 1994). As this analysis occurred independently, the authors met regularly to confirm interpretations and theory.

FINDINGS

We identified four focal values that attracted consumers to their sports, and then influenced their responses to brand activities and the commercialization of their respective sports (see Table 2). Our analysis revealed that, in most cases, consumers had one driving value in their choice of activity, even when they identified with other value motivators (that is, one typically took precedence over the other three).

Freedom was the most common value cited by all respondents and was discussed in ways similar to that identified by Arnould and Price (1993) in their investigation of white water rafting and by Schouten and McAlexander (1995) in their research on the Harley Davidson subculture. For our respondents, freedom related to being able to express one's creativity and individuality. There was also evidence of anti-establishment and getting free from the daily grind that is society, work, or school, and being a part of something not subject to the rules, processes (such as joining clubs) or structure of more mainstream and commercialised sports such as tennis.

Another value emerging recurrently from the data revolved around belongingness, and the sort of social bonding Turner (1977) labelled "Communitas" and which Celsi described as shared experiences or, as Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry (1989) put it, a "shared flow". The vast majority of respondents emphasised that while the practice of these activities were solitary pursuits, they were enjoyed most when enacted in the company of others, and that this resulted in desirable social outcomes, such as friendship, emulation, or simple story telling.

Despite the gregarious and social aspects of their sports, many of our respondents also appeared to relish the individual performance and challenge of their chosen activity, a value we have described as excellence, and which was also identified by Fournier (1998) as a key foundation for strong brand relationships.

The last major value related to a notion of connection and it captured feelings similar to what has been articulated in studies of topophilia (eg. Tuan, 1974). This included a strong sense of connection to a physical place (a geographic location, a beach, a particular resort, or mountain etc) and to others who were at one with place or had a long affiliation with it. It was also about the benefits of this connection, for example rejuvenation and self-renewal through communing with nature.

We identified differences in values depending on how involved in the sub-culture the consumers were. Consumers were classified as being core or peripheral members of a subculture: Core members were those actively engaged in an activity. In many cases these consumers often defined their identity around this activity and

TABLE 2
Values, definitions and text examples

Value	Definition	Text examples
Freedom	Not being bound by rules or procedures; escape from an ordered world	<p>“There is this kind of sense of freedom with surfing...” (Andrea WF33)</p> <p>“I don’t have to travel half way across the world just to go skateboarding” (Sam, WM22)</p> <p>“... free from the normal rushes of the world having time to think, having time out from your normal life...” (James WM19)</p>
Belongingness	Being part of a community; shared experiences; being part of something greater than oneself.	<p>“We’re all mates and we all do stuff together, so we all hand around together, wear the same clothes, are in the same sport... it’s good to fit in, just so you’re labelled as a surfer when you’re going out” (James WM19).</p> <p>“It’s good to be part of a tribe, part of a team... like most things in life, you’re better off doing them together aren’t you?” (Andrew)</p> <p>“It’s good to have 4 or 5 at least other people to go riding [snowboarding]... it builds up a god atmosphere within the group, so it makes it even more enjoyable” (Justin WM22)</p> <p>“We all get fall together, get up together, and encourage each other to keep going” (Joshua WM20).</p>
Excellence	The pursuit of continuous improvement in personal skill level and achievement	<p>“To be out there, trying new things, exploring the boundaries... to try a new surfing move or achieve some thing or just see yourself get better” (James WM19).</p> <p>“If you pull a trick, some of the tricks are really hard and it takes a lot of practice to actually work them... people get excited ... people cheer on someone who puts in a lot of efforts” (Mark WM28).</p>
Connection	An emotional, spiritual or experiential link with place, time, and / or nature.	<p>“Growing up at the beach and everyone did it, my brother surfed, all my family surfed so I got into it” (Hamish WM28)</p> <p>“You feel like you’re just part of a bigger pictures, being our in the ocean... it’s like your world stops and another starts” (Mark WM28).</p>

in the right season (summer for surf, winter for snowboarding) such activities took up 80 per cent of their time. These consumers usually identified more with freedom, excellence, or connection. Peripheral members fell into three groups: new members, previous members and image associates. New members often identified with belongingness because they were interested in becoming a recognised member of the sub-culture. As such, they stressed belonging to the tribe, or being part of something, as a core value (see Table 2) rather than more personal values. Previous members were those that had once partaken in the sport, but due to work or family commitments no longer engaged heavily (or at all) in the actual sporting activities. Again, these consumers stressed belongingness, but more out of a desire to retain some link to something positive in their past. Image associates were consumers that joined the sport largely because they liked the image associated with such activities. These consumers stressed belongingness, but this related more to an idealized image of what the sport stood for. These consumers rarely (if at all) engaged in the focal sporting activity.

Each type of sub-cultural member (core / periphery) also differed in their brand behaviour and attitude towards commercialisation and mainstreaming. This was driven by their focal value, and is explored in more detail in the next section.

Values and brands: how focal values drive brand choice and meaning

The values identified above also drove brand choice and reactions to commercial activity (including mainstreaming) per se

(see Table 3). Brand choice relates to preferred brands in relation to sub-cultural activities rather than brands per se (which were not examined).

Those who valued freedom used this value when selecting brands for sub-cultural activities. The key driver here was the rejection of brands that they saw as “selling out” to the commercial machine. For example:

“I think they’re a hype machine. I think they’ve done very good, making a lot of money. They do put on the contest and they make the Bell’s Beach and the Hawaiian thing, but those things are going to happen regardless of their major sponsorship. They’re just in there, plugging in their logo where they can. That’s the evolution of the sports world, though... I’m pretty sure Quiksilver is on the stock exchange, so we’re talking about people who don’t even surf now, investing in that company to make a profit. Everything changes-the company doesn’t become just about the community and working with the sport in terms of setting up the right environment for people to really grow out of that sport. It’s become more about how many people can we get sucked into, make it cool, make it fashionable.” (Mark WM28)

Mark’s position was representative of many surfers who engaged in the sport due to a desire for freedom. Those members who are openly sceptical of the establishment, including big business and mass marketing, view the recent mainstreaming of the

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sport very negatively. For members like Mark, the change in ownership structure has led him to reconsider a brand that played a major role in developing surfing in Australia. Now, he questions the brand's motives, and even its commitment to surfing events through sponsorship, dismissed as largely irrelevant. Such brands have also lost value for Mark because the desire to make money has led the brand to target consumers who do not surf, and therefore quality has also been reduced. Mark questions the quality of the brand in two ways. First, by identifying real decreases in the quality of the prints. Second, by questioning the motive behind such changes, stating that these brands have become more interested in exploiting populist images of surfing and focusing on fashion instead of the values associated with surfing. For example:

"Some of the latest fashion I've seen lately has been funny, because people obviously just got a heap of paint on their hands and have just smudged it and have worn that out to nightclubs and stuff and why not? It looked a bit messy and stuff, but it's kind of cool. It looks like they've been in a fight with food or something. Now everyone is wearing it and they've never touched a surfboard. In that way they've lost their elite market, which is something they should definitely try and hang onto, really."

As a result of this perceived 'selling out', Mark has ceased buying surf brands altogether, preferring instead to buy customised clothes made by a surfer friend. For example:

"I kind of look at Rip Curl and Quiksilver now and cringe, to know that—I think Quiksilver started up in Torquay or somewhere. To think that it's just gone from being a small shop to a multi-million dollar, a billion dollar industry probably. I don't really go into surf shops any more for clothes. I've got a mate who pretty much looks after my board down the beach and he does them up, which is kind of nice."

In contrast to freedom-loving members, members valuing belongingness saw brands and marketing activity in a very different light (see Table 3). Belongingness was also a more complex value than freedom because the meaning of this value appears to split along core-periphery lines. For example, Fiona (WF24) who is a previous core member, now attempts to retain an association with that community by purchasing brands she believes will help her fit in and be identified as a member of the surf subculture. For example:

"Rip Curl, Billabong, and then there's also brands which I don't think are the main surfing brands, like Roxy. It's more of a mainstream version of what those other brands are, to try and appeal to a greater number of people, people that don't actually surf or people that live in the city... I suppose ultimately it's to feel as though I kind of fit into that niche. These are definitely things that you don't consider, but I'd say it's to fit into that little pocket of wherever I want to be, so if I wear those clothes, it's because I want to probably represent that part of me."

Wearing the brand Roxy enables Fiona to retain her past link with the surfing culture, even though she understands that the Roxy brand trades more off the fashion of surf rather than any real link (making surf boards, wetsuits and other equipment used directly in the activity) to surfing per se. Thus, her desire for belongingness drives a positive evaluation of the brands that best enable her to still fit into the surfing niche. In contrast to freedom-loving consumers like Mark, Fiona accepts mass, fashion-oriented surf brands be-

cause they allow her to feel like she remains in touch with the subculture. For Fiona, mainstreaming of surfing is fine because it places the sport on a more viable footing. Brand-related activity such as sponsorship is viewed positively because it contributes to the continuing health of the sport (in contrast to Mark's dismissal of such activity), as illustrated by the comment:

"I've never done any competitive surfing or anything, but it is important that they help keep it all alive and help people, anyone starting out, achieve things and stuff."

For new peripheral members of the subculture, brands act as a signal or ticket for group membership and they contributed much to the central value of belongingness. James (WM19) for example, wants to wear "what everyone else is wearing". As Kieran (WM15) puts it, "you don't want to be the daggy left out one". For such 'image associates', brands were chosen in a similar way to how Fiona chose the Roxy brand, in that brands that resembled a perceived surfing lifestyle were chosen regardless of their commitment to the sport. For these consumers, mainstreaming was never a concern, presumably because they were themselves active participants in the mainstreaming process.

The value of excellence drove consumers to value brands that performed to high standards, had a proven track record and made ongoing commitments to quality. For these sub-cultural members, the brand was only as good as any one of their products. For example:

"When you take surfing seriously, it's working best in good gear. The first thing you need apart from a surfboard is a really good wetsuit and every time I buy a wetsuit, I make sure I buy the top of the line because it's worth every cent given how much you use it, so I've bought a Rip Curl wetsuit and different brands are better for different types of gear. Even though a lot of the surf brands spread across just about every piece of surfing gear that you need in clothing and stuff, normally the best wetsuits you can get are the Rip Curl wetsuits because they're the first ones. Surfboards, there are just so many surfboards on offer. A lot of the time you want a custom made board, so I'm not too hooked on the brand, as long as I get a good shape, a good board. It's not only about the design, the looks and stuff, which attract a lot of people that don't actually surf, but it's about how practical it is." (Marcio, HM27)

Marcio's quotation uncovers a number of brand attributes valued by excellence-focused consumers, including an appreciation of quality-related details, a desire for the absolute best quality and functional performance and the denigration of fashion orientation in favour of practicality. Consumers like Marcio also had a preference for customised products because these would be made to fit their personal preferences, local conditions, and body shape and size. For these consumers, mainstreaming was not seen as a major problem.

"Burton still is a huge company, so I suppose you could call it—I don't know, it's probably got corporate ranks and stuff in its hierarchy and all that sort of stuff, but the guy that started it is still the owner of it and stuff like that, but it is a big company..."

...They're keeping it real, but they're still commercial, still growing and trying to increase their profit, obviously. You need to do that and I think half the reason they become successful is because they've had their product out there for so long and back in the 80's when it wasn't big, it was banned at

TABLE 3
Values, Brand Behaviour, and Attitudes to Mainstreaming

Value	Brand choice	Attitude to mainstreaming
Freedom	Anti-establishment brands, or brands are owned and run by members of the sub-culture	Either exit sport for less mainstreamed activities, or reduce that investment in the subculture by focusing more on personal interests. Brands per se start losing value.
Belongingness	Core: brands that are associated with sustaining the community. Periphery (new): brands recommended by expert others. Periphery (new, previous and image associates): brands that are perceived to be representative of sport's lifestyle	Core and periphery (previous) viewed mainstreaming as evidence of success: Therefore it will benefit community because it will sustain the sport. Periphery (new and image associates) did not recognize mainstreaming as an issue.
Excellence	Functionality, proven track record and ongoing commitments to quality.	Mainstreaming was viewed positively in general, unless it involves attracting image associates. Some concern that mainstreaming could lead to attracting of brands that take short cuts for commercial gain.
Connection	Brands that reflect local place, commitment to nature, commitment to sport, and are involved in actual activity.	Concerns about overtaxing resources, but generally accepted as it allows more people to connect with experience.

a lot of the ski resorts, snowboarding was, Burton and two other brands were pretty much the only boards you could buy and all the better riders were choosing Burton over the Gear, because obviously Jay Burton was the person that designed and started the company and he rides the same boards.” (Sam WM22)

Sam’s view of the Burton brand remains positive in the face of increased commercialisation because it still commits to quality improvements, and has a pedigree associated with top performance and pioneering technology. Even though Sam recognises that Burton is a large corporate company, he values their continued commitment and, like many other excellence-oriented consumers, believes that ongoing commercial success is due to continued functional performance. For these consumers, brands also offered value when developed by people actively engaged in the sport.

For these consumers, mainstreaming gave rise to a few problems. First, mainstreaming encouraged the entry of other brands into the market. For example, many snowboarders questioned how Rossignol (the main ski brand) could credibly make a good snowboard given their lack of previous development in the area. Rossignol also struggled for a time because they represented skiing, which was seen as the main ‘enemy’ of snowboarding. Second, mainstreaming could attract ‘image associates’ who did not engage in the focal activities but wanted to be connected with those who were. In contrast to freedom-loving members, excellence-loving members viewed these consumers negatively, rather than viewing the sport as having sold out. Finally, these members were often worried that brands would take short cuts to appeal to the mass market, and thus may reduce quality standards. As a result, they became more conscious of past track record, quality standards and product testing.

As noted, our respondents expressed the need for connection in many different forms (see Table 3) including country-of-origin,

heritage, or repeated involvement in important events. James (WM19), for example, described the recurrent presence of key surfing brands, and emphasized a sense of both time and space:

“I think it’s Billabong, I think their motto is ‘born at Bell’s’. Ripcurl first sponsored the Rip Curl Pro down at Bell’s Beach, just brands that are just true to surfing and have always been there, always sponsoring people, always sponsoring comps. They are really popular overseas and that’s really good because they’re an Australian brand and they’ve just expended so I think that’s good. I think they are good brands that are true to surfing.”

For James (WM19), the desire for connection drives him to choose local brands over larger, global brands. This is not driven by anti-commercial motives, but rather, a desire to have a product made by people with knowledge and experience of local conditions.

*“I think I have one of the first boards they ever brought out and it was made by a local down at Torquay, so he’s got general knowledge and everything and I think a lot of the big brands aren’t even made in Australia. A lot of their boards are made overseas, so I’d definitely go back to this board just because it’s thinner, it’s fast, it’s really fast, it’s easy to move because it’s so thin and I’m a little person, so it’s a lot easier to manoeuvre, so I think that’s good, because I’m that type of surfer that likes to do tricks and stuff.
(Probe)... So again it’s more to do with the actual product, rather than the brand?
Yes, the brand I think just put their name on it, where the product, it really depends on who’s made the product rather than the brand, who’s just given them the funding or whatever and just stuck their name on it, so I’d definitely go back to a Beach Crew board, just because—and they do advertise it as*

being locally made and stuff, like by a local hero on the bottom of it or something, so just general knowledge behind it."

In James' passage above, the value of connection drives his search for extremely localized products that enhance his experience of local conditions. Driven by a commitment to place, connection-prone consumers favour smaller brands that tailor their products to local conditions and support local surfers and events. For Anthony (WM24), commercialisation is problematic only if it attracts image associates, because they have no contact with the experience of surfing. For example:

"There's one thing that made me annoyed when I was a little kid, when I did go down surfing and the kids across the road who never knew anything about surfing, they never went to the beach, all wore the same clothes as me. I said why are you wearing them when I'm the one surfing? That made me annoyed, but now everyone does it. You probably see a kid walking around in a Quiksilver t-shirt who's never been to the beach before. It's just one of those brands, they just buy the brand."

This also leads to the rejection of brands that do not have a heritage of engaging in the focal activity, or brands that try and crossover from one sport to another. For example, asked which brand represents snowboarding for him, Sam (WM22) emphasizes the heritage of the brand, in this case it pioneering status among snowboarding brands:

"...Burton, obviously, I guess they're the leaders of technology in snowboarding and they put a lot of time, a lot of testing, a lot of people and a lot of money goes into what they build, so they're trying to create a product that is perfect for snowboarding and they have a lot of testing."

As can be seen in James and Sam's responses, 'connection' for these brands can stem from an early involvement in the sport. This is recognised by both core members like Sam and periphery members like James. For similar reasons, Sam rejected Solomon or Rossignol because they are 'ski companies' and would not want to 'cross over'. These brands, being new to the sport, cannot boast the same connection to it as Burton does and they suffer as a consequence. The connection is at times very personal: the connection with Burton, the brand, goes back to Burton, the man, who is known to have created the first snowboard and therefore is credited for spawning the entire snowboarding movement. This type of veneration for older brands is also apparent in the skateboard community where Vans is perceived as one of "*the bands that initiated everything*".

Connection with place also afforded some brands an edge with core members. Just as respondents recognised the value of the Australianness of some brands, others valued the association with specific locations, be it Torquay (a local Victorian Beach) or Bell's Beach. In other words, the sense of place which motivated so many of our respondents to take up their sport, resonated when the brands established a strong geographical presence or associated themselves with mythical places. For surfers, the beach brought on nostalgic feelings and some brands were able to embody similar emotions. For Hamish (WM) the connection goes back to childhood and the beach:

"Rip Curl would be the one that stands out the most. I think in Australia, it's one that—it's a Torquay company. There's a lot

of Rip Curl around in Victoria particularly and the majority of my stuff is Rip Curl as well...

...It probably comes back to brand favouritism as well, because my dad worked for Rip Curl for a while. He had this new Rip Curl towel and all this promotional stuff they gave him so I guess at a really young age, I just had Rip Curl imprinted in my brain.

...I guess when I look at the logo it reminds me of being a kid. (Probe): What else do you recall?

Wiping out a lot, just going to the beach, spending heaps of time at the beach."

CONCLUSION AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although exploratory in its intent, our study highlights the need for a more dynamic approach to subcultures. In particular, brand meanings and relevance appeared to shift in accordance with three main factors: whether consumers were closer to the core or periphery of the subculture, the primary value that linked them to the sub-culture, and pressures experienced by the subculture as a whole, such as mainstreaming. Despite the fact that we are limited in our ability to generalise these findings even to the small populations we examined (Australian surfers, snowboarders and skaters), we believe that evidence of such diversity within and between subcultures offers fertile grounds for future research. In particular, the degree of value fit between sub-cultures and brands deserves a closer look as different responses can clearly be seen within each sub-culture in response to the core values examined here. Furthermore, a longitudinal approach would seem warranted given our observation that consumers' evolving role within sub-culture seems to influence their response to brands.

Another possible explanation for our results, well worth investigating more formally in future research, could be that the 4 core values we identified in this exploratory work are really 4 expressions of a more fundamental search for authenticity, a concept increasingly described as crucial in the consumer/brand literature. For example, for freedom-motivated respondents, authenticity may be ascribed to brands that remain truly linked to the sport, whereas excellence-driven respondents define a brand as authentic if it performs best and the belongingness-seekers identify authentic by what their reference group uses or wears. Clearly, this hypothesis deserves to be examined with a larger sample of respondents for each of the three subcultures described here, as well as other subcultures beyond them.

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Am I What I Wear? An Exploratory Study of Symbolic Meanings Associated with Secondhand Clothing

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INTRODUCTION

Second-order or alternative marketing systems have received increased attention in recent years. Factors such as concern about the environment, reduction in household consumption costs and the attraction exerted by the experiential nature of exchange venues like swap meets, flea markets and garage sales combine to increase interest in used-product buying behaviors (Soiffer and Hermann, 1987; Belk, Sherry and Wallendorf 1988; Sherry, 1990a, 1990b; Rucker et al., 1995). Solomon and Rabolt (2004) have recently reported that “the number of used-merchandise retail establishments has grown at about ten times the rate of other stores”.

Among the wide range of goods for sale, clothing appears to be an important commodity in second-order marketing systems (O’Reilly et al., 1984). Such research as exists on this topic has revealed factors that can increase or decrease the willingness to acquire used clothing. Economic constraints have been pointed out as a critical factor in the purchase decision for secondhand goods (Yavas et al., 1982; O’Reilly et al., 1984). Conversely, concern about contamination has proven to impede the transfer of certain type of items, especially those worn next to the skin (O’Reilly et al., 1984; Belk, 1988). However, symbolic meanings associated with such consumption decisions have received less attention in comparison with demographic and behavioral variables related to products or purchase situations. Moreover, psychological approaches have especially and narrowly focused on contamination, disgust and negative meanings, while positive motives have received only scant attention. As suggested by Rucker et al. (1995), it is here proposed that a broader investigation of the various aspects of positive and negative meanings associated with the exchange and resale of secondhand clothing will offer insights into the relationships between ideological visions of the consumption world, values attached to possessions, and appropriation processes where contamination plays a significant role in shaping attitudes and perceptions.

This paper will conceptualize and explore the symbolic and psychological aspects of both acceptance and rejection toward used clothing. In-depth interviews and mini group discussions have been used to elicit qualitative data. The findings reveal, firstly, clear-cut attitudes of acceptance or rejection toward used clothing. Secondly, these attitudes seem basically deep-rooted in a system of symbolic meanings that is strongly dependent on the affectively charged power some consumers attribute to such possessions in providing a sense of self. In particular, when they view clothing as an intimate part of their self, they are unlikely to exchange, sell or buy it, especially from strangers. Conversely, when possessions are less a part of their extended self, they are able to perceive clothes as autonomous objects, free of any associations with their previous owner. Such consumers evaluate used items for their intrinsic properties and buy them according to their perceived value and appeal without reference to their past use. In such cases, we examine more specifically the different symbolic meanings and consumption patterns exhibited by those informants who feel concerned by such reappropriation processes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies of second-hand clothing markets have mainly focused on factors affecting consumers’ willingness to purchase used items and their choice criteria. Winakor and Martin (1963) noted that the salability of clothing items was related to how worn

they were and to their fashionableness. O’Reilly et al. (1984) confirmed that low price alone was not sufficient to prompt purchases and that the sizes available, the newness and the quality of the merchandise affected their resale to a greater extent.

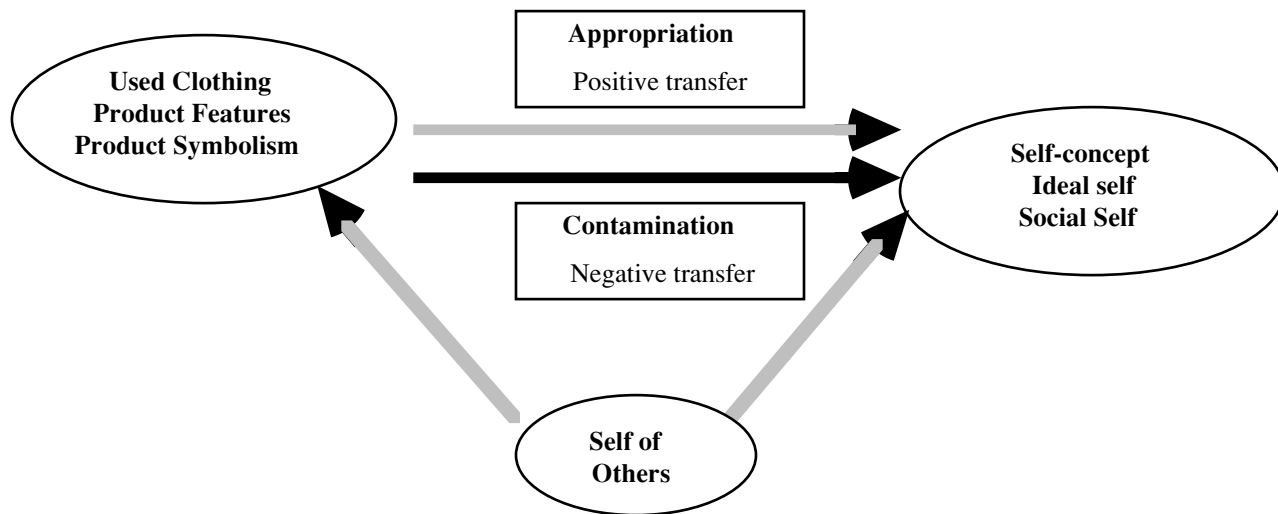
Furthermore, the rejection of certain types of clothing appeared to increase with the increase in proximity to the body, thus confirming concerns about contamination. Goffman (1971) describes contamination as a violation by others of one’s personal space through talking, glancing, touching, bodily contact and excreta. Real or imagined body markings on used clothes, such as perspiration stains or odor, can be felt as a territorial encroachment of the previous owner and therefore a taboo against their re-use. Perspectives on disgust stress the apparent offensive and contaminating nature of contact with other people’s possessions such as clothing and silverware (Rozin, Haidt and McCauley, 2000). While these authors report that aversion to strangeness persists despite laundering or sterilization, Ginsburg (1980) argues on the other hand that concerns toward contamination may have disappeared as a result of public health and cleanliness. Likewise, O’Reilly et al. (1984) and Ostergaard, Fitchett and Jantzen (1999) suggest that appropriation processes can depend on the type of clothes. For example, because of their closeness with the body, underwear are not likely to be transformed, even if washed or laundered, into reusable clothing. With reference to Sartre’s general model of appropriation (1943/1956), objects *are* a part of their owner. The same perspective is supported by the research on the extended self, defined as the self plus possessions (Belk, 1988; Sirgy, 1982; Kleine, Kleine and Kernan 1993). Clothes, perhaps more than any other goods, are supposed to be buried or destroyed when their owner dies, since they represent an intimate aspect of his or her existence. Moreover, destruction, divestment and grooming rituals are also depicted by McCracken (1986) as a means by which individuals void goods of previous symbolic meanings and take possession of the product.

Close relations between physical contamination and moral taint have been explored by Douglas (1966). She suggests that prescriptions concerning purity may derive from increased medical knowledge, but above all from the need to preserve socio-moral rules within the society. Appadurai (1981) found that interpersonal disgust serves the purpose of maintaining social distinctiveness and social hierarchies. Such an outlook is reflected by the literature on ‘aversive’ aspects of consumer choices described by Bourdieu (1984) as the ‘refusal of taste’, especially research conducted on the undesired self and the consumption anti-constellations (Ogilvie, 1987; Englis and Solomon, 1996, 1997; Hogg, 1998; Banister and Hogg, 2001).

However, contact with pre-owned clothing does not always trigger aversion (Belk, 1988). Positive contamination can occur when the clothes are acquired from relatives, parents, friends or loved ones (Lurie, 1981). The magical laws of contagion and similarity (Frazer, 1950/1922; Mauss, 1902/1972) that play a part in transferring negative meanings from strangers or undesirable persons exert symmetric positive influence when other people are part of the extended self (Belk, 1988). Whereas inherited clothes can be cherished as the continuation of loved ones, ancient or rare items of clothing can represent artifacts of a golden age (Baudrillard, 1975) or serve as social markers (Douglas and Isherwood, 1979).

Although accounting for the most commonly recognized psychological variable in purchasing or exchanging used clothing, contamination does not explain the whole significance of this

FIGURE 1
 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE TRANSFERS BETWEEN USED CLOTHING AND CONSUMER SELF CONCEPT



consumption practice. Beyond the monetary or economic benefits that are commonly presented as key factors accounting for the growth of lateral cycling and re-use of secondhand clothing, other motives can be involved in this trend. Thompson and Haytko (1997) showed how consumers resist dominant fashion discourses and create personalized consumption meanings. They stress that some consumers exhibit creative clothing choices—sometimes including second-hand items—in order to stand out and feel unique. Dobscha (1998) has also explored the way some consumers rebel against the marketplace. Among other choices, purchasing secondhand allows them to avoid stimulating the overall demand for new products. Environmental concerns and love of the natural world fuel their motivation in undertaking resistance behaviors such as recycling. Similar anti-consumption attitudes as the result of ethical concerns have been reported by Zavestoski (2002) and Shaw and Newholm (2002). Wearing secondhand clothes *by choice* can thus be regarded as a sign of opposition to consumerism, associated with voluntary simplicity and various reducing behaviors. Murray (2002) has analyzed this recent trend as a response to the materialist culture that focuses on superficial meanings. Controversial elements of the consumerist way of life may lead to a form of detachment from symbolic aspects of the self (Goffman, 1971) and to an increase in re-using and recycling behaviors. Consumers involved in such resistance create new selves that appear to be more “socially conscious” than merely preoccupied with appearance.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In summary, the review of the literature on secondhand clothing has dealt principally, on the one hand, with functional values of used clothes—price, quality, condition, fashionability—and on the other, with the perceived effects of previous ownership and psychological issues relating to contamination. The conceptual framework presented in Figure 1 is based on Sartre’s (1943/1956) view on having and being. He posits that the fundamental intention of desire is to appropriate, in and through the possession of a certain product, some kind of being we lack. «The desire for a particular object is not the simple desire for this object; it is the desire to be united with the object in an internal relation, in the mode of

constituting with it the unity ‘possessor-possessed’ « (Sartre, 1943/1956). Products become significant not in themselves, but rather with respect to their place within the world of the consumer, or, more specifically, as a result of their role in enabling the consumer to appropriate the world of his or her desires. If “I am what I have” (Fromm, 1976, p. 76), to what extent then does the object of desire (here used clothes) contribute to the ideal of desire? Can it be reduced to the fanciful idea of being someone else, the one who preceded me? Or can it support, by its own features, the project of being me? If so, contamination turns out to be simply one of several potentialities carried by the object. But the appropriation of a previously worn item could express the desire to incorporate other symbolic meanings as well. As pointed out by Sartre (1943/1956), it constitutes a creative process shaping the sense of the exchange between the self and the object. Our intent is then to explore the different symbolic functions that such re-appropriation processes can serve for some consumers.

METHODOLOGY

As the overall aim of the research was to investigate the meanings associated with wearing or rejecting secondhand clothes, as well as the psychological and social perceptions embedded therein, a qualitative methodology was considered the most appropriate. In-depth interviews, each of which lasted from half an hour to two hours, were conducted with 43 informants—26 of them female and 17 male—over an 18-month period. A combination of purposive and convenience sampling was used, aimed at selecting informants who would maximally enrich or challenge the interpretations as they emerged and provide what Patton (1990) terms «information rich cases». A snowballing technique was used to identify second-hand clothing consumers *and* non-consumers, using the researcher’s professional and personal network. Variety and contrast were taken into account for recruitment, with respondents chosen sequentially and selectively according to issues and questions that arose as the research unfolded (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The informants ranged in age from 22 to 62 with an average of 38. In order to reflect various symbolic meanings, informants were purposefully selected to represent a mix of different types of

occupation and/or levels of education. The specific nature of the topic led to an over-representation of female respondents, so reflecting their particular interest in fashion and their greater involvement in secondhand purchases, as has been pointed out by O'Reilly et al. (1984). Diversity in sampling also sought to maximize individual differences, taking into consideration familiarity or unfamiliarity with clothing exchange practices and general attitudes toward second-hand consumption. As well as the long interviews, a series of twelve mini-group discussions were held with several members of the same family—husband and wife, parents and children—which provided an opportunity to explore shared values and patterns of consumption.

In all cases, a phenomenological approach was adopted to uncover the lived experience of the respondents and their constructed reality of symbolic meanings. Interviews were conducted in a loosely-structured and non-directive manner around several topics including: 1) clothing choices in general; 2) negative and positive attitudes toward secondhand clothing; 3) type of clothing or situational influences that may affect perceptions; 4) meanings and imagery underlying acceptance and rejection patterns. Respondents were encouraged to recall personal memories, since these can throw light on affectively charged situations and enduring influences acquired during childhood (Sujan, Bettman and Baumgartner, 1993). All interview sessions were conducted at the informants' homes, audio-recorded and transcribed. The constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and grounded theory techniques (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) guided data collection and analysis. Each successive interview was used to refine or put into question the information obtained from previous informants (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The qualitative data were analyzed using an iterative process of searching for recurrent patterns and themes (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Every effort was made to ensure the reliability of the research, including a long-period observation, negative case analysis, debriefing by peers and member checks (Wallendorf and Belk, 1989)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Secondhand clothes purchasing habits

The categorization produced clear differential attitudes between respondents, ranging from those rejecting even the idea of wearing something previously used to those expressing attitudes of acceptance toward secondhand clothing. Some informants acknowledged that they buy used clothes rather frequently from swap meets, flea markets, personal sales or used-merchandise retail outlets. Interestingly, the latter category shows positive but heterogeneous behaviors toward second-hand clothing, as described in the following section. Some informants even admitted to re-using clothes that have been thrown away and put in the trash. Surprisingly, they also acknowledged that they are materially well-off and that such behavior is not dictated by necessity.

Between extreme positions, situational factors are also likely to influence perceptions about used items. For example, acquiring second hand evening dresses or suits for a special event or a fancy dress ball do not seem to elicit either strong feelings of appropriation or fears of contamination. Another perspective is offered by those informants who do not buy used clothes, but do not object to wearing clothes given to them by friends or acquaintances.

This key differentiation between acceptance or rejection related to secondhand consumption substantiates the theoretical model insofar as positive or negative emotions underlie symbolic meanings associated with consumers' choices. To clarify the presentation of the findings, we follow these two main schemata as they emerged from examination of the qualitative data.

Favorable attitudes and symbolic meanings: when reusing worn clothes extends positively the sense of self

Knowledge of the origin of worn clothes and their previous ownership by close friends or relatives transforms perceptions into a positive contagion (Lurie, 1981). These re-appropriations are likely to provoke an increased feeling of identity because they enhance the value or the confidence of the subject by identification with freely chosen, accepted or desired references. Certain respondents testify to this phenomenon through their attachment to special possessions that belonged to their relatives or through the exchange of clothes between friends during their adolescence.

“When I was younger, I sometimes wore clothes of certain friends that I found cute. So it operated itself as a sort of appropriation of their beauty” (Nadia, 30, Medical Secretary).

“I don't believe I've ever bought used clothes, but in the '70s, we'd meet up between girlfriends to exchange our clothes. I really loved this. It was enjoyable and fun. In general, it was the cute things that one would no longer want to wear. It was nice to wear a friend's clothes. It allowed us to change our style by thinking of one another” (Sylvia, 48, Commercial Manager).

On the other hand, the purchase of clothes from unknown individuals, and their recovery from a variety of questionable outlets, poses a more complex problem in conceptualizing the notion of evoked contamination both in the literature and when observed empirically. However, some respondents do not conform to the law of contagion which underlies a part of the sympathetic magic at work in contamination (Frazer, 1950/1922; Mauss, 1902/1972). To express this in another way, for these consumers, clothes can be dissociated from their previous owner and freed from his or her imprint. In contrast to what Rozin, Haidt and McCauley (2000) argue, cleaning does seem to be an effective and sufficient ritual of purification (though it may not always be necessary).

“Yes, I very often wear used clothes that I buy at flea markets and even those that I find in the trashcan. No, that doesn't bother me. Why would that bother me elsewhere? They have been washed. If the clothes please me, I take them, that's all! I do not think about the previous owner at all.” (John, 45, Telecom Engineer).

The lower the investment of self in the possession of clothing and the more the distinction between subject and object is verbalized by consumers, the more likely they are to invest the same types of relationships with worn clothes as with new clothes. In addition, certain characteristics of these clothes and/or of their state of use seem to create for some informants a particular desire for re-appropriation. Four types of motives characterized by distinctive symbolic representations and ideological arguments emerged from the interviews.

The desire for uniqueness

The worn clothing itself, sometimes unique or peculiar, acts as a vector of privileged expression of one's identity and of its wearer. It fulfils the need for uniqueness that certain consumers seek through choices of counter-conformist consumption—a creative expression or a refusal to be submerged in uniformity (Snyder and Fromkin, 1980; Tian and McKenzie, 2001; Tian, Bearden and Hunter, 2001). Worried about being dressed 'like everyone else' and losing their identity, certain respondents acquire worn clothing for the purpose of distinguishing themselves from the mass. De-

picted as risk-oriented consumers by Jensen and Ostergaard (1998), they emphasize differentiation, personal style and originality more than the pursuit of standards of 'good taste' and social norms.

Two young respondents perfectly expressed this need to be different in their clothing choices, to assert their personality and to create a distance between themselves and mass sartorial conventions.

"From my point of view, buying clothes at flea markets is far more original. I look for something unique, something that not everyone already has. And even if other people seek something similar, it will never be the same. It's also a way to feel different, a means to avoid following the rest of the world. What most people consume doesn't interest me" (Mary, 23, Medical Student).

"I buy used clothes about twice a year, always at the same shop. I love the clothes I see there and I hope that each time I will find something that will match my personality. In general, these clothes are very original and express my personal style" (Ellen, 24, Artist).

Smart shopping and social ruse

In contrast to the preceding profiles that incorporate the characteristics of used clothes to their ideal self in order to assert distinctiveness from others, some informants stress the role that branded used clothing can play within the social comparison process (Festinger, 1954). They express strong feelings of concern both about the image they project to others and about the price to pay to reflect a desirable standard of living. Insofar as they seem particularly sensitive to the impression they make on others through their appearance, second-hand purchases allow them to acquire luxurious and branded clothing, but without paying the full price. For bargain hunters and smart shoppers (Mano and Elliott, 1997), price savings may be a source of pride and accomplishment as much as their desire to escape their 'class habitus' and to acquire the appearance of certain upper social strata by what Bourdieu (1984) calls a strategy of distinction.

The overlap between the financial and psycho-social benefits of such shopping behaviors is attested by the repeated associations of satisfaction derived from pride in being able to buy items of high social value at a very low price.

"I wear used clothes that I generally buy in luxury secondhand shops, branded clothes—Chanel, Yves Saint-Laurent—often slightly worn, at a very reasonable price. What makes me really feel excited is finding nice clothes and accessories that I couldn't have afforded at their full price and that represent a very good deal under those conditions! And for my job, it's a real plus. I really look nice, and I'm all the more pleased in that everyone thinks I bought my stuff in an expensive shop" (Ann, 32, Directional Secretary).

The symbolic interactionist perspective (Solomon, 1983) has previously emphasized the importance of relevant product cues and reliance on material values in meeting role demands. The look created by having up-market clothing, even if second-hand and previously worn, enables consumers to manifest the signs of respectability that protect them against the risk of negative evaluation in public contexts. However, for some informants, this type of appropriation sometimes seems to betray a tension or conflict between an original identity and a borrowed appearance. Some try to keep at a distance the conspicuous display they apparently favor and despise at the same time, while deriving a certain cynical

pleasure in deceiving others. This paradoxical position appears to be what could be termed social ruse. One possible interpretation may be that their rationalization could be dictated by a high sensitivity toward appearances.

"I don't like branded fashion products in general. I find them expensive and not very original. Yet I have discovered that I can buy myself clothes in flea markets that I would have never bought new. Some of them are well-known brands. I laugh at women who have paid a fortune for items that I buy for two euros, and I think they're stupid to have spent so much money. But I am quite happy even so to advantage of it" (Valerie, 38, Medical Visitor).

Nostalgia

Whereas for some consumers the previous history of their clothes is a matter of indifference, others precisely seek a trace of the past, a symbol of a style, epoch, culture or forgotten know-how. This process of historical and cultural identification is often underlined by the perpetuation of myths related to this particular period or that particular group, and for which the clothes constitute one of the visible narrators. Such clothing permits some individuals to perpetuate his or her memory and maintain some temporal continuity, and others to engage in vicarious nostalgia for periods outside of their living memory (Goulding, 2002):

"I often bought old embroidered sweaters and old garments at flea markets. I am also found of lace baptism dresses. They remind me of my childhood, when my grandmother was a laundry washer in the country... I get flashes of memory that come back to me when I see these clothes" (Esther, 54, Hair Stylist)

This nostalgic experience functions like a therapy in terms of memory against the uniformity and banality of mass production, and against a gradual depersonalization of the individual.

"Through objects, I appropriate fragments of history, moments of the past. Today, everything is focused on mass consumption, and the ideal is 'to buy buy buy'—but always something new, of course. Even so, certain products may have a soul or a spirit, because manufacturers reproduce what was made in the past. But it's not the same, because people clearly see it's new. It has no soul in fact. It lacks authenticity" (Alice, 22, Literature Student)

Rejection of squandering

Certain respondents express great concern about the proliferation of consumer goods. Faced with unequal distribution and scarcity of resources, they see the anarchistic depletion of such resources as part of the overall production of waste, and which is especially scandalous if dictated by mood or fashion. Closely aligned to the ethical concerns and attitudes of voluntary simplicity (Dobscha, 1998; Zavetoski, 2002; Shaw and Newholm, 2002), they reject inducements to consume, despise ads and mock all forms of conspicuous consumption. They frequently purchase worn clothing by choice, because it conforms to their logic of personal and collective economy and contributes to the conservation of resources.

"Very often I wear clothes that I buy in secondhand shops, but I also wear clothes I find thrown out in trashcans. And it doesn't bother me, actually! It's the fact that people throw out too many things that really bothers me. Most of the time, they are in good condition. These clothes are rejected and un-

wanted, but they're quite reusable. Why should I leave them?"
(Paul, 47, Primary School Teacher)

For such consumers, articles of clothing rejected as result of the arbitrary whim of fashion re-acquire some of their original desirability, in a process that resembles anthropomorphic attachment to abandoned objects.

"I feel no kind of repulsion toward clothes that have already been worn. Obviously, these clothes have a history that appeals me. They have been chosen by another woman, they had been loved, and now that they no longer please her, I give them a second chance" (Susan, 52, designer)

Attitudes of rejection: When wearing used clothes degrades the sense of self.

Unlike the previous informants for whom perceptions of waste are associated with an endless cycle of buying and disposal, other consumers perceive used clothing essentially as rubbish. They hold that an item of clothing can only be worn by a sole owner, in the same way that food can only be eaten by one mouth. According to Thompson's (1979) assumptions, usage of such products makes them change from the 'Transient' to the 'Rubbish-category'. Appropriation is perceived as a marking of the product, which becomes indissociable from its owner and thereby unfit for subsequent use. A used item of clothing cannot be seen other than as highly contaminating, because it is experienced as an extension of the body of another person. Grooming and purification rituals do not suffice to eradicate the fantasy of bodily impregnation.

"I will never buy secondhand clothes. This is due to the problem of hygiene. I can't stop myself from thinking that the previous owner could have been dirty and never have washed"
(Michael, 28, Export Executive)

These representations underline the existence of possible symbolic transfers between two identities, that of the other and that of the self, mediated by the object. For some respondents, fear of the unknown and of strangeness engenders a degraded image of the former wearer, which is projected onto the clothing. This then becomes a physical or symbolic vehicle of contamination by unwanted characteristics of others. Such intimate corporeal proximity can represent a kind of auto-violation of the territory of the self, according to Goffman (1971), or pollution, as proposed by Douglas (1966). Disease, death, and social misfortune are often associated in fantasy with used clothing:

"...I don't see myself ever buying these types of items, in any case. It is the idea of imagining the previous owner which puts me off. The idea of not knowing, I imagine it in a negative manner. Maybe the clothes carry diseases. The worst thing would be to imagine that I was wearing clothes of a dead person" (Laura, 24, Doctoral Student)

"Yes, I would be embarrassed to wear secondhand clothing. To me they seem tainted and associated with an image of failure. It would mean that I can't afford to buy new clothes and that I have gone down on the social scale." (Alex, 38, Lawyer)

Beside the fear of contamination, other interesting motives were revealed by the interviews. The intimate and unique link that some owners have with their clothes lead them to project this exclusive vision onto possessions in general. What is at stake here is less a concern about contamination with germs than the refusal of

a shared narrative with someone else through his or her possessions. Wearing something that belonged to others threatens the feeling of difference, unity and coherence which nurtures the sense of self (Allport, 1955; Erikson, 1968). As expressed by one of the young women participants:

"Clothes already have a history and a life before me. Purchasing them doesn't take away their previous life, and in some way they could never completely belong to me and be part of my intimacy." (Sandra, 22, Student).

Thus in certain cases, wearing used clothes is expressed figuratively as a feeling of dispossession. Individuals feel condemned to assume other people's identities and to leave their own behind. This point is particularly well illustrated by those informants who had to wear clothes passed down from their brothers or sisters who had outgrown them, and whose feeling of dispossession seems to derive from an involuntary encroachment of their older siblings' personalities on their identity, threatening their perception of their own value.

"When I was a little boy, I always wore used clothes. That is to say, clothes from my brother. I have never had anything of my own. Therefore I think that it comes from that, not wanting to buy secondhand clothes" (Joseph, 56, Professor).

All these aspects show the high degree of attachment some individuals invest in their clothing. Clothing plays a great part in reflecting their identity, and they cannot tolerate any kind of transfer or infringement from others. An exception can be made when others are incorporated in the individual's extended self.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

A review of the literature stressed the importance of contamination in appropriation processes concerning secondhand clothing. The findings confirmed that contamination is an important factor in rejection behaviors toward used clothes. In particular, our research showed that rejection is based on the specific fear of incorporating a degraded image of the previous owner. Death, disease or misfortune are often associated with the former wearer, and 'bad vibes' are imagined to transfer through his or her possessions to the new owner. But the findings suggested also that the concern with unwanted contamination is not as general as it is thought. Positive symbolic appropriation can be involved in exchanging clothing between friends or parents. Moreover, fear of contamination does not necessarily play any part in buying or wearing secondhand clothes, even when the previous owner is unknown.

What clearly differentiated acceptance from rejection behaviors was the ability of individuals to view clothing as mere objects rather than as part of their or someone else's extended self. When used clothes are not too closely associated with their former wearer, they can be appraised for their own values instead of being reduced to the incorporated intimacy of another person. In this case, other motives guide and explain purchasing and recycling behaviors in relation to used clothes. Four types of symbolic representations were extracted from the interviews. The first two refer to the social comparison process. The desire to be unique and smart shopping behaviors are two opposing facets of a way one presents oneself to others. This indicates that there is an integration of the imagined appraisals of oneself by others in the construction of one's ideal social self. While counterconformity expresses self-assertion, risk-taking and differentiation, social ruse orientations are grounded on conformity to and imitation of perceived social superiors.

Two other categories of representation are related to ideal self and self-esteem, namely nostalgia and responsibility. Because of their connection with the past, either of fashion or of a bygone age, used clothes may express a singularity, a difference or an authenticity for certain respondents. Possession allows them to differentiate themselves, express their personality, or maintain a tie with the past, history, and personal or collective memory. The refusal to squander combines an ethical dimension with the intense feelings of collective responsibility induced by acts of consumption. The ideal self does not express itself in clothing and appearance, but rather in the social implications of consuming less and reinvesting discarded objects with a value deriving from their function.

CONCLUSION

This examination of symbolic meanings associated with secondhand clothing stands in marked contrast to earlier studies which have generally focused on negative perceptions triggered only by a fear of contamination. The present study has sought to extend and challenge a traditional view of the appropriation processes by exploring other positive motives likely to promote the transfer and re-use of used clothing. It is hoped that the study, despite the small sample size, contributes to a deeper understanding of consumer-object relations and of the complex processes of incorporation of objects in constructing a sense of self. The illumination of such partially hidden consumption choices can illustrate how consumers exercise their freedom to create new meanings far from conventional consumption practices.

Based on the results of this exploratory research, the next step of this project could be to test on a larger sample the degree to which disgust sensitivity plays a part in differentiating attitudes toward used clothes. In addition, further research may test the propositions set forth in this paper concerning secondhand buyers' orientations such as the desire to be unique, the tendency to engage in nostalgic feelings, prestige sensitivity associated to smart shopping behaviors or anti-consumption attitudes.

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Constructing 'Hortiporn': On the Aesthetics of Stylized Exteriors

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INTRODUCTION

The commodification of contemporary gardening cultures is big entertainment business in the UK. It employs a panoply of celebrity gardening gods (e.g. Diarmuid Gavin, Alan Titchmarsh, Joe Swift) and goddesses (e.g. Rachel de Thame, Charlie Dimmock). Television and radio programs are regularly devoted to those 'green fingered' stars (*Gardener's World*, *The City Gardener*). They also author, or ghost-author, a wide variety of supporting texts which provide apparently avid consumers with instruction on *How to be a Gardener* (Titchmarsh, 2002), or how to bedeck one's *plant room* (Swift, 2001). Walk through many large bookstores to the section now known as 'lifestyles' and you will find crowded shelves of glossy gardening books competing to attract and hold your attention and spending power. Open some of those books and you will immediately be struck by their meritorious production values: glamorous photographic images of enchantingly aestheticized spaces not only decorate the text, they punctuate it, revealing the carefully deployed hands of designer calculation and the expensive grammar of fine art photography. In this sense such texts are purposefully landscaped, i.e. designed, moulded and assembled so as to provide a very particular vista, deeply enmeshed within dominant regimes of meaning. We understand this as one moment in the historical process of the 'aesthetic fetishising', the *hortipornography* of gardens and gardening.

While offering sophisticated compositions that play on discursive spaces around gardens and gardening, the paper argues that such texts employ dominant logics of representation that are socially and historically situated and which construct and reconstruct divisions within social formations. It considers the framing of meaning through competing strategic 'positionalities' generated by discourses that circulate around the garden and gardening, aligning viewers with social positions and employing various technologies of enchantment to imbue artifacts with aesthetic meaning. It provides a reading and interpretive analysis of one contemporary gardening text, understanding it as one heavily inscribed artifact, indicative of underlying cultural forces. We discuss the 'landscaping' of this artifact's materiality and how those landscapes are inscribed with aesthetic meaning. After Schroeder and McDonagh (2005, p.3), this text was selected because it "reveal[s] interesting aspects of [positioning]." Prior to this an assessment of the importance of the image to understanding contemporary culture is provided, alongside a discussion of methodological approaches available for understanding visual culture.

THE IMAGE AND CONTEMPORARY CONSUMER CULTURE

A host of contemporary theorists have sought to untangle the role of images in contemporary culture (Bauman, 2000; Maffesoli, 1996; Robins, 1996; Schroeder, 2002). The work of Maffesoli (1996) alerts us to the potential and power of images for an understanding of consumer culture. Maffesoli argues that the image must be understood as constitutive of urban memory: "the image *is* culture, the image *makes* culture" (1996, p.100, italics in original). The image from this account is thus expressive of our being-in-the-world, providing consumers with a 'linking' or 'communion' with others. The work of Bauman is also useful in advancing our understanding of the representational burden on images, as being

reflective and constitutive of positioning repertoires. In *Liquid Modernity* (2000), Bauman extends the meaning of shopping from its delimited retail context to that of:

"scanning the assortment of possibilities, examining, touching, feeling, handling the goods on display, comparing their costs with the contents of the wallet or the remaining credit limit of credit cards, putting some of them in the trolley and other back on the shelf—then we shop outside shops as much as inside; we shop in the street and at home, at work and at leisure, awake and in dreams... Shopping is not just about food, shoes, cars or furniture items. *The avid, never-ending search for new and improved examples and recipes for life is also a variety of shopping*" (2000, pp.73-74, italics added).

The notion of 'recipes for life' is a useful one and Bauman positions consumers as constantly seeking the skills and competences of consuming. Consumers are said to make use of discourses. In this regard, Bauman draws upon the work of Thrift, who considers discourses as "meta-languages that instruct people how to live as people" (Bauman, 2000, p.54). Our own argument builds upon this view by considering images as resources or scripts utilized by the consumer. Images in other words are considered as *recipes for life* that instruct people on the whys and wherefores of consuming, providing quick, easy and tailored solutions to time-strapped, harried consumers to resolve in an imaginary fashion the problems of contemporary life.

Parallels can be drawn with the work of Robins (1996) who, in drawing upon the work of Vattimo, conceives of images as devices for managing anxiety. Given the multiplication and proliferation of images in contemporary culture, he argues that this results in consumers becoming embroiled in images as a means to "take refuge from the shocking and exhausting reality of the modern world." (1996, p.121). The sphere of consumption is in this fashion said to provide consumers with "strategies of insulation and protection against the shocks of the real world" (p.126). Images by this token become akin to a resource for the consumer, functioning as technologies and sanctuaries of enchantment.

ANALYZING THE IMAGE

There are a variety of different ways in which visual culture can be understood, through the lenses of cultural theory, psychoanalysis, feminism, semiotics and post-structuralism (Fuery et al., 2003). Drawing upon the analytical distinction between structure and intention, Barnard (2001) describes two traditions by means of which to understand visual culture: the hermeneutic or phenomenological and the structural. And using the work of Ricoeur (1974), he goes on to state that those approaches depend on various ways upon each other, that each of them should be thought of as supplementing or complementing the other. This call to interdisciplinarity inspires the study reported here, which is informed by the seminal work of Barthes (1973; 1984), Williamson (1978), Scott (1994), Schroeder and Zwick (2004) and Zafar's (1999) later feminist work. All sought to generate understanding through cultural interpretation and detailed critique of a limited number of key texts. Rather than attempting the thinner but broader sweep of a larger sample, our approach seeks to employ the strengths of thick description and

interpretive analysis. Schroeder (2002) details how such an analysis moves through a series of stages, commencing with description and interpretation, prior to a shift to evaluation and theorization. More so, we draw specifically upon cultural analysis to investigate “*how meaning, pleasure and power are articulated through specific images*” (Lister and Wells, 2001, p.63). In this vein, we sought to develop readings of a carefully selected gardening text, to develop a line of argument which positions such texts as “*complexly coded cultural artefacts*” (Lister and Wells, 2001, p.89) embodying a host of representations, announcements and recipes for the consumer to enliven their lives. We argue for this cultural approach simply on the basis that it appears to replicate the way such cherished texts are consumed at an everyday level. Unlike the economy of exchange which marks out consumers’ interaction with formal advertising; readers (see Amazon, 2005) speak of the selected book as “*an engrossing read*” and a spur for the “*imagination*”: “*There’s so much going on in this book you’ll keep coming back for another little look. Whether it’s for a tip on keeping the maintenance down...or simply to gaze once again at some great pictures.*” Our method is therefore one of taking such ‘pictures’ or images seriously as data. And through interpretation, our own readings lead to the emergence of a number of key themes, namely: the reconfiguration of urban exterior spaces; seductive images of gardens as hortiporn; and finally the notion of consumer choice implicated in the instruction of a will to garden design.

IN SEARCH OF GARDEN REPRESENTATIONS

As a practice of consumption this paper is inspired by the lack of attention granted to such mundane, but spectacular and seductive activities as gardening. This perplexing lack of interest by consumer researchers is further questioned by the attention devoted to the practice from other disciplines. From the bible, to works of arts and literature the image of the garden can be read as what Morris terms a “*powerful collector of symbols*” (1996, p.62). Morris (1996) argues that the meanings of gardens are historically and culturally specific, always shifting, never fixed. In addition, she suggests “*The garden space, like identity, is fragmented, multiple, contradictory and provisional.*” (1996, p.76). She traces how the central motif of the novel, in this case *The Secret Garden*, is the representation of the garden as a retreat, but more specifically a feminine space for ‘self-determination and negotiated freedom’. Themes which echo throughout garden design history as we shall see when we turn to research which has examined gardening texts by garden designers of the Italian Renaissance to French formal gardens of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Mukerji (1990) in charting the history of French formal gardens analyses such spaces as ‘manifestations of materialism’ in early modern Europe suggesting:

“Gardens are forms of material culture inscribing affluence and power, legitimating social stations made problematic by economic change. They are places in which statues glorifying Europe’s classical heritage and rare imported plants, testifying to the economic reach of the international capitalist trading system, were used to buttress the social claims of their owners and designers. In addition, these gardens were designed. They were active means for communicating social location because they were carefully planned and executed, using the rich book culture that was being expanded through capitalist development in the book trade. With these tools, gardens were constituted as models of the exercise of power over nature, narratives for describing the virtues of discipline and of integrating divergent elements within an organized whole.” (1990, p.653).

From this we take a number of elements, the importance of garden spaces in previous societies, the use of gardens to express and communicate power, the importance of design and lastly, those sources through which such advice was exchanged. Mukerji thus demonstrates the importance of analysing representations of the garden, in her case through books on horticulture. In this way, she turns to the some of the first books on practical gardening, such as those of Alberti in Renaissance Italy for whom the garden “*was a place of retreat and fantasy, wish-fulfillment rather than practical activity. It was to be situated by the house so the garden could function as an outdoor living space.*” (1990, p.661). Gardens were therefore playful spaces for conspicuous display. Mukerji explains how the stylistic shift to French formal gardens involved a changing view of nature whereby the focus was placed upon the ‘geometry of its design’. This was most clearly articulated through the design of parterres and the work of Boyceau for whom the garden was conceived as a representation of the natural, a representation which contained two major characteristics, orderliness and diversity. As Mukerji explains, “*These were the aspects of nature that were revealed by scientific study. The diversity was made clear by empirical observation of particulars. The orderliness was revealed by the fact that natural laws could be written in the language of mathematics. The garden was a representation of the natural, so it too had to display the diversity and unity of nature.*” (1990, p.662).

Mukerji argues that the stylistic differences between Italian, French and English gardens during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can be read as “*systems for mapping social ambitions on nature.*” (1990, p.668). She suggests that the central motif of the English landscape garden was meant to mirror God’s creation, the earth. Gardens were therefore designed to be observed and admired: “*The English garden was a place of study and contemplation of a nature that was other, and perfect in its otherness. It was something beyond human control, and yet under control because people had come to understand and work within its autonomous movements.*” (1990, p.670). Through such representations the underlying message was of the control exerted over land, as expressed through the portraits of landowners in their gardens where the message was one of the land that was tamed and open to their gaze.

Watters (1988) explores the relationship between Victorian literature and garden design theory suggesting that no singular garden ideal existed rather an eclectic range of garden styles from the picturesque, to old-fashioned gardens. In detailing the aesthetics of Victorian garden theory Watters starts with the idea of the garden as “*a work of art rather than an attempt to copy the ‘natural’ landscape.*” (1988, p.9). In this way, much of Victorian literature articulated a disapproval of the eighteenth-century landscape garden ideal, as did the writings of perhaps the most famous garden designer of the time John Claudius Loudon. For Loudon, the appeal of nature was mistaken, rather “*the hand of man should be visible in gardens*” (Watters, 1988, p.9). And this hand is clearly evident through the appeal of the ‘trim’ garden as illustrated through the writings of Trollope and Disraeli. Trollope’s *Can You Forgive Her?* published in 1864-5 contains the following description of John Grey’s house and garden:

“...perhaps the gardens of Nethercoats constituted its greatest glory. They were spacious and excellently kept up, and had been originally laid out with that knowledge of gardening without which no garden, merely as a garden, can be effective. And such, of necessity, was the garden of Nethercoats. Fine single trees there were none there, nor was it possible that there should have been any such. Nor could there be a clear rippling stream with steep green banks, and broken rocks

lying about its bed. Such beauties are beauties of landscape, and do not of their nature belong to a garden. But the shrubs of Nethercoats were of the rarest kind, and had been long enough in their present places to have reached the period of their beauty." (Watters, 1988, pp.10-11).

This style needs to be contrasted to that of the cottage garden or old-fashioned garden, which flourished within Victorian literature, as expressed through the writings of Thomas Hardy to George Eliot. In *Scenes of Clerical Life*, published in 1858, Eliot describes Mr Jerome's garden along the following lines:

"The garden was one of those old-fashioned paradises which hardly exist any longer except as memories of our childhood: no finical separation between flower and kitchen-garden there; no monotony of enjoyment for one sense to the exclusion of another; but a charming paradisiacal mingling of all that was pleasant to the eye and good for food. The rich flower-border running along every walk, with its endless succession of spring flowers, anemones, auriculas, wall-flowers, sweet-williams, campanulas, snap-dragons, and tiger-lilies, had its taller beauties such as moss and Provence roses, varied with espalier apple-trees; the crimson of the neighbouring strawberry beds; you gathered a moss-rose one moment and a bunch of currants the next; you were in a delicious fluctuation between the scent of jasmine and the juice of gooseberries." (in Watters, 1988, p.50).

Watters (1988) argues that the qualities of such gardens included variety, simplicity, harmony, unforced abundance, but also that they mirrored those qualities which Victorians associated with pre-industrial England:

"Of all the old rural scenes the arts had to offer, that of the old-fashioned cottage garden afforded the most coherent, complete, and readily apprehensible symbolic version of the world it at once recalled, ratified, and rendered in miniature. It was also the most bounded and idyllic of these scenes, an image that bracketed off the complicating and discordant realities of agrarian capitalism and rural labour, with a potential for disguising material poverty as natural wealth." (1988, p.51).

From these accounts of contrasting styles we gather a sense of the garden as an empty vessel with which meaning is contained, a meaning which is inextricably linked to notions of society and our vision of ourselves, and our role in that society. This meaning thereby resists definition, is open to change, and borrows from previous eras continually.

The shift to American gardens of the twentieth century is considerable, but in making it we find similar preoccupations, although a democratization of the games being played appears to have taken place, for no longer are we solely concerned with the lives of elite groups. Virginia Scott Jenkins in her study entitled *The Lawn: A History of an American Obsession* (1994) asks the telling question: what do front lawns reveal about American culture? In answering this question she turns to representational forms such as lawn-care advertisements which promoted the ideal of upward mobility through their persuasive and carefully placed images. She suggests that two types of advertisements in early years of 20th century can be spotlighted. The first were straightforward and unsophisticated and simply stated what was available to the gardener; but the second were designed to create markets: "by convincing readers that they should do something new or in a different way." (1994, p.67). Scott Jenkins (1994) explains how lawns at this

time were still perceived as the province of the well-to-do and that therefore advertising appeals used English lawns as a standard of perfection. In this way, she charts the increasing emphasis placed upon public display in such a mobile society where "residents were judged on first impressions from the street." (1994, p.79). Gardens, but more specifically lawns, were marketed as important means by which the character and economic standing of their owners might be displayed. Garden design and advice was thereby democratized, and through magazines Scott Jenkins suggests that "Homeowners were taught that the house should be viewed from the road as a work of art." (1994, p.79). Crucial to this vision was the emphasis placed upon the image of the lawn as a veritable carpet. In this way, "Postwar lawns were marketed to the most white middle class as luxury items that reflected status." (1994, p.81). Embedded in this view of the front garden was the notion of nature as something to be controlled, not simply tamed, but something to be managed and transformed. Echoes of Mukerji's approach thus abound, but Scott Jenkins is able to show how this produced a whole horticultural industry of lawn-care products. As she explains "The standard held up for lawns that requires the grass to be of a single color, texture, and size was unrealistic even for the most devoted gardener; however, it enabled manufacturers to sell more weapons to homeowners in their battle against nature." (1994, p.158).

Scott Jenkins (1994) ends her account with the demise of the lawn aesthetic and the emergence of new trends, aspirations in the face of cultural change. One such being the search for cultural security, as she continues: "Privacy is becoming the new status symbol in a society that is increasingly crowded. As homeowners perceive a breakdown in the social order and must live closer to their neighbors, they are turning inward." (1994, p.187). This comment mirrors the view of Popcorn in her suggestion that gardens have become the buffer zone between 'our cocoons and the real world' (in Rice, 1995). She continues by distancing this search from the everyday practice of gardening itself: "This new wave of flower power seems rooted in a need to escape from a frenzied world rather than a desire to get dirt under the fingernails." (Rice, 1995, p19). Our own approach focuses upon another means of representing the garden, that of the design-inspired, photo-feature, coffee-table lifestyle gardening book.

RECONFIGURING URBAN EXTERIOR SPACES

In the commodified world of consumer culture, marketing books about gardening have become big business. It is no longer sufficient for such books to merely inform about horticultural issues, instead each must have its own USP, its unique take on lifestyle. For *the plant room* (2001), subtitled *a contemporary guide to urban gardening*, the proposition engages readers through a discussion of the changing meaning of gardens and gardening in the context of contemporary lifestyles. The book describes itself as 'mould-breaking' and heralding a 'new age of gardening'. Gardening by this account becomes 'garden-making'; the themed decoration of 'outer space'; the domestication of light, air, flora and space; the commodification of space as an essential component of a new form of identity kit: in other words, an escape from existential angst and alienation, an ontological practice for modern life. From this perspective the book can be read as a manual for time-strapped, design conscious consumers who are presented with quick (already) fixed solutions to some of the problems of contemporary living.

In *the plant room* (2001) representations of gardens are situated against the backdrop of contemporary urban living. The reader is presented with a playful stylistic mixing of codes such as dramatically juxtaposed notions of spatiality and de-centred subjects experimenting with fashion and the stylization of their lives,

in this case through shaping garden space. Images speak simultaneously of intimate and immense geometries making sense of each other; of centre and hierarchy giving way to periphery and horizontality; of the co-existence of agoraphobia and claustrophobia, of shelter and security and vulnerability and uncertainty; of cosy intimate metropolitan corners, secluded peaceful havens overlooking the River Thames (London), Sydney harbor, or Central Park (New York), located amidst the immense voids that punctuate skylines of imposing towers. In this way the garden is positioned as malleable imaginative space (Bachelard, 1994), as territory that is symbolic of the power and promise of modernity and its urge to shape, lift and separate. Rather than viewing the garden as a space that is 'other' to contemporary living, i.e. through a nostalgic return to some long-forgotten past (Hewer, 2003), in *the plant room* the reference point is to conceive of the garden as a mirror held to the rhythms of urban living: "In the cosmopolitan setting of a modern international city such as New York, London or Sydney there is an exciting shift taking place within the gardening world." (2001, p.7). The book employs a touristic quality of representing to the reader 'ideal' garden geometries exploring "contemporary city gardens from around the world, showing the wide range of garden designs that are at the forefront of this new look, and the issues that confront the modern gardener." (2001: 15). In this framing the targeted reader/viewer/consumer is that of the sophisticated aspirational metro-dweller. The book reads like a manifesto, or as the author prefers, 'guide' for the reconfiguring of garden space as outdoor interior. The spatial designs it offers not only anticipate forms of sociality, they transpose the idea of garden space into what Auge understands as a 'proper place', as a "principle of meaning for the people who live in it, and also a principle of intelligibility for the person who observes it" (1995, p.52). Auge asserts that as 'systems of possibilities' places have at least three characteristics in common: as sites of identity construction, of relations and of history. *The Plant Room* also anticipates the work of de Certeau (1984) when it portrays garden space as the place 'in whose terms elements are distributed in relations of coexistence', so that the patterns and rhythms of modern urban living are given expression in what is termed a 'versatile' space to be shaped and designed to 'suit your needs'. The garden is understood as an extension to our living space, an alfresco area for dining and recreation, an outdoor 'room' that flows seamlessly from your house's architecture and style. Not only is it "somewhere to relax, entertain, cook, eat, play and work." (2001, p.7), but somewhere to complement the classic interior of your home with an Italianate garden room featuring chalk white urns, striped fabrics and roman busts: a place for playing with geometries of space, for giving physical shape to the values that organize your life and for making one's lifestyle meaningful.

By this account, the text seeks to cast aside traditional conceptions of the garden as a "place to primarily grow plants" (2001, p.8) or to "imitate or recreate nature" (2001, p.9), to sex-up gardening for a younger generation through his tale of gardening as 'outdoor living'. In this way, we are told that the garden is "a place in which to spend leisure time" (2001, p.9), a space to reflect your personality and taste, an outdoor room in which to enact one's creativity and imagination, to show, find or reveal your selves to yourself. The central metaphor of garden space as a room is interesting in this respect as it heralds, not only the collapse of boundaries between the concepts of outdoor and indoor, but a reconfiguring of garden space whereby the ethos of design becomes paramount: "Some gardens are so closely designed and linked to the interior that the transition between the two has become seamless and the garden has become a real 'indoor-outdoor' room." (2001, p.11).

In a chapter entitled 'the versatile garden' the account of this space as produced through a deliberate and planned set of geom-

etries of design and decoration is outlined. Central to these is the idea of optimizing available space and its use by incorporating a 'large space for general outdoor living'. Within this space, Swift seeks to argue that it is the uses of such a space, the forms of sociality that it engenders that are paramount, rather than the traditional focus upon planting: "If you entertain outside on a regular basis, design a garden where people come first as the plants and features are easier to adapt to a layout than the other way round" (2001, pp.19-20). In this way, we can suggest that what the book outlines are the components of garden-making which are akin to a recipe for modern living, a recipe which has at its centre gardens as dwelling places: "It follows that with small garden you should try to keep a consistent paving level throughout. This will help keep the majority of the space usable...Dividing the garden into two main areas to create spaces for the children to play and the older folk to relax in can work really well." (2001, p.20). Such recipes include such items as the design of the layout, choices over the use of materials and surfaces, but also safety, especially in terms of child-friendliness:

"Safety is an important issue, especially where children are concerned. If the garden is a place to relax and unwind in, it has to also be a safe place where you don't have to be watching the children every minute of the day, and where you can be confident that the kids can't seriously injure themselves. Children are naturally inquisitive and will inevitably test a garden's safety to the max." (2001, p.24).

The importance of foregrounding children is interesting as it demonstrates a number of tensions within this aesthetic of modernism. First, the tension between the notions of the city as vibrant and energetic, with that of the city as a place of danger: "Unfortunately, the city has become a more dangerous place for children and the garden has become the principal place for them to play." (2001, p.12).

The second tension is that between having children in the garden and the effect of this inclusion on the design aesthetic, as we are told that "A child-friendly garden doesn't have to ruin the aesthetics of the design". To illustrate the point we are shown a garden with blue decking surrounding a square sandpit which is full of children's toys.

HORTIPORN: GARDENS AS HETEROTOPIC SPACES

As yet, we have attended to the design aesthetics which are central to *the plant room*. However the book also has fine art and design aesthetic which is equally conveyed through glamorous images of 'rooms' with decking, sparkling lights, glistening water pools, funky tables and chairs for conversation and relaxation and sociality, with verdant hyperreal plants acting as the backdrop to these scenes of contemporary living. All the images have one striking compositional feature in common-the absence of people, of actors. The reader is presented with scenes of outdoor living, whereby the gardens become stages for the drama of social communion, but without any actors being evident, emphasizing to us the agency of the images. One such image (2001, p.25) conveys a typical scene of outdoor living with the trademark large open space devoted to the rituals of everyday life, the text for the image reads as such:

"The cool colours and simple unfussy planting create a relaxing space for outdoor living. All the planting areas are mulched with cockleshells over a landscape fabric to minimize maintenance for the busy owners." (2001, p.24).

The images thus read as lifestyle enactments to provide solutions for the 'busy owners'. The absence of people as actors is interesting, as one might suggest that this facilitates the process of objectification by which viewers insert themselves within the network of traces, objects and imprints that define the images. The viewer is thus given furniture such as recliners and chairs to occupy, so that the garden space becomes a site of choice and critical moments of becoming, a room not for gardening as soil and toil, but a space for the shaping of power, desire and time as leisure-filled. The photographic image becomes a site of representational practice, a site of signifying activity; where photographs can themselves be seen as social agents doing the work of larger cultural forces, where images are required to be that which they are used to signify. In this sense signification can be seen as a constitutive feature of the context of the communication that is taking place around the discursive subject of gardens and gardening.

We refer to the images as 'hortiporn', after Smart's (1994) notion of 'gastroporn, where photography inscribes a 'look' into a subject position that demands submission, activated by mechanisms of fantasy and desire, fetishising goods such as food (Brownlie, Hewer and Horne, 2005; Hewer and Brownlie, 2005a), or in this case gardens, through, as Schroeder and McDonagh (2005, p.5) note, "eroticizing and reifying consumer products". That is to say, as hortiporn, the premeditated images in *the plant room* not only anticipate forms of arousal, they provide simulations of pleasure by means of employing pornography's photographic codes of representation. The pleasure is then derived from the act of gazing, whereby the images themselves act as substitutes for 'real' gardening. Paraphrasing Bywater (2001) we might suggest that hortiporn is to gardening, as gastroporn is to food, and what sexoporn is to sex: "Both are double-edged; they first create a simulacrum of a desire, then a simulacrum of satisfaction." (2001, p.1). For *the plant room* we might suggest that the images function in a number of similar ways. First, they convey images of gardens as desired lifestyles. Second, as forms of hortiporn the images function as *spectacles*, or as Debord suggests: "In societies where modern conditions of production prevail, all of life presents itself as an immense accumulation of *spectacles*. Everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation." (1977, p.95)

For Debord the power of the image is conceived as a monopoly of appearance implying 'passive acceptance'. In *the plant room* the power and potency of the images appear to negate the view of gardening as a form of everyday practice. Instead garden making has become like tourism, a scopic regime, a spectator activity with its own prefigured rules or positions for the viewer (Crouch and Lubben, 2003). The space for any notion of gardening as a performance or practice (De Certeau, 1984) is thus delimited. Instead, the garden is read as a space for desire and consumption:

"As the sun sets, what you have created as your outdoor spaces takes on a completely different look. The ability to extend the hours of the day into the garden can constitute the perfect antidote to stressful city living while reflecting urban culture and all that comes with it." (2001, p.135)

As with a theatrical stage, Swift outlines how different lighting techniques, from spotlighting, to uplighting, to grazing, silhouetting, shadowing and downlighting can be employed to create a 'magical place'. The images of gardens as outdoor rooms can be read as simulated heterotopias. Foucault in the article 'Of Other Spaces' likens the garden space to a heterotopia, "...a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled." (1986a, p.27). As other spaces we argue that the images function as representations of

spectacular artifice, as immaculate conceptions freed of labour and effort, conjured up by the magical hand of consumer culture. They thus function as heterotopic spaces, designed to shelter consumers from the anxiety and vicissitudes of everyday reality (Robins, 1996), but also to reenchant this sphere of everyday life (see Hewer and Brownlie, 2005b).

THE CHOOSING (CONSTRAINED) SELF AND THE WILL TO DESIGN

Within the book the gardener is positioned as above all a consumer, little space is provided for gardening as production, instead consumer choice is foregrounded, whether this be in the form of choices over plants, colours, water features etc. But the logic which unites this aesthetic is one of the will to design. Design has thus become the holy grail of gardening, offering a vocabulary for garden making for the anxious city dweller, as the book promises:

"It takes careful planning to foster plants which will look good in the urban setting. Joe Swift show you how to do this and to choose from the wide range of garden furniture and accessories available to complete the look...in each chapter, Joe looks at layout, planning, colour, landscaping, materials, lighting, irrigation, maintenance, furniture and accessories." (2001, Inside Cover).

From a Foucauldian perspective we might argue that consumer choice or freedom appears to deliver forms of power, the "inculcation of a self managing and choosing self" (Slater, 1997, p.61). Consumer culture is thus said to represent a form of governmentality, a preoccupation with the 'conduct of conduct', whereby the modern consumer conforms to the "norm of the autonomous, responsible subject, obliged to make its life meaningful through acts of choice" (Rose cited by Slater, 1997, p.61). A sphere in which liberation and freedom reveal themselves as ultimately constraining.

However, before the reader becomes too burdened in the face of such freedom, the text is quick to reassure, to offer a solution: "If you are confident about designing your space yourself then that's fine, but if you have a tricky site or find the building aspect complicated then you could consider employing a garden designer. Why not?" (2001, p.15). Such design consultants are thus suggested as providing solutions, able to wave their magical wands for inspiration, aesthetic stimulation and above all to deliver a space that 'functions well'.

However, the image of the panopticon is readily apparent within *the plant room*. The concept of the Loft or roof garden, is thus able to be represented as a form of freedom, an 'oasis in the city', a space where the vista of the city is opened up to the gaze of the loft dweller (see images on pages 54-55 and 59, 2001). As Swift advises:

"The roof garden can be a truly unique and exhilarating space from which the vibrancy of urban life can be viewed, taken part in—or escaped from...However small, the outdoor space can give a property an all-important feeling of freedom—creating an oasis in the city." (2001, p.43).

What appears paramount is the sense of freedom obtained from such an elevated position.

However, other images (see p.50 and 58, 2001) paint a very contrasting picture, here the garden is open to the gaze of the city, a site "to watch over others" (Foucault, 1986b, p.246), but also a space in which to be prone to the gaze of others. For Foucault,

“space is fundamental for the exercise of power” (1986b, p.252). From this perspective, devices such as plants, parasols and trellising are employed to screen the consumer from this objectifying gaze: “...if privacy from overlooking apartments is an issue, consider erecting strong visual boundaries.” (2001, p.45).

In these images the strategic uses of parasols and plants are important in that they function to shelter the consumer from the power of this gaze appears telling. However, dilemmas and guidance over their selection bring us back to the exercise of power as a form of surveillance.

CONCLUSION

In this exploratory paper we read-off aspects of contemporary gardening culture from the subject text, thinking of its images as windows through which to glimpse processes of culture-making at work. Moreover, we argue that those images do not simply reflect culture and that we need to understand those images as instances of culture in the making. Offering more than simply lifestyle recipes, in our view the subject text serves to represent, or position the shaping of space in terms of several discourses located in the magical realm of gardens and gardening, where acts of mundane consumption take on an extraordinary form and are represented as such by various technologies of enchantment. In doing so, we have sought to provide an analysis of representations of the contested space which is the garden, and the ways through which this space is represented to consumers as a locale in which issues of choice, design and surveillance are brought to bear.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

When Brands Join Hands: Examining the Reciprocal Effects of Brand Alliance Strategies on Partner Brand Equity

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SESSION OVERVIEW

Consumer behavior researchers have long been interested in understanding factors that influence consumers' evaluations of brands and brand equity. Previous research has demonstrated that strategic actions such as brand extensions and co-branding influence consumers' perceptions of the parent brands. Such 'reciprocal effects' are often critical to enhancing or diluting brand equity. Brand alliances or co-branded strategies, where two brand names are jointly presented to the consumer are increasingly common. Co-branding can result in enhanced brand recognition, increased product differentiation and greater market share for the focal product. A successful co-branded product therefore, can improve perceptions of the partner brands and enhance their brand equity. However, negative information surrounding the co-branded product is also likely to backfire and dilute the brand equity of the partner brands. Aside from the early work on co-branded strategies (Park, Youl Jun and Shocker 1996, Simonin and Ruth 1998), there is little systematic examination of how consumers react to such co-branded strategies and how consumers use information regarding such co-branded products to modify their perceptions of the parent brands. The objective of this session is to examine the positive and negative reciprocal effects of brand alliance strategies. We present multiple theoretical perspectives on the phenomenon of co-branded strategies and their reciprocal effects on the parent brands. The proposed session builds on the early work by Park et al. (1996) and more recent research that has examined ingredient branded strategies (Desai and Keller 2003). Specifically, the papers in this session demonstrate that there are unexpected benefits and risks of brand alliance strategies that can impact brand equity of the partner brands. The first paper by Piyush Kumar demonstrates how a brand can mitigate the risk of brand counter-extensions by using a co-branded brand extension strategy. The second paper by Geylani, Hofstede and Inman how co-branded strategies may improve the expected values of the attributes of the partner brands, but also increase the uncertainty associated with the partner brands. The third paper by Swaminathan demonstrates how spillover effects may vary as a function of type of concept combination and attribute fit.

"The Reciprocal Effect of Co-Branding: A Counter-Extensions Perspective"

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Brand extension activity between product categories is becoming increasingly bi-directional. As a result, a brand that successfully extends from its parent category into a new extension category often faces a *counter-extension* by a brand from the extension category back into its own parent category. However, while we increasingly see counter-extensions in many product-markets, there is little guidance available regarding how brand extension strategies need to be adjusted in order to mitigate the risk to the parent brand from counter-extensions. It is important to manage this risk to ensure that the gains to the brand from its own extension are not nullified by the losses it might suffer to future counter-extensions into its own parent category.

In this paper, we investigate whether co-branding an extension with a partner brand instead of launching it solo-branded has an

effect on customers' response towards a counter-extension into a brand's parent category. Drawing upon categorization theory, we argue that a successful launch of a solo-branded extension improves customer perceptions of the similarity between the parent and extension product categories. The improvement in similarity enhances perceptions of inter-category fit and, as a consequence, improves customer evaluation of a counter-extension. We further posit that, because a co-branded extension merely inherits select attributes from each partner brand, it leaves the perceptions of similarity between a parent category and the extension category relatively unchanged. Therefore, we hypothesize that a counter-extension will be evaluated less favorably if the previous extension by the focal brand was co-branded with a partner brand than if it was solo-branded.

We use a series of experimental investigations to examine the differential impact of co-branded versus solo-branded extensions on customer evaluation of brand counter-extensions. In each experiment we describe a scenario regarding the past extension activity of the focal brand and a set of unrelated brands. We then measure the subjects' response towards a future counter-extension. The results from the first study show that a counter-extension is evaluated more favorably if the previous extension by the focal brand was solo-branded than if it was co-branded. The evaluation of the counter-extension is especially weaker if the focal brand that launched the previous co-branded extension was a modifier brand than when it was the header brand. The results of the second study show that the differential impact of solo-versus co-branded extensions on the evaluation of the counter-extension persists even when we don't use real brand names in the construction of the stimuli. In both cases, we find that changes in perceptions of inter-category similarity mediate the impact of solo-branded versus co-branded extensions on the evaluation of a counter-extension.

The results of a third study suggest that co-branding results in a lower evaluation of a counter-extension relative to a successful solo-branded extension but not relative to a failed solo-branded extension. They show that a failed solo-branded extension does improve customer evaluation of a counter-extension because it is less likely to change perceptions of similarity between the parent and extension categories. Finally, a fourth study shows that a positioning and communication strategy that explicitly partitions the key attributes of a co-branded extension and relates them to the respective partner brands lowers the evaluation of a counter-extension. Further, under an attribute partitioning-based positioning strategy, the evaluation of the counter-extension does not depend on whether the focal brand serves as the header or the modifier brand in the previous co-branded extension.

Taken together, the results from the four studies show that customers evaluate a counter-extension *less favorably* if the preceding extension by the focal brand is co-branded than if it is solo-branded. The studies also show that the discrepancy between the evaluations of counter-extensions following the two alternative branding strategies results from the differences in the levels of post-extension perceptual similarity between a brand's parent and extension categories. Specifically, a successful solo-branded extension results in a greater improvement in the perceptions of inter-category similarity than does a co-branded extension. A brand in the exten-

sion category benefits from the relatively greater increase in the psychological proximity between the two categories following a solo-branded extension because its counter-extension is evaluated more favorably than what it would be if the previous extension was co-branded.

Overall, the paper provides a novel perspective on the defensive role of co-branding and suggests that launching an extension in partnership with a complementary brand may not only improve the attribute profile of a brand's own extension, it may also help protect the brand against counter-extensions. It also shows that the partner brands that launch a co-branded extension can further protect themselves against counter-extensions by using a positioning and communication strategy that explicitly outlines their respective contributions to the co-branded product. The findings suggest that the strategic choice between solo-branding versus co-branding an extension may influence the evaluation of not only a brand's own extension, but also of counter-extensions into its parent category. It provides some new directions regarding the criteria used to select partner brands as well as the configuration of a co-branded extension.

“Image Reinforcement or Impairment: The Effects of Co-Branding on Attribute Uncertainty”

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Co-branding is a brand alliance strategy in which two or more brands are simultaneously presented to consumers. There is a wide range of brand alliance activities in the marketplace, ranging from advertising several brands in a single ad (e.g., Shell and Ferrari ads featuring both brands simultaneously, or ads showing the complementary consumption of McDonald's Fries and Coca-Cola) to jointly branded products (e.g., Lexus Coach Edition or Kellogg's Healthy Choice Cereal). In recent years, co-branding has become a strategic tool for many companies to attain higher market shares. There are a variety of reasons driving the surge in co-branding ranging from the desire to gain access to new markets to the attempt to signal unobservable quality. A key motivation for co-branding is image reinforcement, and this is the aspect on which we focus in this research. Previous research has also examined the effects of co-branding on brands' images. These studies investigated attribute or affect transferal that occurs as a result of co-branding. In our paper, we not only analyze attribute transferal but also how co-branding affects attribute uncertainty of the partner brands and that of the co-branded product.

This study addresses a number of issues important for managers considering co-branding as an image reinforcement strategy. More specifically, we study when a brand's image is reinforced or impaired as a result of co-branding, and which partner is right for a firm that considers co-branding for image reinforcement. We address these issues by investigating the effects of co-branding on attribute uncertainty of partner brands, when these brands are complementary in terms of their attribute performances and salencies. We conceptualize a specific attribute belief as a two-dimensional construct with location reflecting the average performance of the attribute and reliability reflecting the degree of certainty consumers have about the performance of the brand on the attribute. We argue that these parameters are updated after consumers are exposed to the co-branding activity. We incorporate theories of consumer behavior in a mathematical formulation for updating the location and degree of certainty in a multi-attribute co-branding model. Our model formalizes the formation of co-branded product beliefs using the notion that the greater the saliency of an associa-

tion, the greater its accessibility from memory. In our formulation, the updating of brand beliefs as a result of a co-branding activity relies on the occurrence of subtypes. Several propositions follow from our model, which we test in an experiment.

Our model predicts that partner brands attract each other through an alliance. That is, the difference between the locations of the brands decreases through an alliance. This was supported by the experiment which showed significant attraction of brands through co-branding. However, an important implication of our study is that it is not necessarily in a brand's interest to choose the best performing partner on the attribute of interest. Rather, it is optimal to collaborate with a brand that is perceived to be of only moderately higher performance. We find that inconsistent images of the partner brands may result in confusion about the co-branded product and cause high uncertainty about the joint venture. Moreover, when the brands are far apart, our analysis and experiment show that the co-branded product is regarded as an exception, and thus, does not substantially affect the formation of posterior partner beliefs. Considering that partner brands attract each other through an alliance, it is best to collaborate with a brand that is perceived to have a moderately higher performance. With a partner performing moderately higher, expected attribute belief of the brand will be enhanced with a less likelihood of subtyping and without an increase in uncertainty about this attribute.

Another important result of our study is that co-branding for image reinforcement may not be a viable strategy for reliable brands (brands for which consumers have low degree of uncertainty about their performance). This is because both our theory and experiment show that uncertainty associated with the reliable brand increases through co-branding. According to our results, although, location of a reliable brand improves when it co-brands with a better performing brand, no matter what partner the reliable brand chooses, its reliability always decreases (uncertainty associated with it increases). Thus, managers of reliable brands should carefully consider the trade-off between this risk of image impairment and advantages of collaboration.

Finally, according to our results, total location (total expected performance) of the partner brands improve as a result of co-branding suggesting brands reinforce their images. This is due to the pull of the highly performing brand. However, under certain conditions, uncertainty associated with the brands increases through co-branding. This is due to uncertainty transfer between the brands and to possible consumer confusion that can arise from a co-branded product that is inconsistent with the partner brand's prior image.

“Spillover Effects of Co-Branded Strategies: The Role of Attribute Fit and Type of Concept Combination”

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This research focuses on spillover effects of co-branded strategies or the extent to which information regarding the co-branded product modifies perceptions of the constituent brand names. Specifically, this research examines the differential impact of attribute fit on spillover effects based on the type of concept combination. Previous research by Park et al. (1996) suggests that attribute-level complementarity will enhance the perception of the co-branded product leading to greater spillover effects when attribute complementarity is high and lower spillover effects when attribute complementarity is low. Indeed, Park et al. find evidence that attribute complementarity moderates the extent of spillover effects. We suggest that the impact of attribute-level fit between co-branded partners on parent brand attitudes is moderated by the type of concept combination.

Recent research on concept combinations has shown that people process noun-noun combinations in two different ways (property-based interpretation or relational interpretation). Property interpretations involved one of more properties of the modifier concept being applied to the head concept. Relational interpretations involve focusing on relationships among objects where each of the entities may play different functional roles. The type of concept combination (property-based or relational) may have an impact on the manner by which concepts are combined. For instance, in the case of Godiva cakemix by Slimfast, when property interpretations take place, consumers may map onto Godiva chocolate the properties of Slimfast (e.g., low calorie) and the tendency may be to think of this combination as a type of Godiva chocolate but with some health benefits.

In contrast, when thematic relationships are the focus, a combination of Godiva and Slimfast may evoke the possible ways in which these two may be consumed together, e.g., perhaps by people who are on a diet. These differences in concept combination may result in differential spillover effects on the constituent brand names.

In order to investigate the potential role of property-based and relational concept combinations on co-brand spillover effects, we prime a subject to process either relationally or in a property-based fashion first using the procedure suggested by Wisniewski and Love (1990). Following the administering of this prime, we examine reactions to co-branded partnerships that have either high or low levels of attribute complementarity. We expect that a high level of attribute complementarity will only matter when property priming takes place. A high level of attribute complementarity will not matter when relational priming takes place. Further, we suggest that this differential impact of attribute complementarity in the relational versus property conceptual combination will hold only under high levels of motivation. In addition, we suggest that the impact of attribute fit on co-brand spillover effects will vary across cultures, with East Asians exhibiting a thinking style that utilizes relational concept combinations and Westerners exhibiting a thinking style that utilizes property-based interpretations.

We test these ideas in a series of three studies. The first study examines the impact of relational versus property-based concept combinations by priming these conditions. The second study examines whether the level of motivation interacts with thinking style to impact co-brand evaluations and subsequently influences the host brand equity. The third study examines whether differences in dominant thinking style across cultures and the impact of such differences on spillover effects of co-branded strategies. Results of this research demonstrate that the impact of attribute fit varies based on the type of concept combination and level of motivation. In other words, a highly complementary combination such as Godiva cakemix by Slimfast resulted in significantly higher spillover effects than a less complementary combination such as Godiva cakemix by Haagen Dazs only when property-based interpretations took place. In the case of relational combinations, both types of co-branded products resulted in similar spillover effects. Further, these differences were only seen in the case of high motivation. Implications of these results for research on spillover effects are discussed.

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Why Consumers Buy Lottery Tickets When the Sun Goes Down on Them. The Depleting Nature of Weather-Induced Bad Moods

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Lottery play is a phenomenon of all times that occurs around the world (Garrett 2001). In the present paper we investigate whether lottery play is linked to the amount of sunshine that consumers are exposed to. Earlier, it has been argued that certain consumer behaviors reflect adaptations to variations in the duration and intensity of sunlight (Parker and Tavassoli 2000). We conducted a longitudinal study in which we analyzed over eight years of semiweekly Belgian lottery-expenditure data. A seasonal time-series model showed that as the number of hours of sunshine decreased, the level of engagement in lottery play increased, even after controlling for other relevant drivers such as people's inertia, time-varying characteristics of the game, and deterministic seasonal components.

In subsequent laboratory studies, we investigated *why* this link between a reduction in sunlight and an increased engagement in lottery play takes place. We propose that a reduced exposure to sunshine leads to negative mood, which in turn leads to an increased engagement in lottery play. In a second study, we provide correlational evidence for the link between bad mood and lottery play. In addition, we test in a sequence of studies (2, 3, and 4) two alternative hypotheses as to why the link between bad mood and lottery play occurs. A first hypothesis (i.e., the mood repair hypothesis) states that negative moods prime a mood repair goal (Tice, Bratslavsky, and Baumeister 2001), which may be realized through lottery play (Pezza Leith and Baumeister 1996). In this model, lottery play serves as a means to repair one's bad mood. It predicts that lottery play will be related to people's mood *at the moment* they are given the opportunity to buy lottery tickets. A second hypothesis (i.e., the depletion hypothesis) builds on the theory of self-control depletion (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, and Tice 1998; Muraven, Tice, and Baumeister 1998), which states that all acts of self-control draw on a common limited resource that is akin to energy or strength. Hence, exertion of self-control is followed by a period of diminished capacity to exert self-control (i.e., self-control depletion). One factor that weakens self-control is active mood regulation (Baumeister and Heatherton 1996; Vohs and Baumeister 2000). Attempts to regulate emotions deplete the same limited resource that is needed to resist temptations as lottery (Vohs and Baumeister 2000). In this model, lottery play reflects a reduced resistance to temptation after engagement in active mood regulation attempts. It predicts that lottery play will be related to people's mood some time *before* they are given the opportunity to buy lottery tickets. Indeed, people need a time lag of several minutes to engage in active mood regulation attempts (e.g., Baumeister et al. 1998).

Study 2 was a laboratory study that was correlational in nature. Participants filled out a PANAS (Watson, Clark, and Tellegen 1988), engaged in a creativity task during which they were given the opportunity to regulate their mood, and filled out another PANAS. Subsequently, they were given the opportunity to buy lottery tickets. Our dependent variable was each participant's amount of lottery expenditures. We found that the worse participants felt upon entering the laboratory, the higher their lottery expenditures were later. This provided support for the hypothesis that lottery play is related to negative mood. In addition, as lottery

expenditures were related to the extent to which people felt bad some time *before* they were given the opportunity to buy tickets, this finding was consistent with the depletion explanation. The depletion hypothesis was further supported by the finding that negative mood had decreased during the creativity task. In addition, we found that the bigger the reduction in negative mood was, the higher lottery expenditures were.

Study 3 aimed at experimentally manipulating mood and finding further evidence for the depletion hypothesis. Participants filled out the PANAS, were assigned to a bad or a good mood condition (i.e., by reading a description of a character walking around in cloudy or sunny weather conditions, respectively; Tice, Bratslavsky, and Baumeister 2001), filled out the PANAS again, were assigned to a depleting or a non-depleting condition (i.e., by engaging in a Stroop color-naming task in which colors and color names were mismatched or matched, respectively; Wallace and Baumeister 2002), and were given the opportunity to buy lottery tickets. The mood manipulation was crossed with the depletion manipulation, resulting in four experimental conditions. We found that lottery expenditures were higher for depleted than non-depleted participants, irrespective of their mood states. Although this finding seemed to rule out the mood repair explanation, one could argue that the mood repair explanation was not tested fairly, because of the lag between the mood induction and lottery play in our design. We conducted a follow-up experiment in which we removed the lag. We found that lottery expenditures were as high for participants in a good mood as for participants in a bad mood. Overall, the results of study 3 provided support for the depletion hypothesis for lottery play.

We conducted a fourth study in which we manipulated depletion due to engagement in active mood regulation attempts. A bad mood was induced for all participants in the same way as in study 3. Before and after the mood manipulation, participants were asked to fill out a PANAS. Subsequently, participants engaged in depleting mood regulation attempts or received a non-depleting good mood induction (i.e., by writing down their stream of consciousness or hand-copying a description of tranquility, respectively). Afterwards, participants were given the opportunity to buy lottery tickets. We found that lottery expenditures were significantly higher for participants who engaged in depleting attempts to regulate their bad moods than for participants whose mood was regulated by means of the mood induction procedure.

Overall, our studies showed that lottery play is linked to bad weather and weather-induced bad moods. Depleting mood regulation seems to be the underlying process for this link.

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Meddling-in of Affect in Information Integration

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Given the growing interest in the role of affect in consumer decision-making, in this article we examine the meddling-in role of stimulus-induced affect in the process of information integration. A large body of work on task-induced affect conceptualizes affect and cognition as two independent modules where the affective module works faster and gives an instant feedback compared to the cognitive module, which is slower and more deliberative. Therefore, the speed of affective reactions to the stimulus influences the decision making by preempting the slower response from the cognitive module.

We suggest that affect should not only influence cognitive processing, it should also have the capacity to meddle with information integration. Specifically, many decisions require the integration of information (given that information may be received at sporadic and infrequent intervals) to form accurate representation. We suggest that if one element of information elicits a strong affective reaction, this affect could then interfere with the information integration process by providing higher weight to the affectively charged element. Therefore, the appropriate stimulus should allow us to examine whether affective experiences cause biases in the information integration process. We discuss a series of studies that utilize different versions of the stimulus, relevant to everyday consumer decision-making, to test the prediction regarding the meddling-in of affect in information integration and how such meddling-in can be detected in altered mental representations. To test our predictions that affect meddles in with the process of information integration we constructed a stimulus wherein the failure to integrate information properly could result in a normatively indefensible choice. The stimulus was a choice set comprised of two alternatives, one being a dominant alternative. Information about each alternative was given on two related dimensions. An integration of both dimensions (since they were related) revealed the dominance relationship, with one alternative being better than the other. However, the stimuli were designed such that information on one dimension created an affective response in favor of the suboptimal option. Thus, the choice of the sub-optimal option allowed us to infer the meddling-in role of affect in information integration. In other words, if the information were integrated, the choice of the dominant option would become patently obvious. The inability to choose the dominant option would reflect problematic information integration.

These findings have important implications for consumer decision-making as many decisions require the consumer to make a choice after comparing and contrasting presented information. The decision could be a choice between banks, cell phone plans, product return options etc. If one of the options produces an affective reaction that hinders proper information integration of all the presented information then this would result in the consumer reaching a biased (probably sub-optimal) decision. In this article, we propose and find evidence that the affect generated from the provided stimulus does meddle-in with the process of information integration leading to the choice of a suboptimal option. The experiments use the setting discussed above of choice between banks, cell phone plans, ATMs and mail-in rebates to demonstrate the relevance of these findings for consumer decision-making.

Across four experiments, we document a tendency on the part of individuals to choose a sub-optimal option due to the meddling-in role of affect in the process of information integration. Experiment 1 uses a cell-phone minutes and penalty structure to show people's preference for the suboptimal option because the presented information gives an illusion of leniency to the suboptimal option, which results in this affect meddling-in with the process of information integration resulting in a non-normative choice. Experiment 2 uses a mail-in rebate scenario to show the robustness of this phenomenon in both the domain of gain as well as that of loss. Experiment 3 uses the misattribution paradigm to show the crucial role of affect. We followed this misattribution paradigm to test whether it is the affective reaction that is hindering information integration. In line with the findings of past research, we show that if participants were told that the background music could affect their subjective liking for an option, the positive affect experienced (due to the illusion of leniency given by the suboptimal option) is misattributed to the background music. Hence, the choice of suboptimal option is reduced when participants misattribute their affective signal to the music. In Experiment 4 we use an affective versus cognitive priming manipulation to show that affect is not merely being used as a cue but actually distorts the mental representations of the choice set, suggesting that the experienced affective reaction meddled, or interfered, with the process of information integration.

In sum, we hypothesize that the experience of an affective reaction meddles with ongoing information processing—by making us 'see what our affect wants us to see'—thereby resulting in systematic distortions of the resultant mental representation. In other words, affective reactions serve to facilitate and inhibit the formation of certain mental representations. Evidence for such interplay between the parallel, loosely interacting systems of affect and cognition, provide a more detailed picture of the apparatus underlying human choice and preference. We suggest that feelings are not just used as information but feelings also interfere with information integration.

Why Feelings Stray: Sources of Affective Misforecasting in Consumer Behavior

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ABSTRACT

Affective misforecasting (AMF) is defined as the gap between predicted and experienced affect. Based on prior research that examines AMF, the current study uses qualitative and quantitative data to examine the sources of AMF (i.e., why it occurs) in the consumption domain. The authors find evidence supporting some sources of AMF identified in the psychology literature, develop a fuller understanding of others, and, find evidence for novel sources of AMF not previously explored. Importantly, they find considerable differences in the sources of AMF depending on whether feelings are worse than or better than forecast.

INTRODUCTION

Before purchase: *"I can't wait to use this all the time, it is going to be so much fun, I'm going to go out with my buddies and use it all the time. I am so happy."*

After purchase: *"It does not play a significant role in my life now, and I use it only on occasion."*

-Male (21)

Before purchase: *"This is going to be great. I am going to pay so much attention to my new dog. I will walk her everyday. I am so excited."*

After purchase: *"I am upset with myself for not thinking about the future. I was blinded by excitement at the time of purchase. I just am tired of it and don't want to spend time with it anymore."*

-Female (20)

Research in psychology suggests that when people think about their emotional futures, they are often wrong (Gilbert et al 1998; Loewenstein and Schkade 2000). In other words, they will exhibit Affective Misforecasting (hereafter AMF), experiencing a gap between predicted and experienced feelings. This paper is designed to determine whether the sources (or reasons) for AMF identified in the psychology literature is generalizable to consumer contexts. More importantly, we contribute to the AMF literature by determining whether *different* sources of AMF cause feelings to be better than forecasted vs. worse than forecasted. We also identify novel sources of AMF not previously revealed in the extant literature.

AFFECTIVE FORECASTING AND MISFORECASTING

A growing body of research indicates that decision-making is based on individuals' predictions or forecasts about how a given product will make them feel in the future (Bagozzi et al 1998; Mellers and McGraw 2001; Perugini and Bagozzi, 2001; Shiv and Huber 2000). A different body of research in psychology, however, also indicates that these *forecasts are often wrong*—as individuals feel quite differently about an outcome or decision than they predicted they would (e.g., Mellers et al. 1999; Gilbert et al. 1998; Loewenstein and Schkade 2000; Wilson et al. 2000). The fact that choices are based on predictions about how consumption will make the consumer feel, coupled with a tendency for inaccuracy in these forecasts suggests considerable potential for heightened satisfaction when consumers feel better than forecast, or dissatisfaction when they feel worse than forecast. Therefore, understanding the

drivers of AMF has considerable import for consumer behavior, particularly in the area of consumer satisfaction, brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth.

Figure 1 depicts the process by which affective misforecasting occurs (for greater detail see MacInnis, Patrick and Park 2005). As Figure 1 suggests, affective forecasts are based on a representation of a future event and an assessment of the possible affective reactions to this event. AMF occurs when experienced affect deviates from the forecasted affect on one or more of the following dimensions: valence, intensity and duration.

Since forecasts can be made regarding the valence of the feelings, the specific emotions expected to be experienced, the intensity of feelings or the duration of a projected affective response, consequently affective misforecasting can occur along any of these dimensions. In this research we are particularly concerned with misforecasting along intensity and valence dimensions, such that feelings are either better than forecast (BTF) or worse than forecast (WTF).

SOURCES OF AFFECTIVE MISFORECASTING

A growing literature in psychology has examined the sources of affective misforecasting—or why predictions of future affect are often erroneous. As shown in Figure 2, in some cases, consumers feel different from forecasted because they initially *represented the future erroneously*, failed to consider critical details, were influenced by other influences at the time, or failed to consider other things that might make them happy. In other cases, consumers felt different from expected because they did not adequately or accurately *imagine their affective reaction* to the future outcome. In some cases consumers failed to *adjust their forecasts based on their current emotional state*. In other cases, the actual outcome was as expected, but simply did not produce the *intensity* of emotion imagined. Within these broad categories, several subcategories of AMF sources are identified and described briefly in Figure 2 (see MacInnis, Patrick and Park 2005 for more detailed discussion).

Research Objectives

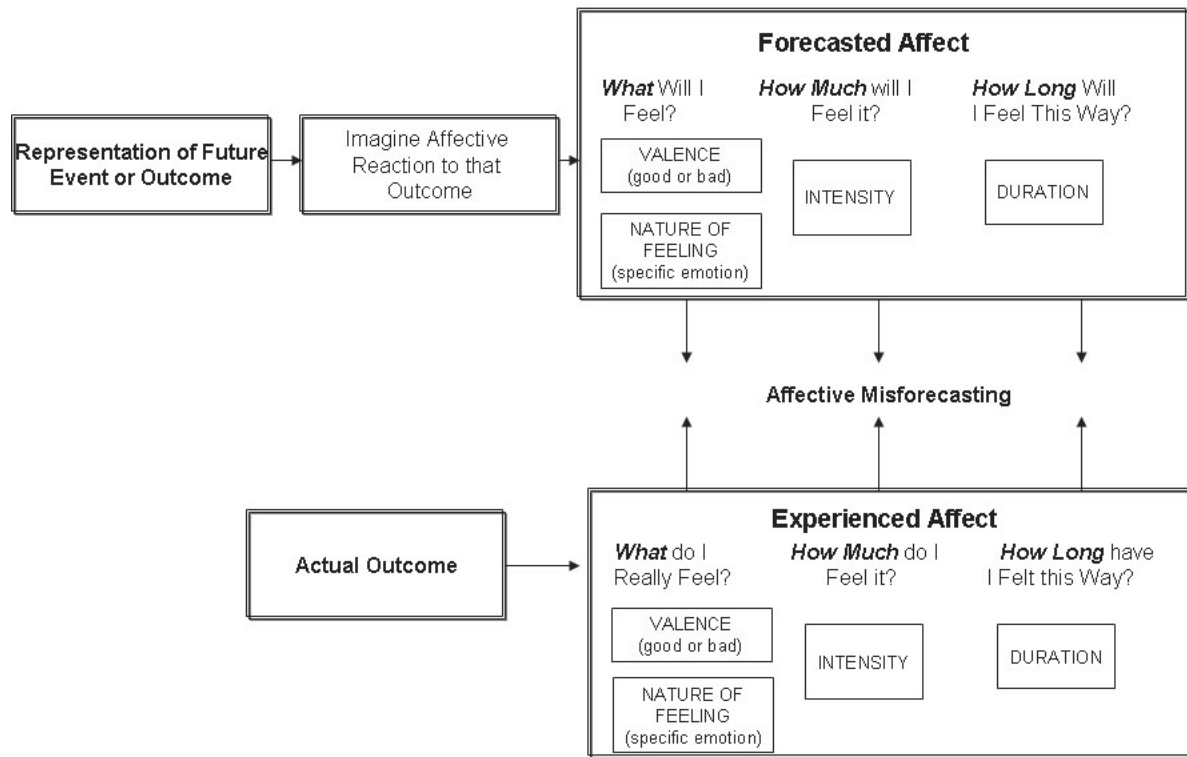
While interesting, the framework in Figure 2 was based on studies that involved neither consumption nor satisfaction. As such, it is useful to consider (a) whether the sources of AMF identified in Figure 2 generalize to such contexts and (b) whether these contexts evoke novel sources of AMF unique to the consumption domain. Since satisfaction deals with outcomes that are not only different from expected but either better than or worse than expected (i.e., they are valenced judgments) it is also useful to consider (c) whether the sources of AMF differ depending on whether consumers feel better than forecast or worse than forecast. The study described below was designed to assess these three issues.

METHODOLOGY

Design

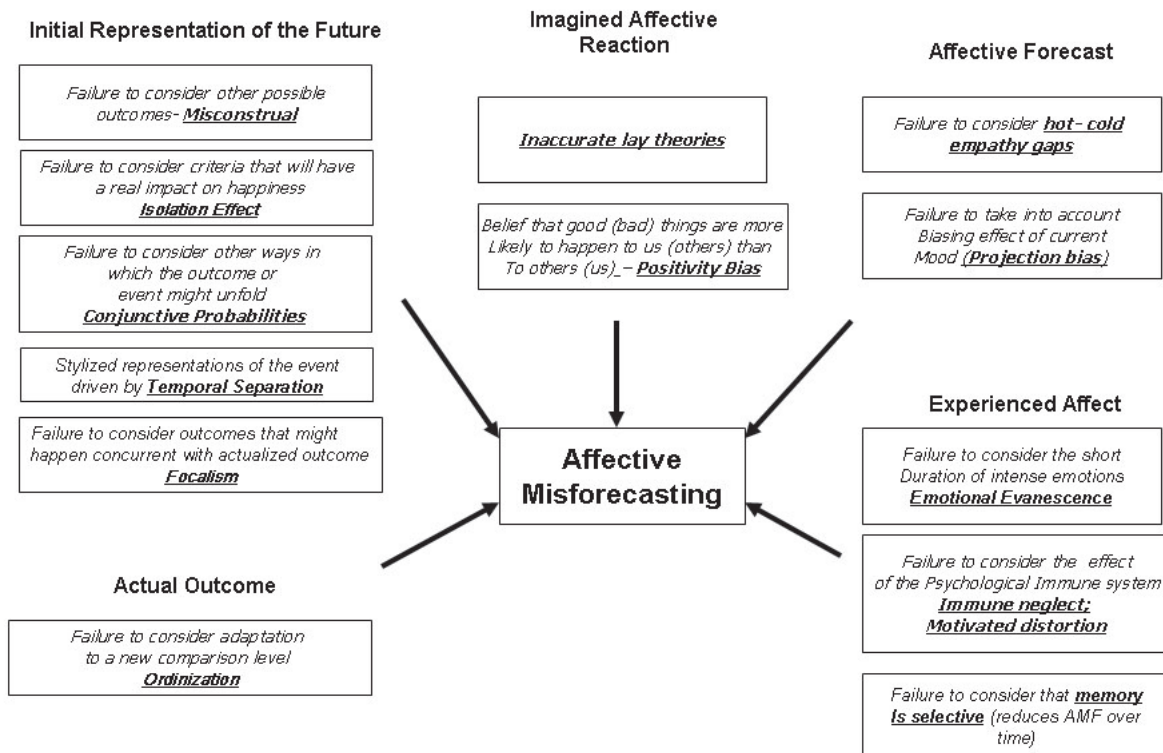
Given the exploratory nature of the study coupled with the notion that satisfaction is a process that evolves over time, we used a critical incident paradigm where (a) consumers could choose the purchase incident and (b) where the time frame in question (i.e., immediately following purchase, a short time or a longer time post-purchase) would vary across respondents. Respondents were divided into three groups: one group reported on a consumption

FIGURE 1
Affective Forecasting and Misforecasting



Source: Adapted from MacInnis, Patrick and Park (2005) Review of Marketing Research, Volume 2, 43-79.

FIGURE 2
Categorization of the Sources of Affective Misforecasting in the extant literature



Source: Adapted from MacInnis, Patrick and Park (2005) Review of Marketing Research, Volume 2, 43-79.

incident in which they felt better than forecasted (referred to as BTF, henceforth) (N=25); a second reported on a consumption incident in which they felt worse than forecasted (referred to as WTF, henceforth) (N=22); a control group (N=40) was asked to report on a situation in which they felt different from forecasted. The qualitative data from the respondents in this latter group would reveal whether consumption episodes that are better than forecasted are more or less salient in memory than those that are worse than forecasted.

Quantitative Measures

Respondents used a 9-point happiness scale to indicate how happy they felt when thinking about their purchase now (1=not at all, 9=extremely). As expected, happiness with the purchase in the “better than forecast” condition was significantly greater than happiness in the “worse than forecast” condition (8.03 vs. 3.51, $F(1,85)=145.41, p<.05$).

Respondents were also asked to report how frequently an incident like the one they reported occurred on a 7-point scale where 1=not at all often, and 7=very often. They also responded on 1-9 point agreement scales to a set of statements designed to represent some of the most frequently mentioned sources of AMF in past literature; namely, *misconstrual*, *focalism*, the *hot-cold empathy gap*, see Table 2 for items.

Qualitative Measures

A qualitative analysis of the data was then conducted, with responses placed within the categories represented in Figure 2 or placed in novel content categories. Inter-rater agreement among two coders knowledgeable about the categorization scheme provided by MacInnis, Patrick and Park 2004 (as shown in Figure 2) was .98.

RESULTS

Memory Salience

The results reveal that worse than forecasted experiences are more salient in memory than better than forecasted experiences. As evidence, 90% of control subjects (36 of 40) reported experiences that were worse than forecasted. Furthermore, subjects reported that feeling WTF occurred more frequently than feeling BTF ($M=5.47$ vs. $M=4.58, F(1,60)=3.72, p<.05$). The responses of control group subjects were subsequently combined with subjects in the BTF (if they reported a BTF experience) or WTF conditions (if they reported a WTF experience).

Sources of Affective Misforecasting

The results of the qualitative data, as summarized in Table 1 (a) replicate the sources of AMF identified from prior research, (b) identify novel sources of AMF, and (c) show differences in the sources found for BTF vs. WTF experiences. The results that correspond with the table and above noted conclusions are described below.

Sources Linked to the Initial Representation of the Future

Misconstruals. *Misconstrual* occurs when individuals consider one way in which an outcome might turn out and fail to consider others. Failing to take into consideration the temporal location of an event influences how we imagine it (Liberman and Trope 1998), how we appraise or evaluate it (Loewenstein and Elster 1992) how often we think about it (Fingerman and Perlmutter 1995) and how optimistic we are about it (e.g., Shepperd et al. 1996) are all dimensions of *misconstrual*. We found considerable evidence for *misconstrual* both when consumers felt WTF and BTF.

Moreover, we also found evidence of *misconstrual* of things besides outcomes (the focus of past research on AMF). We also found more variation in the types of *misconstruals* consumers used in the WTF compared to the BTF condition. These conclusions are illustrated below.

Consistent with past research on AMF, *misconstrual of outcomes* was observed:

In planning my trip I felt confused, overwhelmed, inexperienced, and unsure about lodging. I am extremely happy about my decision now because what I feared might turn out to be a mistake was actually the best vacation I have ever had. (BTF)

We also found evidence of *misconstrual* of other aspects of consumption not predicted by the expectancy-disconfirmation model, including *misconstrual of usage*:

I still am very happy and satisfied with the product. I still use it about every day, and I love music. (BTF)

Although I really liked the shoes at the time of purchase, I didn't think about how many times I would get to wear them and now it's been so long, I would rather buy a new pair of nice shoes that would make me happy. (WTF)

Interestingly, while these were the only types of *misconstrual* for consumers in the BTF condition, those in the WTF condition showed additional types, including *misconstrual of changes in the marketplace, changes in the economy, the need for the product in one's life, and social disapproval*. The following examples illustrate each type respectively:

Times change and so do trends. I was very excited about the purchase because it was new and “in” at the time. Although only a few months have passed, I already feel like it is out of style. (WTF)

I feel that I should have held off on the purchase because the prices of property came crashing down after an economic shakeout in Asia. If I were to try to sell it now, I would not be able to recover my cost, let alone think of making profit like I did when I made my first purchase. (WTF)

[I thought] This is going to be so fun. I'm going to go out with my buddies and use it all the time. The item does not play a significant role in my life now. (WTF)

Relatedly, some consumers anticipated feeling happy from product purchase because it would bring *social acknowledgement*. They felt worse than forecast at finding this social acknowledgement not forthcoming:

I thought the girls would notice my watch and perceive something good. Instead, I found that college age women don't really appreciate the prestige of an Omega watch. Even though I love the quality, beauty, reliability and workmanship of my Omega, it didn't help my status with women. (WTF)

Others failed to anticipate *post-consumption social comparisons* and their impact on future feelings. As one respondent noted:

After a year I saw all my friends driving nicer cars than mine and I was jealous. (WTF)

TABLE 1
Sources of AMF: Time of Occurrence and Characteristic Features

Time of Error	Nature of Error	Observed in BTF condition*	Observed in WTF condition*
Initial Representation (Painting a picture of the future)	Painting the wrong picture (Miscontrual)	X	X
	Painting the picture wrong (Framing/Isolation effect)	X	X
	Failing to account for the process (Conjunctive Probabilities)		X
	Painting an incomplete picture (Focalism, Focusing illusion)		X
The Forecast	Relying on the wrong theory (Inaccurate lay theories)	X	
	Being in the wrong state (Hot-cold empathy gaps)		X
	Situational influences (Projection Bias)		X
	Everything goes back to normal sometime (Ordinization)		X
The Experience	Seeing it the way I want to (Motivated Distortion)		X
	I made a thorough decision (Felt Security in the Thoughtfulness of Decision) **	X	
	Your liking influences my liking (Social Influence) **	X	
	You make me feel better (External Validation) **	X	
	I just didn't listen to my gut (Failure to heed decision rules) **		X
	I simply listened to my gut (Impulsive thoughtless decision making) **		X
	I want it therefore I need it (Escalation of anticipated consumption utility) **		X

* domain in which the source was observed, either BTF or WTF

** novel sources of AMF observed in the consumption domain

The Isolation Effect. The isolation effect occurs when individuals focus on some criterion in making their decisions but fail to realize that it is actually other criteria that will make them happy. We also found considerable evidence for the isolation effect, in both the BTF and WTF condition. For example, though one respondent in the BTF condition believed that happiness from his new car would be based on how cool it was, he later discovered that happiness was tied to its reliability:

After a month or so, I thought the car was not as cool as some other cars that had come out. But now that I have owned it for

two years with no major problems, I have found that it is a reliable automobile that I can depend on, transport my stuff and go on vacations with. (BTF)

Another respondent in the WTF condition believed that happiness with the apartment he rented would be predicated on the services offered by apartment complex; he failed to consider that happiness would really be a function of distance to campus.

I thought it would be great because of the services it provided and I was really excited about it, but then I realized that it

TABLE 2
Self-Reported Sources of AMF in the Better than Forecast vs. Worse than Forecast Conditions

Source of AMF	Item	BTF Means	WTF Means
<i>Misconstrual</i>	I did not consider how useful the product really was	4.46	4.83
<i>Focalism</i>	I had not taken into account all the other possessions I have when I made this purchase.	4.27	5.28*
<i>Inaccurate Lay Theories</i>	When I imagined how I would feel after the purchase, I did not imagine that I would be feeling this way	5.58	6.94*
	After I purchased and used it I knew I was just wrong about what I thought I would feel.	3.31	5.75*
<i>Hot-Cold Empathy Gaps</i>	Before purchase I was excited and charged up, but reality hit me after I purchased and used it.	4.19	4.19
<i>Projection Bias</i>	I bought the product when I was in a good mood	6.58	7.14
<i>Ordinization</i>	I did not take into consideration that I would get bored or fed-up with the product after a while	4.31	6.28*
<i>Emotional Evanescence</i>	I did not anticipate that the pleasure I would get from the product would fade so quickly.	3.69	6.33*

Means based on 9-point agreements scales (1= strongly disagree; 9= strongly agree)

* Differences significant at the $p < .05$ level

wasn't so great because it was too far from campus and I felt weighed down with having to drive in every day. (WTF)

Interestingly, while past research has identified the isolation effect in terms of using the wrong criteria, in the WTF condition we also found evidence of the isolation effect as a source for AMF due to reliance on others' vs. one's own when making a purchase decision. For example, one respondent noted:

The store made me feel that I really "needed the shirt when, if I thought about it, I really didn't. (WTF)

Conjunctive Probabilities. AMF tied to conjunctive probabilities reflects the fact that we often make a prediction about how happy a future event (e.g., going on vacation) will make us feel without adequately considering the number of discrete events that must occur in between the event's representation and its actualization (e.g., getting airline tickets, finding the right place to stay, having good weather, etc.). However, since any one of these contingent events may not occur as expected, AMF is possible. We found evidence (albeit limited) for this source of AMF but here only in the WTF condition:

The [computer] is still relatively new and I'm sure it will satisfy me in the future more but as of right now, I'm just waiting for it to work out. (WTF)

In this case, predicted happiness from buying a new computer was stymied because several events prior to its working went wrong (e.g. the operating system; installing a CD drive).

Focalism. With focalism AMF is tied to an individual's failure to consider what other outcomes (e.g., whiney and hungry kids; mosquitoes) might occur at the same time as that future event (e.g., a family swim before dinner). Wilson et al (2000) demonstrated that affective forecasts are erroneous when people focus only on the most salient event and fail to take into consideration other factors that might play a role. Similarly, Schkade and Kahneman (1998) illustrate this tendency to focus on the one factor that is salient at the time of judgment or decision-making and to downplay others, a phenomenon they termed the "focusing illusion". Although past research has focused a great deal on focalism, we found evidence for this source of AMF only in the WTF condition:

I purchased a pair of Oakley sunglasses last summer but due to my corrective glasses, that would require me to get sunglasses. I have been just too lazy and too stressed out to go get my eyes examined and get contacts. (WTF)

This consumer predicted that purchasing Oakley sunglasses would make her feel happy; however, she also failed to consider the other things that would happen along with the purchase of the sunglasses (exams, needs for relaxation) that would fail to produce the happiness she envisioned.

Sources Linked to the Imagined Affective Reaction to the Event

Inaccurate Lay Theories. We may mispredict how much pain/pleasure we are likely to feel because we hold *inaccurate theories* as to whether certain outcomes will indeed evoke specific affective reactions. If the theory is wrong, the affect we predict will arise in the future may also be wrong. Already evidence for AMF due to

inaccurate theories has been presented in the consumer behavior literature as several studies have shown that consumers hold theories about variety which cause them to overpredict how much variety will make them feel happy in the future (e.g., Ratner et al 1999). We also observed evidence for the use of inaccurate lay theories in this study, but here only in the BTF condition. For example, one consumer used her theory that “families that have had problems will be very difficult to be around” to predict that her vacation to her boyfriend’s family’s house would make her feel anxious. She found that in this case her theory was wrong.

I felt somewhat nervous and worried because of personal issues with my boyfriend’s family. Contrary to my worries, I found that his family was very open and accepting. They made me feel at ease, almost like I was an actual member of the family. (BTF)

Sources Linked to the Affective Forecast

After imagining a future outcome, consumers use the affect linked to this imagined outcome to predict how they will feel when the outcome does occur. Two potentially related sources of AMF have been linked to the affective forecast itself: The hot-cold empathy gap and the projection bias (see Figure 1).

Hot-Cold Empathy Gap. Research on the *hot-cold empathy gap* proposes that people have difficulty predicting future affect if their current affective state *differs* from the state they will ultimately be in when the experience actually happens. When in a “cold” (non-affect-laden) state people often have difficulty imagining how they would feel or what they might do if they were in a “hot” state—for example, angry, hungry, in pain or sexually excited. It may also be the case that, when in a “hot” state people frequently have difficulty imagining that they will inevitably eventually cool off (Loewenstein and Schkade 2000). We found some, though not extensive evidence for the hot-cold empathy gap, but only in the WTF condition. As one consumer wrote:

I am upset with myself for not thinking about the future. I was blinded by excitement at the time of the purchase. (WTF)

The Projection Bias. A related bias in the literature is called the projection bias, said to occur when individuals use their current feelings as a proxy for the feelings they will experience in the future (Loewenstein et al 2003). For example, consumers who are in a good mood at the time of purchase may misattribute their mood to the product and mistakenly believe that subsequent product use will make them feel the same way. We found some (although again, limited) evidence for this bias as well. For example, one consumer who reported feeling unhappy about a purchase of a leather coat wrote:

I was in a really good mood because the music in the store was music that I really enjoyed. I became more excited while looking around at the leather coats. I thought of how good I will look in [leather coats] and how long I have wanted one because they are so expensive. (WTF)

Sources Linked to the Actual Outcome

Ordinization. Affective misforecasting can sometimes be tied to a process called “*ordinization*”, or the failure to consider that novel experiences may become ordinary when they are repeated over and over (Wilson, Gilbert and Centerbar 2002). Because they become ordinary they may fail to have the same affective impact that they had when they first occurred. Some evidence was found

for ordinization, but again only in the WTF condition. As one consumer wrote:

Right now I feel the car is ordinary because I drive it every day (WTF).

The thrill that he imagined from driving a new car became ordinary, and his happiness declined.

Sources Linked to Experienced Affect

Emotional Evanescence. Ordinization is a special case of a broader category of sources—emotional evanescence. Wilson et al (2002) suggest that intense emotions are physiologically taxing and distract cognitive processing resources from the environment. As such, it may be adaptive to experience intense emotions for only a short time. Rapid recovery from intense emotions is also adaptive as it allows individuals to remain attuned to the immediate (and not always benign) environment. Because we do not consider how fleeting our emotions are, we over-predict how intensely and for how long we will feel good (bad) following positive (negative) outcomes. We observed evidence for emotional evanescence in the WTF conditions as illustrated by the following quote:

Before purchasing this stereo system I was enthralled with its appearance and the sound it provided. But in less than a year it went away and I am no longer extremely excited that I have this product. (WTF)

However, we also observed that in the BTF condition, consumers had positive emotions that *failed to dissipate* over time.

Within a week I was still elated to have [the speakers]. (BTF)

Motivated Distortion. Gilbert et al (1998) suggest that one reason why we may mispredict how *bad* we will feel after something negative occurs is that we don’t take into account the fact that our psychology works to minimize the psychological discomfort caused by negative events. People are skilled at re-construing what happens to them in a positive light and use a number of tactics to reframe negative outcomes as less negative than they might have been. We did observe evidence that motivation distortion did occur and perhaps minimized the AMF gap when the experience was WTF:

Maybe I should have gone with the convertible. But I am trying to love the SUV as it is now. (WTF)

If I really wanted to improve my status with women I should have bought a Tag Huer. But ...older people do take notice. (WTF)

Selective Memory. While experiences can sometimes be different from what was anticipated, with time, memories are distorted and so too are memories of the extent, nature and duration of feelings experienced in response to an outcome (Klaaren, Hodges and Wilson 1994). As such, while affective misforecasting may occur, over time selective memory distorts the experience and what one remembers becomes more and more congruent with what one had predicted. Selective memory reduces the gap between the affective forecast and the remembered experience. We found no evidence for selective memory in either the BTF or WTF condition, perhaps because this source operates largely outside of conscious awareness.

In addition to confirming some of the sources of AMF identified in past research outside of consumption and elaborating on others (e.g., misconstrual, the isolation effect) we also observed sources of AMF that have not yet been identified. Sources that occurred when outcomes were BTF and WTF are discussed sequentially below.

Novel Sources of AMF When Outcomes were BTF

Felt Security in Thoughtfulness of Decision. Some consumers reported feeling BTF because they realized that their conscientious efforts at information search and decision making brought them as much if not more happiness than they had anticipated by finding a product they really loved. For example:

I was content with my decision because I felt I made a rational choice. I am very happy that I made the choice I did. (BTF)

I feel that I have made a good choice and others agree with me (BTF)

External Validation. As exemplified in the quote above, some people had not anticipated social acknowledgement or social approval from their purchase but found that they felt BTF when their purchase was externally validated:

Hearing that other people liked the product helped to reinforce my own satisfaction with it. (BTF)

I get a lot of compliments on it so that made me feel even better. The good compliments I got had a big effect on how I feel about the dress now. (BTF)

These comments once again underscore the social aspects of the satisfaction process.

Novel Sources of AMF When Outcomes were WTF

Novel source of AMF were also identified when outcomes were WTF.

Failure to heed Gut Instincts/Internalized Decision Rules. One source that explained why consumers felt WTF occurred because occurred because consumers ignored internal gut instincts that the purchase might be good. Alternatively, they ignored tried and true decision rules. For example:

Before I bought the shoes I felt a feeling of uncertainty or rather discomfort because I believed that there were many opportunity costs that I would give up. That went on for two minutes and then I bought them. (WTF)

I bought a product that I thought was equal to the more expensive brands. I should have remembered—you get what you pay for. (WTF)

Failure to Discount Buying Impulses/Purchase with Limited Search. Relatedly, consumers who felt WTF attributed their AFM to the fact that they did not think through the decision process, acting impulsively and with limited thought.

It was a waste of money. I was acting impulsively. (WTF)

I feel like I should have asked more questions about it, because if I had then maybe I wouldn't have bought it. I realize that the purchase was not intelligent and should have been thought out more. (WTF)

I knew the moment I got there that I wanted to get it. I thought I might not wear it, but I wanted it anyway. I'm still trying to wear it but it just doesn't look right. I wish I had given it more thought. (WTF)

Differences in Sources by Condition

To further differentiate whether and the extent to which various sources were more likely to occur in the BTF vs. WTF conditions, t-tests were conducted on items designed to reflect many of the sources identified in Figure 1. Mean scores corresponding to these t-tests are reported in Table 1. As shown, there were differences in use of these sources between respondents in the BTF and WTF conditions, with respondents reporting greater agreement that differences in their forecasted affective experiences were attributable to focalism, inaccurate lay theories, ordinization, and emotional evanescence. Though subjects in the WTF condition also reported greater use of misconstrual and the projection bias, differences between the two groups were not significant.

CONCLUSION

This research finds evidence for many of the sources of AMF identified in non-consumption contexts. The most prevalent were sources tied to misconstruals and the isolation effect. Misconstrual was not, however simply failure to consider other possible outcomes or potential product failure, but also misconstrual of usage, social approval, social acknowledgement, of marketplace exchanges, of economic changes, of product needs, and of the product's larger role in one's future. The next most prevalent were ordinization and motivated distortion.

Patrick et al (2007, forthcoming) found that while affective misforecasting occurs in a variety of consumption domains, its impact is strongest when feelings are WTF. Perhaps for this reason, we observed a greater number of sources of AMF when feelings were WTF compared to BTF. Most of these were related to the initial representation of the future outcome or event and included failure to deeply consider the purchase, ignore gut instincts or consider the long-term viability of the product in relationship to longer term vs. shorter term goals. In general, the sources of AFM were more numerous and hence more complex when the outcome was WTF than when the outcome is BTF.

Limitations and Future Research. While use of a critical incident methodology enables the study of AMF across a variety of "real" consumption experiences, it affords little control over factors that might impact the frequency of sources, such as time since the consumption experience or the types of consumption experience. This limitation is not critical to the interpretation of the results of this study, since the main objective was to identify sources of affective misforecasting in the consumption domain. Moreover, the fact certain sources were not observed does not mean that they do not exist; perhaps they are simply not accessible (they are unconsciously used) or are not easily articulated.

Future research may link the various sources of affective misforecasting to consumer satisfaction, demonstrating the unique influence of these sources of misforecasting on satisfaction. Furthermore, the implications of these sources on the nature and quality of brand-consumer relationships, brand loyalty, etc. is worthy of study.

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When Thinking Beats Doing: The Role of Optimistic Expectations on Goal-Based Choice

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

With the presence of multiple conflicting goals, self-regulatory goal pursuit of one goal could be understood in terms of progress toward the goal or in terms of commitment to the goal (Carver & Scheier, 1998; Kruglanski et al., 2002). The progress framing of goal pursuit emphasizes how initial goal pursuit reduces the efforts needed for the final goal attainment, whereas commitment framing highlights how initial goal pursuit increases the value of the final goal attainment. Prior research demonstrated that framing goal pursuit as progress has a liberating effect and fosters goal disengagement, whereas framing it as commitment has a motivational effect and elicits more goal-consistent actions. For example, when workout is framed as progress toward the goal of being healthy, going to the gym elicits the perception of partial goal attainment and suggests that effort could be withdrawn to pursue alternative goals such as enjoying tasty but fatty food; when workout is framed as commitment to the goal of being healthy, going to the gym signals the commitment to the goal and thus suggests more consistent actions, such as refraining from tasty but fatty food, should be performed to ensure the goal attainment.

When deciding on subsequent choice of actions, people consider their achieved goal pursuit as well as anticipated future goal pursuit. Like achieved goal pursuit, future goal pursuit is also cognitively represented as means leading to the goal attainment. We therefore propose that anticipated goal pursuit can be similarly framed as commitment to the goal or as progress toward the goal before the actual performance and has similar motivational and liberating effects on choice of actions. Moreover, because of the optimism bias that characterizes the anticipation about future, people anticipated more goal pursuit in the future than in the past, and therefore infer either higher commitment in the future, or more progress will be made in the future. As a result, compared with framing past goal pursuit, framing future goal pursuit amplifies the motivational effect of commitment framing and the liberating effect of progress framing.

Three studies were conducted to test the hypothesis. In the Study 1, we first asked participants to describe either their workout in the past month or planned workout in the coming month. The subsequent mental framing manipulation was achieved by having participants rate the extent to which they agree with statements that either frame workout as commitment to the goal of being healthy (e.g., "Having worked out so much, I must really care about my health") or as progress toward the goal of being healthy (e.g., "Having worked out so much, I must really have improved my health."). We measured participants' intended duration of workout and (in a separate survey) their interest in healthy food as their motivation to pursue additional goal-consistent actions. The results showed participants planned to workout longer and were more interested in healthy food when they focus on future workout than on past workout under commitment framing, but planned to workout less and showed less interest in healthy food when they focus on future workout than on past workout under progress framing.

Our second experiment replicated Study 1 with actual gym users and offered participants a parting gift instead of indicating behavioral intentions. Participants were offered to choose between a can of sugared soda (unhealthy option) and a bottle of spring water

(healthy option). The percentage of participants who chose soda over water was analyzed to examine participants' likelihood to disengage from the health goal. The results showed that participants were more likely to choose soda when they focus on future workout than on past workout under progress framing, although the percentage of soda choosers was not significantly different between future and past condition under commitment framing due to floor effect.

Finally in a third experiment, we manipulated the magnitude of optimism bias about future through mental simulation of goal pursuit (Taylor et al. 1998). Participants either mentally simulated the process of future goal pursuit, which attenuates the optimism bias or the outcome of future goal pursuit, which accentuates the optimism bias, before estimating their planned workout for the future. Then participants completing the mental framing manipulation that was identical to the one used in the last 2 studies. The dependent measure was again their indicated interest in various healthy and unhealthy food items in a separate survey. As expected, when the optimism bias about future goal pursuit became more pronounced, the interest in healthy food as dinner increased under commitment framing, but decreased under progress framing.

Taken together, these studies illustrated that optimism bias amplifies the motivational effect of framing goal pursuit as commitment and the liberating effect of framing goal pursuit as progress. Our findings offered a new perspective in understanding the interaction between cognition and motivation and demonstrated that the optimism bias could be potentially beneficial in terms of enhancing one's self-regulation in making consistent choices to ensure the final goal attainment. This research also speaks to the broader interest in consistency vs. inconsistency in consumer choices. Adding to the finding that people plan ahead to ensure their current choice would be different from future choices (Read & Loewenstein, 1995; Simonson, 1990) for variety, our findings further suggest that, by inferring future choices as commitment, people also achieve forward-looking consistency by making choices in line with expected choices when consistency (e.g., loyalty) is desired.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Consumer Researchers for Public Health: Insights from Three Government-Funded Programs

Cristel Antonia Russell, San Diego State University

SESSION SUMMARY

This session was organized around the conference's transformative consumer research theme and follows its call for research designed for and communicated to consumers. In the spirit of this mission, the session included three current government-funded research programs that address important public health issues. The first project, by Jerome Williams and colleagues, examines the relationship between obesity and other health indicators among minority consumers to environmental factors, such as billboard advertising, and purchasing behavior using scanner data. The second project, by Marty Fishbein and Amy Jordan, investigates the relationship between exposure to sex in the media and AIDS-related sexual behavior. The third project, by Cristel Russell and colleagues, documents the amount and nature of alcohol portrayals in television series to examine how they affect consumers' attitudes and beliefs about drinking.

As the existence of specialized journals and conferences focusing on public policy issues attests, consumer researchers have long considered the implications of their research for public policy. In addition to providing guidance to policy makers that way, consumer researchers are increasingly answering health organizations' requests for focused and applied research and developing research programs that center on the issues. Problems such as tobacco, drug, alcohol and excess food consumption, or the HIV-AIDS epidemic plague all societies and ultimately cost nations large sums of money resulting from lost productivity and increased healthcare expenditures. In the spirit of Kotler and Levy's (1969) original call for extending marketing research outside the traditional for-profit arena, it is crucial for consumer researchers to apply their knowledge of consumer behavior to directly tackle society's preventable health problems.

In the U.S., a multitude of health organizations strive to better understand these issues. Although each state has its own health research activities, the National Institute of Health (NIH) leads the U.S.'s health research efforts with a total budget exceeding \$28 billion, with over 80 percent of the budget going to 50,000+ research grants annually. The NIH's Office of Extramural Research (OER) has oversight of national behavior research. The OER has continued to see its annual research budget grow to nearly \$14 billion; and has increased its efforts to promote applied social science research, including consumer behavior. Presently, academic institutions (excluding medical schools) receive approximately \$3 billion of the OER's overall research budget. This amount continues to increase as the NIH strives to improve the knowledge surrounding influential sources and consumer behavior, in order to improve policies and educational tools for consumers in the hopes of improving public health.

All three research programs presented in this session are funded through government grants. All three document the themes and prevalence of damaging health-related information across a variety of media in order to understand how they affect consumers' beliefs and behaviors. We take a broad approach to the consumer environment by documenting the effects of both traditional advertising messages (Williams et al.) and those messages imbedded in the media content (Fishbein and Jordan), such as product placements (Russell et al.). All projects include a content analytic phase

and an effects-testing phase (with scanner data in the first project and survey data in the other two).

"Obesity and the Built Environment: A Tale of Five Cities"

Jerome D. Williams, University of Texas at Austin

Chiquita A. Collins, University of Texas at Austin

William J. McCarthy, University of California at Los Angeles

Antronette K. Yancey, University of California at Los Angeles

Obesity has reached pandemic proportions in the U.S. (Flegal et al. 2002; Koplan and Dietz 1999). Environmental intervention approaches are necessary to stem this epidemic, as the environment is becoming increasingly "obesogenic," particularly in communities of color, and individual-level change efforts have demonstrated little sustainability (Yancey et al. 2004; Fontaine et al. 2003; Sloane et al. 2003; French et al. 2002; Kersh and Morone 2002; Nestle and Jacobsen 2000; Swinburn et al. 1999; King et al. 1995). A similar shift in level of focus of intervention is credited with the dramatic declines in tobacco use and, recently, particularly in California as the leader in this arena, in tobacco-related disease burden, with important lessons for obesity control (Daynard 2004).

A critical but understudied element of the sociocultural environment influencing the food and beverage preferences and purchasing behaviors of Americans is commercial advertising, marketing and promotion (Nestle et al. 1998). The U.S. food industry spends approximately \$36 billion per year on advertising (Thomas 1998), making it the second largest advertiser in the American economy (Gallo, 2000). A growing literature endeavors to characterize the cultural variations in commercial advertisements in magazines, on billboards, and on television that may contribute to health risk behavior disparities (Wallack and Dorfman 1994; Mitchell and Greenberg 1995; Pratt and Pratt 1995; 1996; Byrd-Brenner and Grasso 2000; Lohmann and Kant 2000; Hackbarth et al. 2001; Story et al. 2000; Tirodkar and Jain 2003; Wakefield et al. 2003). A pattern of findings demonstrate significantly fewer ads for healthier food/beverage products, e.g., fruits, vegetables and dairy products, in magazines and television shows targeting African Americans compared with those targeting "general audiences," and a significantly greater number of ads for unhealthy products, e.g., sodas, candy and alcoholic beverages (Pratt and Pratt 1995; Tirodkar and Jain 2003). On billboards in predominantly African-American and Latino neighborhoods, alcohol products were advertised five times as frequently as in predominantly white areas (Hackbarth et al. 2001), and advertising themes included images of sex, youth and affluence to sell these products (Mitchell and Greenberg 1995).

The primary objective of this study is to conduct a content analysis of food, beverage, and physical activity products and services billboard advertisements to test the hypothesis that African Americans and Latinos are disproportionately targeted by advertising of high-energy, low nutrient density food and beverage products, and underexposed to advertising for nutritious food and beverage products and physical activity-related products and services. The study also will describe the attributes of billboard ads which may influence purchasing and consumption of unhealthy food and beverage products and examine weight-related body imagery in billboard ads. Finally, the study will examine the geographical positioning of billboards relative to schools, to exam-

ine whether the content of billboards near schools differs from the content of billboards far from schools.

To carry out the study, representative zip codes were selected in five cities. Two Los Angeles County health districts (HDs) with large proportions of African-Americans, 2 predominantly Latino HDs, and 2 predominantly white HDs were selected and analyzed using demographic and other data from the Los Angeles County Health Survey. A similar selection strategy was employed in Sacramento and Fresno, using California Health Interview Survey data. In Austin, Texas, zip codes were selected and analyzed using data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, Texas Hospital Patient Discharge Data, and STEPS to a Healthier Austin. Similar steps were taken to identify appropriate zip codes in Philadelphia. Each billboard was photographed with a digital camera, and the photographs were attached to a content analysis abstraction form, accompanied by a GIS map highlighting its location and its distance from nearby public schools. To complement the billboard data, arrangements have been made to obtain scanner purchasing data from the major food store chains in each neighborhood. This will allow analysis of not only differential media exposure but also differential food purchases in the same neighborhoods.

The implications of this work for policymaker and decision-maker education at the local and state levels are substantive. Examples of regulatory and legislative action that might be prompted or supported by the findings include: increased FCC oversight of Spanish-language media content; restrictions on food industry billboard placement modeled on those on tobacco; taxes on foods disproportionately advertised in poor neighborhoods to subsidize parks and recreational facilities or farmers' markets in those areas; and requirements for food establishment menu item nutrition labeling.

The research is in its first year. The neighborhood content analysis of billboards for all five cities were completed in 2005. The health data already is available, as well as the scanner data. Preliminary analysis of the billboard data in six zip codes has been conducted at the Austin site. Below are a few of the highlights of this preliminary analysis:

- Alcoholic beverages are the most advertised item in all zip codes.
- Fast food is the second most advertised item.
- The largest number of alcoholic beverage and fast food advertisements was found in the zip code with High Black and High Hispanic Low Income households.
- Only one water advertisement was found across all six zip codes.
- Milk was advertised in four of the six zip codes.
- None of the zip codes displayed advertisements for exercise.

“The Impact of Media on Adolescent Sexual Development”

Martin Fishbein, University of Pennsylvania

Amy Jordan, University of Pennsylvania

There can be little doubt that the amount of sexual content in the media has been steadily increasing. At the same time however, unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases have been declining. Despite this apparent negative relationship, there is great deal of concern that sexual content in the media is increasing the likelihood that young adolescents will engage in sexual behaviors. This presentation described some of the formative research conducted in preparation for developing a longitudinal survey to assess the impact of six media (TV, Music, Magazines, Movies, Video

Games, and the Internet) on the sexual beliefs, attitudes, intentions and behaviors of adolescents.

More specifically, this presentation addressed some of the methodological issues involved in attempting to link exposure to sexual content in six different media to adolescent's sexual beliefs, attitudes, intentions and behaviors. For example, it focused on some of the problems involved in assessing the amount of time adolescents spend with different media and the extent to which the time spent with those media exposes them to sexual content. Among other things, data were presented showing that media use varies as a function of day of the week as well as by whether the media use estimates are obtained when school is in or out of session (e.g., Spring versus Summer). Moreover, media use estimates vary considerably as a function of the type of measurement instrument used (e.g., a daily diary versus a weekly log versus an open-ended survey) and the question format. In addition the relation between various measures of exposure varies with the medium being considered. The importance of taking multi-media use and multi-tasking into account in attempting to estimate the extent to which one is exposed to sexual content was discussed. Data were also presented showing that adolescents and adults have different perceptions of what is (or is not) sexual content. Thus it is necessary to obtain “objective” (content analytic) as well as “subjective” estimates of the extent to which one is exposed to sexual content.

While the above discussion focuses primarily on the independent variable (i.e., assessing exposure to sexual content), there are also a number of methodological issues concerning dependent variables. Since we wished to go beyond a dichotomous measure of whether an adolescent did or did not engage in sexual intercourse, we wanted to look at behavioral progression toward sexual intercourse. Thus we needed to develop a measure that included both non-coital and coital sexual behavior. This turned out to be a difficult task. For example, given the recent phenomenon of “hooking up,” and the apparent confusion among adolescents as to whether oral sex is, or is not “real sex”, the old notions of “bases” or of progressing from kissing to necking to petting to sex are no longer viable. Perhaps not surprisingly, what is an appropriate (or at least acceptable) progression of sexual activities varies as a function of the nature of the relationship (“hooking up”, forming a new relationship; or being in an “established” relationship) as well as the gender of the adolescent. Finally, the presentation showed that adolescents' intentions to engage in sexual intercourse can be very accurately predicted from a knowledge of their attitudes toward, perceived norms concerning, and self-efficacy with respect to their personally engaging in sexual intercourse. In addition, these attitudes, norms and judgments of self-efficacy are themselves accurately predicted from behavioral, normative, and control beliefs respectively. One implication of these latter findings is that it is important to explore the link between various measures of exposure to sexual content in the media and a wide range of psychosocial and behavioral outcomes.

“Documenting the Nature and Impact of Alcohol Portrayals in TV Programs”

Cristel Antonia Russell, San Diego State University

Dale Russell, University of Amsterdam

Joel Grube, Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation

This project is funded by the NIH's National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. It tackles the widespread concern over the potential effects of alcohol product placements and other media portrayals of drinking on alcohol consumption and drinking-related problems. Television, radio, film, and popular music are often identified as potential sources through which consumers learn

about alcohol and as potential influences on their drinking and drinking problems (e.g., Christensen, Henriksen, and Roberts 2000; Gerbner 1995; Stockdale 2001; Strasburger 1993; Villani 2001). In particular, public health advocates routinely call for stricter self- or governmental regulation of alcohol portrayals in television, film, and music and of alcohol advertising (e.g., Hacker and Stuart 1995; Hill and Casswell 2001; Mosher 1994; Strasburger 1993). The objective of this grant is to document how television programming contributes to the development of preferences and symbolic associations related to alcohol and to inform policymakers who are concerned about the effects of alcohol portrayals in television programming.

The research program includes two inter-related studies: a content analysis of a composite sample of regular TV series focusing on the themes, images, and other characteristics of alcohol portrayals in television programming; and a cross-sectional survey of viewers to investigate the effects of such alcohol portrayals on perceptions and beliefs regarding drinking. The aim is to document the frequencies and types of alcohol portrayals in current television programming and identify the processes through which such portrayals shape consumers' responses and behaviors. The results will provide a firmer basis for designing prevention strategies to counter the effects of TV-based alcohol portrayals on drinking beliefs and behaviors.

The theoretical model builds upon research on the effects of product placements (Russell 2002) that identified the conditions under which a product included in a program is remembered and whether attitudes toward it are positively affected. We apply the product placement typology to the context of alcohol products in television programming to investigate objectively both explicit and implicit themes, images and other characteristics of alcohol portrayals in TV programming. The model is rooted in cognitive social learning theory (e.g., Bandura 1986) and classic attitude theories (e.g., Ajzen 1989; Fazio 1989; Petty and Cacioppo 1983, 1986) and incorporates the mediating role of audience connectedness (Russell and Puto 1999) to specify different mechanisms by which programs contribute to consumers' schemas and beliefs related to alcohol. We propose that consumption portrayals in the television program context more strongly affect highly connected viewers' beliefs and behaviors because they view the TV characters displaying these consumptions as referent others (Newton and Buck 1985) and behavioral models (Nord and Peter 1980). Connectedness to TV characters is a key factor influencing viewers' recall of alcohol depictions, which in turn affects normative beliefs about drinking and alcohol expectancies and, ultimately shapes viewers' drinking intentions and drinking behavior. Further, the nature of alcohol portrayals in a series is expected to moderate the relationships between recall and drinking beliefs: recall of or connectedness to programs high in positive alcohol portrayals will have a greater effect, increasing drinking beliefs and behaviors, than will recall of or connectedness to programs with less alcohol portrayals.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY
Exploring Masculine Ideologies
Gokcen Coskuner, University of Wisconsin, Madison

LONG ABSTRACTS

“Grooming Masculinities: A Poststructuralist Analysis of Masculinity Discourses in Films”

Gokcen Coskuner, University of Wisconsin, Madison

In this paper, I take a poststructuralist approach to present the masculinity discourses circulated in films. This approach allows me to analyze how masculinity is socially constructed in media images, to locate central tensions operating within masculine ideologies and to present the interconnectedness of gender, social class positions and ethnicity. In this analysis, I focus on the cinematic representations of men's grooming practices. Traditionally grooming like fashion is viewed as a feminine activity. It has been argued that men's increasing involvement in consumption especially fashion and grooming and the increased depiction of men in advertising inverted the male gaze onto itself (Mulvey 1975). Looking at the masculinity discourses in a consumption context that is traditionally viewed as incompatible with masculinity thus, provides potential to understand how masculinity is constructed through conventional feminine cultural practices. An analysis of men's grooming practices extends prior consumer research, which has primarily focused on the consumption of products/brands/activities that reinforce traditional masculinities (i.e. Belk and Costa 1998, Schouten and McAlexander 1995) and on research that presents how products are chosen/avoided because they are perceived as fit/unfit with masculinity (i.e. Barthes 1975, Bourdieu 1984).

The popular media offer a variety of characters and masculine ideologies. These ideologies function as how to be (or not to be) a man and they also represent the dominant tensions that exist with contemporary models of masculinity. Kimmel (1992) for example, asserts that if masculinity is socially constructed, one of the primary elements in that construction is the representations of manhood that we see daily in the mass media. Along similar lines in her book *The Male Body*, Bordo (1999) analyzes images of male bodies as represented in advertisements and films to understand the contemporary masculinity discourses. She asserts that advertising serves as the primary lexicon of gender images, responsible for the wide dissemination of currently relevant masculine and feminine imagery. I explore grooming of the male protagonists in films *About a Boy* (2002), *American Psycho* (2000), *Casino* (1995), *Saturday Night Fever* (1977), *Zoot Suit* (1981) and *Malcolm X* (1992) to understand the masculine ideologies that are represented through grooming practices. I map various masculinities in comparison to one another to understand the symbolic boundaries between masculinities that are expressed through distinctive grooming (see Holt 1997).

The analysis suggests that men's grooming not only carry gender instructions, but also represents/creates/reestablishes boundaries around social class and ethnicity. Men in upper class positions tend to gain power and status among his milieu through his extensive self care practices. A very good example of this phenomenon is depicted in *American Psycho* (2000), where the main character has a set of grooming rituals before he starts his day and spends extensive amount of time and energy on how he looks partly because this is a part of his competition in the business world. On the other hand, among working class the physical capital that is valued is associated with a more down to earth look where involve-

ment in extensive grooming would not be seen appropriate and men who do so are called “sissy” and/or even “gay”. In addition men from diverse ethnicities employ different grooming practices to construct their masculinities. Analysis of the masculine ideologies in films and comparison of characters in films such as *Casino* (1995), *Zoot Suit* (1981), *Malcolm X* (1992) and *About a Boy* (2002) provide an important tool to understand these differences.

Based on the analysis, I identify two dominant tensions (femininity versus masculinity and rebellion versus conformity) that are influential in the representation and/or construction of masculinities. I propose that men constantly borrow from and negotiate between these tensions to construct their masculinity and that exploring these tensions is imperative to understand men's identity projects. The first tension I present is between femininity and masculinity. The masculinities are constructed against other masculinities and sometimes femininities. In different forms of masculinities we see the balance between these tensions vary. Hugh Grant's character in *About a Boy* (2002) depicts a masculinity that borrows largely from feminine traits. The character and the story of the film transgress the modernist dichotomies connected with female and male that emerged from the modern era some of the eminent ones being home versus workplace, passive versus active, emotional versus rational, submissive versus assertive (Firat 1994). Grants' character (Will) is unemployed; he is submissive and passive; and depicted as developing an emotional relationship with a preadolescent. Another dominant tension I identify is rebellion versus conformity. Holt and Thompson (2004) point out how rebellion and conformity play an important role in formation of certain masculinities. Again by focusing on masculinities in films I discuss how men strategically employ grooming to rebel against the traditional masculinity roles (i.e. Hugh Grant in *About a Boy*) and to construct their identities against other masculinities. I also note that conformity and rebellion tensions are not always binary and that rebellious actions should be interpreted within new hegemonic power relations (Foucault 1984).

I present the implications of the poststructuralist analysis of masculinities in films to marketing. As Holt (1997) notes, under the conditions of postmodernism it becomes ever more difficult to capture the subtle differences among collectivities. The plethora of masculinities thus poses challenges especially for those who aim to segment the male consumer. The marketer that claims to be targeting to male consumers in a specific demographic, such as 18-25 year olds, will likely overlook important differences in product usage habits, advertising readership, consumption experiences, identity projects that exist within the statistical category (see Holt 1997). The poststructuralist analysis of masculinity discourses in the media, on the other hand, has the potential to map various masculinities that are represented across a variety of situational settings in comparison to one another, to locate main tensions around masculine ideologies and to understand the dominant masculinity ideologies and its relation to other constructs such as social class positions and ethnicity. Analyzing how masculinities are represented in other mainstream media and how these discourses are perceived/ negotiated/ reconstructed by men in different social positions and from diverse ethnicities will be important steps to undertake in the future studies.

“Men’s Responses to Depictions of Ideal Masculinity in Advertising”

Linda Tunca, *Loyola University Chicago*

Past researchers have noted the importance of examining the connections between advertising representation and identity construction (Schroeder and Zwick 2004; Bordo 1993). However, despite the increasing importance of male consumers in the marketplace, little consumer behavior research has investigated masculine gender identities, with few exceptions (Holt and Thompson 2004; Hirschman 2003; Belk and Costa 1998). While research outside of consumer behavior has investigated the ideals of masculinity, and created typologies to capture these ideals (Brannon 1976, Lindsey 1997), this research is outdated and offers insights only from the researcher’s perspective.

Moreover, men are bombarded with mediated messages of masculinity in advertisements, but little is known as to how these depictions influence their experiences of masculinity. Several researchers have discussed the confusing and often contradictory nature of depictions of masculinity in advertising and in society as a whole (Mangan 2003; Lindsey 1997; Firat 1994; Pleck 1981). Thus, it is clear that the meanings appropriated to masculinity are not only complex, but also dynamic in nature. It is important to examine these meanings to gain a better theoretical understanding, as well as to discover emergent themes in the experiences of masculinity.

The principal research questions for this study are (1) How do men respond to images of ideal masculinity in advertising? (2) What do men’s interpretations of ideal masculinity in advertising reveal about their own sense of masculinity? To investigate these issues, 20 in-depth interviews were conducted, using advertisements containing masculine images as projective aids (White 1984; McGrath, Sherry, and Levy 1993). The informants were asked “grand tour” questions (McCracken 1988) at the onset of the interviews, while subsequently moving toward a more semi-structured approach in order to compare responses to a set of 15 ads. Thus, the ads were used as projective techniques to gain a better understanding of how these men experienced ideal masculinity. The interviews yielded over 300 pages of text, which was analyzed through a process called “dialectical tacking” (Strauss and Corbin 1998).

Several findings emerged from the text. One of the aims of the research was to understand, how do men respond to images of ideal masculinity in advertising? Six “types” of responders emerged. These were the Skeptics, the Avoiders, the Indifferents, the Enhancers, the Strivers, and the Chasers. First, Skeptics attempted to avoid engaging in comparison to the male models depicted in the ads because they believed these depictions were unrealistic or unauthentic. They displayed negative emotional responses to the ads, sometimes even derogating the spokesperson. Next, Avoiders also avoided comparison to the models in the ads, but this was due to the fact that they felt threatened by the ideal standards set by the images. Individuals in this category sometimes shifted their own personal standards of masculinity as a coping mechanism. Indifferents claimed they were unaffected by ideal images of masculinity and did not believe advertising held any standards for them personally. Unlike the previous response styles, Enhancers often engaged in comparison, although their comparisons were relatively passive in nature. Moreover, the Enhancer felt motivated by ideal depictions and believed they were attainable through incremental improvements in the self. Strivers also felt motivated and believed the ideals depicted in advertising were attainable through hard work. These individuals often discussed “imagined selves” (Scott 1998). Finally, Chasers actively looked to advertis-

ing for standards of masculinity, although these standards often times were beyond reach. It is important to note that informants often displayed characteristics of several “types” of responders depending upon the focal point of the ad. This is due to the fact that different masculine themes interact with the consumers’ own personal histories and life projects (Mick and Buhl 1992). Moreover, informants expressed that as they progressed through their lives, their likely responses would have changed as well. Thus, these response styles are not only fluid in nature, but temporally situated.

The response styles to depictions of ideal masculinity in advertising were examined further in order to uncover what men’s reactions revealed about their own notions of masculinity. While these response styles emerged, it is important to note that the crux of the analysis was what these response styles meant about notions of masculinity rather than providing a typology of how these men read the ads. For example, to Skeptics masculinity meant *authenticity* while for Avoiders, masculinity was experienced as *vulnerability*. For Indifferents, masculinity meant *individuality* in thought while for Enhancers and Strivers masculinity was experienced as *achievement*. Finally, for the Chaser, masculinity was experienced as *elusiveness*.

Thus, the present research sheds light on how men respond to depictions of ideal masculinity in advertising. The findings reveal how images in advertising influence men’s conceptualizations of their own sense of masculinity, including creating feelings of vulnerability and elusiveness, among other outcomes. Future research could examine the ethical issues surrounding these findings. Finally, this research holds managerial implications for advertisers and retailers who target male consumers.

“The Challenge of the New Masculinity: Conservative Reactions to a New Consumption Ethos”

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It has been proposed that we today see a “*new hegemonic masculinity*” (Patterson and Elliott 2002), which includes a feminization of masculinity, and invites men from all social positions to partake in the carnival of consumption in ways previously reserved predominantly for female consumers (Schroeder and Zwick 2004). Due to this change in mainstream masculinity, the traditional elite—who have long been concerned with appearances and are expressing their masculine identities through a knowledge and practice of refined consumption—is challenged in their roles as tastemakers *par excellence* (Osgerby 2001). The advent of popular-culture outlets for new gender ideologies—such as the TV-show *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, self-help books such as *The Metrosexual Guide to Style*, not to mention the abundant availability of men’s lifestyle magazines—make the (sub)cultural capital previously reserved for the higher social classes available to the masses. Members of the traditional elite therefore need to find new ways to manifest their masculinity in unique ways. In this paper, I look at strategies utilized by the traditional elite to strengthen their sense of masculinity in light of this new, allegedly feminized, consumption ethos.

Previous research has looked at how changes in dominant masculinity ideologies force men to negotiate their identity projects (May and Strikwerda 1992). Focusing more on consumption practices, Holt and Thompson (2004) have looked at how men from the “*stuck-in-the-middle socioeconomic profile*” are afflicted by the crisis of masculinity and how they tackle this by adaptive consumption behaviors. What this research adds is a focus on how the changing gender ideologies in our consumer society ripple through the social classes and affect the groups that, according to their own

mythology, are not easily influenced by consumer fads and fashions.

Data was collected during a 12-month immersion in an enclave (cf. Firat and Dholakia 1998) of young, well-off consumers in Stockholm. The principle means of data collection was observational studies in three different online communities where the whereabouts of this enclave is documented and commented on. In addition, participant observation was conducted at venues where the members of the enclaves hang out. Through the analysis of the data—which consists of editorial material from the webpages, transcripts of chat-room conversations, and field notes—I detected various strategies used by the members of the enclave to construct masculine identities.

The first characteristic of the traditional elite's consumption is that they do not regard themselves as representing something new, or as following contemporary trends. Instead, they see themselves as defenders of stability and providing a timeless, classic (and classy) masculinity as an alternative to all available fast-moving consumer fads. They are characterized more by conservatism and a willingness to uphold—what they perceive to be—traditional values, than the more rebellious traits usually upheld by similar youth constellations (cf. Hebdige 1979). Instead of manifesting their identity by rebelling against the parent generation, they act in a rebellious fashion by trying to resurrect conservative values of an imagined past. They are thus escaping the temporality of contemporary, faddish consumption, of which they would regard the new feminized masculine consumption as a prime example, by attaching themselves to a timeless ethos of style. In the online communities, references are many times made to how they—the traditional elite—do things with style, whereas others—particularly the new elite—lack the ability, both economically and culturally, to be stylish. One principal way for them to distinguish their consumption from that of the new elite is to frame the latter's consumption behaviors as overly conscious or even girlish; if one *really* has style, one rarely has to show it in the explicit way utilized by the new elite.

Another common denominator for what is deemed stylish, and thus a suitable blueprint for the construction of masculinity, is that it should be connected to what other, imagined, groups of similar consumers around the world are engaging in. In this way, the traditional elite is trying to escape the spatial restrictions of their present consumption by attaching themselves to an imagined community of global cosmopolites. By viewing these global soul-mates as their points of reference rather than the upward-striving new elitists, they manage to downplay the similarities between their respective consumption behaviors. Another device utilized by members of the traditional elite in order to strengthen their sense of masculinity in light of the new masculine gender ideologies is to reframe women's roles. The underlying logic is that as consumption becomes feminized, having support from women to prove one's masculinity becomes even more important. In the online communities, there are explicit calls for women to accept a more stereotypically old-fashioned, passive role in the company of these men. In the enclaves under investigation, women appear content with playing only supportive roles in the males' identity game. This stands in stark contrast to contemporary nightscapes that have been characterized as "feminized", where young women are adopting "predatory" sexual attitudes and are thus playing a more active role (Chatterton and Hollands 2003, 155).

This study of the traditional elite's responses to the new hegemonic masculinity offers three major contributions. First, it extends research on the crisis in masculinities by looking at a group neither directly addressed by the marketers of the products and ideas behind the alleged new masculinity, nor studied by previous researchers. Despite not being the target group, the crisis of mascu-

linity reaches this group by altering the positions among the different subcultures of consumption on this particular market. Second, it taps into the rather undeveloped area of conspicuous non-consumption by looking at how the traditional elite can afford not to engage in potlatch-style consumption of branded goods in order to build their masculine identities, whereas the aspiring new elitists resort to this means of consumption. Finally, it addresses the issue of how men use women to manifest that they are still "real men" despite engaging in the allegedly feminized consumption patterns prescribed in contemporary consumer culture.

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Cross-Gender Brand Extensions: Effects of Gender of the Brand, Gender of Consumer, and Product Type on Evaluation of Cross-Gender Extensions

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ABSTRACT

Many brands can possess strong gender identity: Marlboro for masculine images and Chanel for feminine images. Over the years, there has been a growing trend of cross-gender extensions among brands, partly due to the unisex trend in consumer goods. This study examines consumers' evaluations of cross-gender extensions in an attempt to identify conditions for successful cross-gender extensions. The results show that the gender of a brand, gender of consumers, and product type influence the evaluation of cross-gender extensions.

INTRODUCTION

There are many brands in the marketplace that possess gender identities (Allison, Golden, Mullet, and Coogan 1979; Alreck, Settle, Belch 1982; McCracken 1993). They can be stereotyped as either masculine or feminine. Some examples include Chanel, Hugo Boss, Marlboro, and Virginia Slims.

One advantage of these gendered brands is that they leverage on their masculine or feminine associations to attract the male or female consumers respectively. However, this strong association with a particular gender could be a hindrance for brands trying to extend beyond their traditional market segment. As a result, some companies choose to target the opposite gender segment by using different brand names. For example, Philip Morris uses the brand name 'Marlboro' for targeting men and 'Virginia Slims' to reach out to women (Alreck, Settle, and Belch 1982; McCracken 1993). Similarly, Estee Lauder uses its own brand of fragrance to target its female customers while a separate brand name, 'Aramis', is used to target male customers (*Fortune* 1998).

However, a major disadvantage of using this approach is cost. The cost of introducing a new brand in some consumer markets has been estimated to range from \$10 million to more than \$200 million (Kotler and Armstrong 2004). In order to deflect the high cost of launching new products, an extension strategy could be employed. In addition to the advantage of lower costs, using an extension strategy also allows the company to leverage on the current brand associations to build brand equity (Aaker 1991). In 1990, an estimated 81 percent of new products introduced were extensions (Keller 1998). This further testifies to the attractiveness of using an extension strategy of gendered brands.

Extending the same brand name to target the opposite sex (cross gender extension for short) is not a new phenomenon. There is a history of masculine brands launching an extension to reach out to women in the domain of traditional masculine products. Examples of cross-gender extensions by masculine brands include Levi's and Gillette in jeans and razors respectively. However, there is a recent trend of companies extending their feminine brands to target men. For example, Estee Lauder initially launched "Pleasures" for ladies as a perfume with a soft and feminine appeal with Elizabeth Hurley as the celebrity endorser. However, "Pleasures" was later extended into the men's segment directly under the Estee Lauder corporate brand (*Marketing Week* 1998). This represents a departure from the traditional branding strategies of Estee Lauder of using separate brand names to target the different gender segments. Another prominent example is the attempt by Triumph International to launch an extension into male swimwear from its

original offerings of female swimwear. What is seen here is a growing trend of companies using the same brand name to target the opposite sex segment. In recognition of the vast advantages of using the extension strategy, it is crucial for marketers to know under what conditions a cross gender extension can be successful. It is the objective of this study to find such conditions.

BACKGROUND

Gender Stereotyping of Brands

According to Wrightsman (1977), a stereotype is "a relatively rigid and oversimplified conception of a group of people in which all individuals in the group are labelled with the so-called group characteristics." Children in every society need to learn their roles and the behaviours that go with them. They need to learn what a child, a student, a brother/sister, son/daughter, man/woman should do. Thus, sex roles refer to the expectations of what a man and a woman should do by society. Combining the concept of stereotypes and the concept of gender roles, gender stereotypes refer to the rigidly held and oversimplified beliefs that men and women, by virtue of their gender, possess distinct psychological traits and characteristics. Such overgeneralizations tend to be widely shared by a particular society or culture. In the past, both men and women have had certain sex role requirements as well as prohibitions (Alreck 1994). For instance, a man had to be strong, tough minded, and decisive, while a woman was expected to be nurturing, lady-like, and put the family first.

Similar to cultural or country stereotypes, gender stereotypes should influence the perception and judgment of any object, including consumer products and brands (Alreck, Settle and Belch, 1982). Keller (1998) also argues that some brands in the marketplace possess certain gender-specific associations so that consumers associate the individual brand's user as specifically from either sex. A sample categorization of masculine and feminine brands in various product categories is provided in Table 1. The list is not exhaustive. However, it shows that gendered brands are not restricted to the traditional domain of fashion and beauty products. They are found in other product categories such as tobacco and toys

Perception of Fit in Cross-Gender Extensions

Past studies in brand extension areas have found that the success of an extension depends on the perception of fit between the parent brand and the extended product category (Aaker and Keller 1990; Boush and Loken 1991; Keller 1998). The greater the perception of fit between the two, the more easily the positive associations of the parent brand are transferred to the extension, thus increasing the chance of success in the extension. Greater fit perception will have a positive impact on consumers' evaluation of the extension (Aaker and Keller 1990) as well as on their attitude towards the parent brand (Loken and John 1993).

Although the perception of fit could be formed by various factors, past studies have identified two major bases for more successful fits: product feature similarity and brand image or concept consistency (Park, Milberg, and Lawson 1991; Bhat and Reddy 1998). Park, Milberg, and Lawson (1991) suggested that evaluations of brand extensions depend on the degree of overall

TABLE 1
Examples of Gendered Brands

Product Category	Masculine Brands	Feminine Brands
Fragrance	Aramis, Hugo Boss	Estee Lauder, Elizabeth Arden
Beauty care products	Clinique	L'oreal, Lancome
Tobacco	Marlboro	Virginia Slims
Fashion	Hugo Boss, Arrow	Chanel, Laura Ashley
Undergarments / Negligee	Byford	Victoria Secret, Triumph
Toys	Lego	Barbie

perceived fit between the extension product and the brand name. The degree of overall perceived fit is, then, a function of both product-feature similarity perceptions and brand-concept-consistency perceptions. Product feature similarity perceptions are derived by feature correlations or attribute matches from feature level comparisons. Brand concept consistency perceptions are formed by the image fit between the extension product and the brand (i.e., how well the brand concept accommodates the extension product).

In cross-gender extensions, the main concern for marketers would be brand image fit. This is because product feature similarity in cross-gender extension is not significantly important since the extension is in the same product category and shares the same features. The most critical aspect is a brand's perceived masculinity or femininity. For example, when Triumph extends into male swimwear, the key issue is whether men will accept the feminine image of Triumph on their swimwear. In essence, the focus of this study is on assessing brand image fit between cross-gender extensions.

Gender of Brand and Evaluation of Cross-Gender Extensions

According to studies in gender stereotyping, masculine traits tend to be regarded higher than traditional feminine traits (Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, and Rosenkrantz 1972; Ashmore, DelBoca, and Wohler 1986). Being strong, independent, and willing to take risks are seen more positively than being weak, gullible, and easily influenced. This difference in values may result in a greater desirability for masculine traits in society.

Since a brand is used as an expression of one's personality (Aaker 1996), the greater social desirability for masculine traits would be manifested in the choice of products as well as brands by consumers. This line of argument is consistent with the study by Alreck, Settle, and Belch (1982) which suggested that men will almost reject feminine brands while women will most likely accept masculine brands.

Stuteville (1971) also suggested that it is easier for a male-oriented product to attract females than the reverse situation. This is because society labels a boy who acts like a girl as a "sissy" boy while a girl who acts like a boy is called as a "tomboy". The latter is much easier for a girl to accept than the former is of a boy. Like products, a brand can also be an avenue to express one's masculinity/femininity (McCracken 1993). Given that it is more difficult for a female-oriented product to attract males, it follows that it is more difficult for a feminine brand to attract males than the reverse situation.

Based on the casual order of consumers' evaluations of brand extension as examined earlier, the following hypotheses are suggested to predict easier acceptance of an extension from a masculine

brand than an extension from a feminine brand:

H1: Compared to a cross-gender extension from a feminine brand, a cross-gender extension from a masculine brand will result in:

- (a) greater perception of brand image fit,
- (b) greater perception of overall fit,
- (c) more positive attitude towards the extension, and
- (d) more positive attitude towards the original brand.

Gender of Consumer and Evaluation of Cross-Gender Extensions

Gender stereotyping studies suggest that men and women perceive sex roles differently, with men holding a more unfavorable view towards femininity (Lii and Wong 1982; Smith and Midlarsky 1985; Werner and LaRussa 1985). Based on the concept that consumers use brands as an expression of their personalities, men and women are predicted to react differently when they encounter cross-gender extensions.

Alreck, Settle, and Belch (1982) found that men tend to exaggerate the differences in brands more markedly than women. Men are found to perceive a masculine brand to be more masculine and a feminine brand to be more feminine. They also suggested that compared to women, men tend to find their sexual identity in the material goods they buy and use. This implies that, compared to a woman, it would be more difficult for a man to accept an extension from a feminine brand if it contradicts to his masculine gender identity.

On the other hand, Lull, Hanson and Marx (1977) found that women were more sensitive and critical of sex-role stereotyping than men. Thus, women tend to be more responsive to gender crossing than men because they prefer to adhere less to the traditional sex role prescriptions. This is opposed to men who have a more rigid definition of their male sex roles. Therefore, the following hypotheses are suggested when predicting the possible differences between men and women towards cross-gender extensions:

H2: In evaluating cross-gender extensions, compared to men, women will have:

- (a) greater perception of brand image fit,
- (b) greater perception of overall fit,
- (c) more positive attitude towards the extension, and
- (d) more positive attitude towards the original brand.

Product Type and Evaluation of Cross-Gender Extensions

Product types may play an important role in consumers' evaluation of brand extensions. Since image fit is more important in cross-gender extensions, the acceptance of cross-gender

extensions would be influenced depending on whether the product type is image-oriented or function-oriented. Park, Jaworski, and MacInnis's (1986) conceptualization of functional and symbolic brand concept is useful in examining product type effect in cross-gender extensions. With symbolic products, the benefits sought are more extrinsic in nature and usually correspond to non-product related attributes, especially user imagery. Symbolic benefits relate to underlying needs for social approval or personal expression and outer-directed self-esteem (Solomon, 1983). Thus, getting the wrong symbolic product could result in high social and psychological risk.

In the case of functional products, the benefits sought are more intrinsic in nature and usually correspond to product-related attributes. Functional benefits are often linked to basic motivations such as physiological and safety needs, and often involve a desire to satisfy problem removal or avoidance (Fennell, 1978). Such products have a lower level of social and psychological risks when compared with symbolic products.

Since the main concern for cross-gender extensions is the image incongruence between masculinity and femininity, a symbolic product which offers emotional and self-expressive benefits is likely to experience more difficulties than functional products. To explore the differences between these two categories of products in cross-gender extensions, the third hypothesis is formed:

- H3: Compared to a symbolic product category, a cross-gender extension in a functional product category would result in:
- greater perception of brand image fit,
 - greater perception of overall fit,
 - more positive attitude towards the extension, and
 - more positive attitude towards the original brand.

METHOD

Experimental Design and Subjects

A 2 (product type: symbolic vs. functional) x 2 (direction of cross-gender extension: masculine to feminine vs. feminine to masculine) x 2 (gender of subject: male vs. female) factorial between subject design was used in this study to test the proposed hypotheses. A total of 233 undergraduate students participated in this study. Among them, 124 (53.2%) were male and 109 (46.8%) were female students.

Experimental Stimuli

Selection of Product Categories.

Two product categories, one represents the symbolic product category and the other represents the functional product category, were selected through the following procedure. First, a list of product categories where gender crossing of a brand is a relevant phenomenon was identified. Considering the technical feasibility of cross-gender extensions (the sanitary product category, for example, was not considered in this regard because men never use it) and actual existence of both masculine and feminine brand names in the product category, twelve product categories were identified. They were fragrance, shampoo, alcoholic beverages, tobacco, high-end fashion, undergarments, swimwear, magazines, shoes, sportswear, spectacles, and hair gel/spray.

Second, each product category was evaluated in terms of performance and social/psychological risks to select a functional and a symbolic product category (Friedman and Friedman 1979). A symbolic product is meant to satisfy the emotional and self-expressive benefits. A consumer buys a symbolic product to enhance one's self-image among others. For example, a consumer does not

buy an expensive dress just to satisfy the basic function of clothing. Rather, she buys it to keep or improve one's self image as perceived by others. Thus, a symbolic product has a high level of social and psychological risks and a low level of performance risk. On the other hand, getting a wrong functional product will not incur much social and psychological risk because it is meant to satisfy the basic utilitarian function of the product. The consumer would judge a functional product primarily in terms of how well it functions. For example, a consumer would be more worried that a vacuum cleaner does not work rather than whether it fits well with his/her image. Thus a functional product has a high level of performance risk and a low level of social and psychological risks based on the above classification of perceived risks.

Thirteen undergraduates took part in a pretest to evaluate the risks associated with the twelve product categories on a seven-point scale (e.g., 1="very unlikely" and 7="very likely"). For each product, ratings of the social and psychological risks were averaged out and the mean was compared with performance risk. Hair gel/spray was selected to represent a functional product type because of its highest level of performance risk (4.43) and relatively low level of social/psychological risk (3.26). High-end fashion was selected to represent a symbolic product type with its highest level of social/psychological risk (4.53) and relatively low level of performance risk (2.93).

Selection of Gendered Brands.

The pairs of masculine and feminine brands were chosen from the two product categories of high-end fashion and hair gel/spray based on the following criteria. First, the brands should be strongly identified with either of the gender images. Second, the chosen pair of brands for each product type should be equivalent in terms of subjects' familiarity with and attitudes towards the two brand names. This would allow a fair comparison of the cross-gender extendibility between the masculine and the feminine brand.

With the selection criteria in mind, a potential list of brands was identified first by the researcher. Thirty undergraduate students were then asked to rate each brand in terms of its gender image, attitude, and familiarity. Gender images of the brands were measured on a set of seven semantic scales with seven intervals between the two bipolar adjectives (e.g., large-small, harsh-gentle, masculine-feminine, strong-weak, rough-smooth, etc.) The scale was adapted from Alreck, Settle, and Belch (1982). Attitude and familiarity were measured by a seven-point scale (very unattractive-very attractive; very unfamiliar-very familiar).

Hugo Boss and Chanel were selected as a masculine brand and a feminine brand for high-end fashion product category. They were different in gender image (3.13 vs. 5.05, $t=12.28$, $p<.01$) but not significantly different in attitude (5.44 vs. 5.44, $t=0.00$, $p>.10$) and familiarity (5.41 vs. 5.52, $t=.42$, $p>.10$). Gatzby and Sifone were selected as a masculine brand and a feminine brand for hair gel/spray product category. They were also different in gender image (3.36 vs. 5.26, $t=6.38$, $p<.01$) but not significantly different in attitude (4.04 vs. 4.11, $t=0.21$, $p>.10$) and familiarity (5.30 vs. 5.41, $t=.32$, $p>.10$).

Manipulation of gender crossing extensions.

The gender crossing extensions of each brand were manipulated by providing a scenario that announced an extension to target the opposite gender group. For example, the scenario used for the high-end fashion product category is as follows:

"Hugo Boss (Chanel is now a leading men's (women's) fashion brand name in the high end fashion category. Delighted with the success of its men's (Women's) fashion line, the top management of Hugo Boss (Chanel) decides that it is time to take full advantage of this success. It decides to capitalize on

the strength of the *Hugo Boss (Chanel)* brand name in the high end fashion category by launching a new product line—*Hugo Boss Ladies (Chanel for men)* to target *female (male)* consumers. Examples of the new product line include *dress, jacket and blouse for women (shirts, pants and jackets for men)*.”

Dependent Measures

Four dependent variables were measured in this study: perception of overall fit, perception of brand image fit, attitude toward the extension, and attitude toward the original brand. Perception of overall fit was measured using four 7-point Likert scales adopted from Bhat and Reddy (1997). Degrees of agreement were measured with the following four statements: “The introduction of the extension makes sense,” “The extension seems logical,” “The extension would be a good example of the brand,” and “The extension would be typical of the brand”. The items showed a good reliability measure ($\alpha=.93$).

Seven items for perception of brand image fit were adopted from Bhat and Reddy (1997). The items include the scales measuring generic aspects of brand image fit (e.g., fit with subject’s idea and image, similar images, conveys same impressions), symbolic concept consistency (e.g., the user of the extension as stylish as user of brand, the extension makes same statements about users) and functional concept consistency (e.g., the extension as practical as parent brand) and produced a relatively good level of reliability ($\alpha=.89$).

Attitude toward the extension was measured using three 7-point Likert scales (e.g., good, likable, pleased) adopted from Park, Milberg and Lawson (1991). Attitude toward the original brand was measured using four 7-point semantic differential scales (e.g., good-bad, like-dislike, favorable-unfavorable, positive-negative) adopted from Holbrook and Batra (1987). Both items turned out to be reliable items ($\alpha=.94$ and $.96$ respectively).

RESULTS

Manipulation Check

Although product categories and brands were carefully selected based on pretest results, perceived risks associated with the product categories and the perception of gender image of the brands were measured to check manipulation using the same scales used in the pretests. First, the manipulation of product type turned out to be successful. It was found that hair gel/spray had a significantly higher level of performance risk than high-end fashion (4.87 vs. 3.44, $t=-2.358$, $p<0.05$). In terms of social/psychological risk, high-end fashion was rated significantly higher than hair gel/spray (4.90 vs. 3.50, $t=7.412$, $p<0.01$).

The choice of the gendered brands also turned out to be successful. There were significant differences between Hugo Boss and Chanel (3.40 vs. 5.06, $t=12.29$, $p<0.01$) as well as between Gatsby and Sifone (3.47 vs. 5.29, $t=9.63$, $p<0.01$) in the perception of gender image of the brands.

Initial attitudes towards the original brands were checked to evaluate possible confounding effects. It was found that respondents were equally favorable towards Hugo Boss and Chanel (5.15 vs. 4.94, $t=1.17$, $p>0.10$) as well as equally favorable towards Gatsby and Sifone (4.60 vs. 4.60, $t=0.02$, $p>0.10$). However, the initial attitude level of the symbolic product category (Hugo Boss and Chanel) was higher than that of the functional product category (Gatsby and Sifone). A t-test confirmed this difference ($t=2.30$, $p<0.05$). To remove the possible confounding effect from this difference in the initial attitude level between product categories,

the initial attitude level was used as a covariate in the following analyses.

Hypothesis Testing

To test the hypotheses, MANCOVA was first conducted using SPSS for Windows 11.0 with the initial attitude level as a covariate. The means for experimental conditions and the results of the multivariate are summarized in Table 2 and 3. MANCOVA results show significant main effects of product type and gender of consumers, and a significant 2-way interaction effect between product type and gender of consumers.

The effects are further investigated using univariate analyses. Table 4 summarizes the univariate ANCOVA results for all four dependent variables. First, although the main effect of gender-of-brand is not significant at the multivariate level, univariate analyses show a significant gender-of-brand main effect on the evaluation of cross-gender extensions. The image fit perception (3.81 vs. 3.44, $t_{1,231}=2.19$, $p<0.01$ by one-tail test), overall fit perception (4.03 vs. 3.69, $t_{1,231}=1.79$, $p<0.05$ by one-tail test) and attitude toward the extension (3.72 vs. 3.30, $t_{1,231}=2.10$, $p<0.05$ by one-tail test) are higher for the masculine brand condition than the feminine brand condition, thus providing supporting evidences for H1(a), H1(b) and H1(c). Even though it fails to reach the conventional level of significance, the mean of the attitude towards the original brand is higher when the extension is made from the masculine brand to target female consumers than the other way round (4.22 vs. 3.95, $t_{1,231}=1.58$, $p=.06$ by one-tail test), providing a directional support for H1(d).

Next, the main effect of gender-of-consumer is significant on all dependent variables as predicted. The acceptance of cross-gender extension is higher for female subjects than for male subjects (3.85 vs. 3.43, $t_{1,231}=2.78$, $p<0.01$ for perception of brand image fit by one-tail test; 4.09 vs. 3.65, $t_{1,231}=2.34$, $p<0.01$ for overall image fit by one-tail test; 3.78 vs. 3.28, $t_{1,231}=2.46$, $p<0.01$ for attitude toward extension by one-tail test; 4.41 vs. 3.80, $t_{1,231}=3.57$, $p<0.01$ for attitude toward original brand). Thus, H2(a), H2(b), H2(c) and H2(d) are supported at both multivariate and univariate levels.

The main effect of product type is significant on all dependent variables except for the attitude toward original brand. The acceptance of cross-gender extension is higher for the functional product category condition than for the symbolic product category condition (3.79 vs. 3.46, $t_{1,231}=2.19$, $p<0.05$ for perception of brand image fit by one-tail test; 4.14 vs. 3.58, $t_{1,231}=3.02$, $p<0.01$ for overall image fit by one-tail test; 3.86 vs. 3.16, $t_{1,231}=3.52$, $p<0.01$ for attitude toward extension by one-tail test; 4.19 vs. 3.98, $t_{1,231}=1.18$, $p=.12$ for attitude toward original brand by one-tail test). Thus, H3(a), H3(b), and H3(c) are supported, but not H3(d). However, a directional support is found on the attitude toward original brand H3(d).

In addition to the significant main effects, a significant 2-way interaction effect between gender of consumer and product type is found on the perception of brand image fit ($F_{1,224}=8.33$, $p<0.01$) and the attitude toward original brand ($F_{1,224}=4.56$, $p<0.01$). Therefore, the interpretation of significant main effects of both the gender-of-consumer and the product type factors has to be made within in the relationship depicted in the interaction effect. The relationship is presented in Figure 1 and 2, and the detailed relationship is explained in the discussion section.

DISCUSSION

This study examines consumers’ evaluations of cross-gender extensions in an attempt to identify conditions for successful cross

TABLE 2
Means and Standard Deviations for Treatment Conditions

		Extensions from Masculine Brand		Extension from Feminine Brand	
		Men's Reaction	Women's Reaction	Men's Reaction	Women's Reaction
Symbolic Product	Cell size (n)	32	26	31	27
	Perception of overall fit	3.43 (1.40)	4.01 (1.20)	3.21 (1.34)	3.76 (1.75)
	Perception of brand image fit	3.29 (1.19)	4.08 (.87)	2.88 (1.04)	3.74 (1.25)
	Attitude toward extension	3.01 (1.36)	3.69 (1.67)	2.70 (1.25)	3.37 (1.89)
	Attitude toward original brand	3.77 (1.51)	4.59 (1.30)	3.34 (1.17)	4.39 (1.33)
Functional Product	Cell size (n)	30	29	31	27
	Perception of overall fit	4.28 (1.37)	4.44 (1.44)	3.73 (1.31)	4.13 (1.39)
	Perception of brand image fit	4.02 (1.10)	3.93 (1.19)	3.56 (1.11)	3.64 (1.00)
	Attitude toward extension	4.10 (1.40)	4.15 (1.70)	3.36 (1.34)	3.86 (1.24)
	Attitude toward original brand	4.16 (1.21)	4.46 (1.44)	3.96 (1.17)	4.19 (1.12)

TABLE 3
MANCOVA Results

Source	Pillai's Trace	Wilks' Lamda	Hotelling's Trace
Main Effects			
Gender of Brand	.028	.972	.029
Gender of Consumer	.054**	.946**	.057**
Product Type	.069**	.931**	.074**
2-way Interactions			
Brand x Consumer	.010	.990	.010
Brand x Product	.005	.995	.005
Product x Consumer	.057**	.943**	.060**
3-way Interactions			
Brand x Consumer x Product	.008	.992	.008

Note: : *= $p < .05$, **= $p < .01$ (Initial attitude toward brand was used as a covariate)

gender extensions. Gender of the brand, gender of consumers, and product type are considered key conditional factors that may influence the success of cross gender extensions. It is found that all three factors do influence the evaluation of cross gender extensions. Key findings are summarized as follows. First, although it is not significant at the multivariate level, a significant main effect of the gender of brand (more specifically the direction of gender crossing)

is observed on the three dependent variables related to the acceptance of cross-gender extension. As indicated by the results, the acceptance of a cross-gender extension is higher when an extension is made from a masculine brand to target female consumers than the other way round.

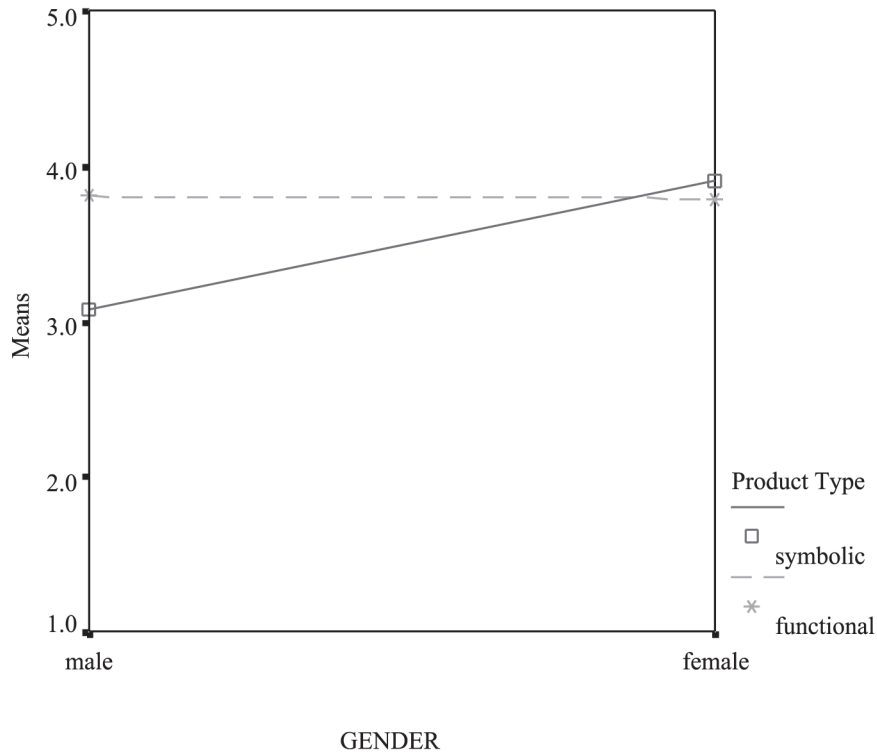
Second, significant main effects of the gender-of-consumer and the product type are also observed in the study. Women are

TABLE 4
Univariate ANOCOVA Results

Source	df	F value			
		Perception of Image Fit	Perception of Overall Fit	Attitude toward Extension	Attitude toward Original Brand
Main Effects					
Gender of Brand	1	6.28*	2.96 \ddot{O}	3.94*	1.84
Gender of Consumer	1	7.73**	5.01*	5.46*	12.05**
Product Type	1	4.43*	9.51**	14.54**	3.41 \ddot{O}
2-way Interactions					
Brand x Consumer	1	.31	.26	1.06	1.54
Brand x Product	1	.00	.36	.44	.01
Product x Consumer	1	8.33**	.61	1.12	4.56**
3-way Interactions					
Brand x Consumer x Product	1	.02	.12	.33	.27

Note: \ddot{O} = $p < .10$, * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$ (Initial attitude toward brand was used as a covariate)

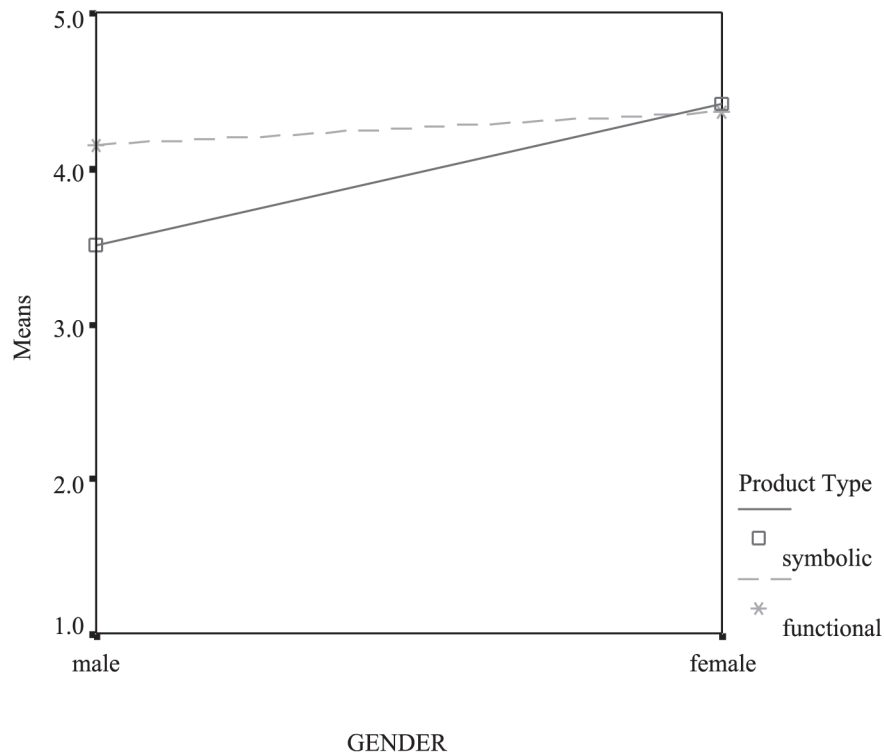
FIGURE 1
Interaction effect of product type and gender of consumer on the perception of brand image fit



found to be more receptive towards cross gender extensions than men. The acceptance of cross gender extensions is lower for the symbolic product category than for the functional product category. However, a significant 2-way interaction effect between the gender-of-consumer and the product type suggests a more complex picture on the relationships. It is observed that men’s perception of brand image fit of cross gender extensions is higher when the brand is

from the functional product category rather than from the symbolic product category. On the other hand, women’s perceptions are not different whether the brand is from the symbolic product category, or from the functional product category. This pattern is also evident on the attitude toward the brand after extension. Although it is not significant, a similar pattern is observed on other dependent variables as well. Overall, men’s acceptance of a cross-gender extension is

FIGURE 2
Interaction effect of product type and gender of consumer on the perception of brand image fit



found to be lower in the symbolic product category than in the functional product category compared to women. This finding is consistent with the past finding which suggests that men are more likely to find their sexual identity in the material goods they buy and use. Men are also more consistently defining their sexual identity in terms of external possessions. (Alreck, Settle and Belch 1982). In a symbolic product category, the gender image associated with a cross-gendered brand tends to become a salient attribute, thus, men would become more resistant than women to accept cross-gendered brands. On the other hand, the gender image associated with a brand tends to become a less salient attribute compared to other functional attributes in a functional product category. As a result, it may not become as influential as in a symbolic product category.

Third, the pattern of effects on the attitude towards the original brand after the extension mirrors that of the evaluation of the extension, although the effects are weaker. This may suggest that there is a positive correlation between evaluation of an extension and attitude towards the original brand. A possible explanation is that an incongruous extension not only affects the evaluation towards the extension, but it also affects consumers' attitudes towards the brand itself. This explanation is consistent with past research findings (Aaker 1991).

The results of this study provide some useful implications to marketers who are considering cross gender extensions. Faced with a cross gender extension from an established gendered brand, marketers may want to know the conditions that could increase a chance of success in the extension. The findings of this study suggest that it would be easier for a masculine brand to extend to target female customers than the other way round. The chance of success would be further increased if the product category is a

functional one. This explains why Gillette has successfully extended its shaving product lines to women customers.

However, the findings of this study should be interpreted with the following limitations in mind. Since university students were used in this study, it should be cautioned to generalize the result of this study to other populations. It has been suggested that demographic variables such as age also have an effect on an individual's sex role perceptions, which in turn affects an individual's perception of gender crossing. Another limitation of this study is that only one product category is used to represent each of the functional and the symbolic product categories. The results of this study should also be replicated in other product categories before generalizing the results in future studies.

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The Effects of Line Extensions Up and Down in Quality on Initial Choice and Subsequent Switching Tendencies

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Line extensions have been popular for centuries, yet little is known about their effects on choice and switching, issues critical to global branding initiatives. For example, brands taken around the globe increasingly face pressures for lower-quality and higher-quality versions. In China, for example, *Colgate's* regular brand of toothpaste was too high in quality and price for many in this market to afford, leading *Colgate* to introduce a lower-quality toothpaste. The question, then, was whether to put the *Colgate* name on the lower-quality version (e.g., *Colgate Basic*) or adopt a new name altogether. Such decisions have far-reaching implications because they can (1) stimulate initial choice share, (2) influence subsequent switching rates to, and away, from our brand, (3) influence brand equity by way of associations with lower-quality or higher-quality products, and (4) influence brand equity through line-breadth effects, either positive effects resulting from perceived expertise and coverage, or negative effects from diluted image. To help begin answering such questions systematically, this study tests the effects of extending product/brand lines up or down in quality on initial brand choice and subsequent switching. In addition to their implications for practitioners, the results implicate theoretical mechanisms and methodological issues of relevance to decision researchers (e.g., switching rates offering a level test sensitivity beyond that of simple choice).

Design and Stimuli. In Experiment 1, respondents initially chose from two medium quality (MQ) brands (identical in price and quality) and one higher-quality (HQ) higher-priced brand, where all brands were listed by brand name, price, and quality level as rated by the retail chain's consumers. Experiment 2 respondents chose from the same two MQ brands plus one lower-quality (LQ) lower-priced brand. The cover story had U.S. college juniors and seniors imagine taking their first job in the UK, where they were faced with a given shopping decision. Fictitious (supposedly UK) brands were used for two product classes that were counter-balanced between-subjects (pasta sauce and portable CD players). In pasta sauce, the MQ names were *Giovanni's* and *Formaggio's*, where (1) the name of the single HQ brand in Experiment 1 was *Magnifico*, *Giovanni's Magnifico*, or *Formaggio's Magnifico* (varied between-subjects), and (2) the name of the single lower-quality brand in Experiment 2 was *Basiqué*, *Giovanni's Basiqué*, or *Formaggio's Basiqué* (varied between-subjects). Four-hundred-sixty-six respondents were randomly assigned across the various between-subjects conditions in Experiment 1, with the exception of self-selected conditions (e.g., choice at Time-1), and 586 were so assigned in Experiment 2. Experiments 3a and 3b began testing theoretical mechanisms but are discussed only briefly (later) due to inconclusive results.

Procedure. Respondents first chose one of the three brands and then, based on that choice, were directed to another page in their booklets where they chose again in the face of a price discount offered by a non-chosen brand from another quality tier. Key dependent measures were initial choice shares as well as various switching rates across lower and higher-quality brands: switching from a non-extended brand to another such brand (e.g., from *Formaggio's* to *Magnifico*), from an extended brand to a novel brand (e.g., from *Formaggio's Magnifico* to *Giovanni's*), from a

base brand to its extension (e.g., from *Formaggio's* to *Formaggio's Magnifico*), etc.

Initial Choice Results. Brand names had no effect on initial-tier shares in either choice experiment, and the split between the two brands at the MQ level was comparable when neither brand offered a line extension. However, when one MQ brand also offered an HQ extension (Experiment 1), it enjoyed a 2/1 share advantage over its MQ competitor (e.g., when HQ = *Magnifico*, *Formaggio's Regular* = *Giovanni's Regular*, but when HQ = *Formaggio's Magnifico*, *Formaggio's Regular* > *Giovanni's Regular*). No corresponding negative effects of LQ extensions emerged, however, in Experiment 2.

Switching Rates. Experiment 1's non-extension (control) conditions produced symmetric switching up and down in quality at roughly 46%. When HQ was a line extension, however, the standard asymmetry in price competition emerged, where line extensions helped HQ versions both attract new consumers and retain old ones. Discounted-HQ-extensions attracted 57% of LQ choosers but discounted-LQ-brands attracted only 34% of HQ-extension choosers.

In Experiment 2, LQ extensions failed to influence choice shares or switching. At a practical level, marketers may have little to fear from extending brand names to lower-quality versions. In terms of theory, null lower-quality-extension effects may reflect two countervailing forces; a negative effect of the name being associated with lower-quality products, and a positive effect of the name being associated with broader product lines (perceived expertise, sensitivity to consumer needs, etc.). Experiments 3a and 3b began testing this possibility with measures of product perceptions (rated name respect, company knowledge, and overall quality). Although their results echo the patterns seen in the choice experiments, their results remain inconclusive with respect to the possible distinction between quality-breadth and quality-association effects.

Implications. First, line extensions can improve choice shares relative to novel names. Second, even if higher-quality extensions do not increase shares of the line-extended version, they can increase shares of lower-quality versions within their brand family. Third, extending a name to a higher-quality version can, relative to a novel name, improve that version's competitiveness by (1) increasing its ability to steal consumers from competitors, and (2) increasing its ability to retain consumers in the face of competitive attacks. Fourth, decision researchers can increase the sensitivity of their tests by assessing not only choice, but switching. Switching rates away from a target alternative reflect the same type of resistance-to-persuasion measures popular in attitude research, and switching rates to targeted alternatives reflect future persuasive power, in this case, an additional measure of brand equity. Such switching rates, moreover, mimic a marketplace dynamic of particular interest to practitioners (i.e., long-run (as opposed to initial) choice shares). Fifth, the failure of lower-quality extensions to produce corresponding negative effects suggests, at a practical level, that marketers may have little to fear from extending brand names to lower-quality versions within the product line, although work is still needed to understand such effects theoretically.

Existing Products and Brand Extension Judgments: Does Brand Category Context Matter?

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ABSTRACT

This research highlights how less accessible individual products and associations that are part of a brand category can influence consumers' brand-related judgments. Altering the brand category context in which a brand extension is introduced can increase the salience of these less accessible products and associations. In situations where this information is diagnostic, individuals base their extension judgments on a different set of dimensions than they would if the extension had been presented in the context of just the brand name. The data collected provided evidence that these brand context changes affected the temporary representations used to judge a new extension.

INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1980's, the idea of leveraging brand associations through a variety of strategies (e.g., brand and line extensions, licensing, etc.) has received a great deal of attention (see e.g., Broniarczyk and Alba 1994; Keller 1993). As many companies have pursued active brand leveraging strategies, it is increasingly common to observe a series of products that are on the market under a single brand name (Dacin and Smith 1994). This market phenomenon suggests that one of the ways that consumers' product information is likely to be organized is as *brand categories* (Boush 1993; Boush and Loken 1991; Dawar and Anderson 1994). There are clearly other possible organizations of consumer knowledge (e.g., by product categories, consideration sets, usage situations) however, brand categories are of growing importance. As a result, consumers are likely to consider the overall brand category when evaluating new products introduced with an existing brand.

Previous research in marketing has applied concepts from categorization to understand product categories (Loken and Ward 1990), brand categories (Boush and Loken 1991), and brand extensions (Dawar and Anderson 1994). *Mixed-representation* conceptualizations of categorical information include abstract, category level associations, as well as individual member, or exemplar, information (Sherman and Klein 1994). Although many brand category representations are influenced more by their most typical products, a wide range of exemplars and associations in the category may also influence consumers' information processing and judgments.

BRAND CATEGORY STRUCTURE AND BRAND EXTENSIONS

One area in which brand category structure is particularly relevant is consumers' evaluations and processing of brand extensions (Boush and Loken 1991; Dacin and Smith 1994). The relationship between an existing brand category and a new extension clearly influences perceptions and evaluations of the extension (e.g., Aaker and Keller 1990; Bottomley and Holden 2001; Boush and Loken 1991; Zhang and Sood 2004).

Recent research suggests that judgments of a brand extension may be influenced by whether different members of the brand category are made salient, or more accessible, during presentation of the extension. Changing individuals' temporary representations of the brand category, by increasing the accessibility of existing products in a brand category, may have an effect on subsequent brand-related judgments (Chakravarti, MacInnis and Nakamoto 1990; Lord et al. 2004).

Brand Extension Evaluation and "Fit"

A starting point for many conceptualizations of how consumers evaluate brand extensions is that brand affect and brand extension "fit" play important roles (Broniarczyk and Alba 1994; Dawar and Anderson 1994). In the brand extension literature there is a rather loose application of terms such as "similarity," "typicality (goodness-of-example)," "coherence," "relatedness," and "fit" (e.g., Aaker and Keller 1990; Boush and Loken 1991; Broniarczyk and Alba 1994; Dacin and Smith 1994; Dawar and Anderson 1994; Smith and Park 1992). A broader view, based on psychological research on similarity and categorization (e.g., Heit and Rubinstein 1994; Medin, Goldstone and Gentner 1993), suggests that fit is a more global measure that may be based on a variety of dimensions, and the specific context of the judgment may drive which of these are salient (Chakravarti, MacInnis and Nakamoto 1990).

Mixed-representation models of brand categories would suggest that it might be important to consider the role *individual exemplars* and the *breadth of the category* (Boush and Loken 1991; Meyvis and Janiszewski 2004) have on consumers' fit judgments and evaluations of brand extensions. If consumers consider the entire brand category, a different, broader, set of potential fit bases may be salient than would be otherwise, and these, in turn, are likely to influence consumers' judgments.

Flexible Category Representations

Category judgments are dependent upon the subset of relevant exemplars that happen to be momentarily salient or activated at the time a judgment is made (e.g., Bodenhausen et al. 1995; Lord et al. 2004; Sia et al. 1997; Smith and Zarate 1992). Because the subset of activated exemplars can change across time and situations, judgments of the same stimulus can change correspondingly (Bodenhausen et al. 1995; Lord et al. 2004; Sia et al. 1997). This suggests that different, specific individual products, as well as, or instead of, brand names, may play a role in brand extension judgment. Consistent with the notion of graded structure in a brand category, some exemplars and associations are likely to be more accessible than others when the brand is considered. When consumers make judgments about brand extensions, there are likely to be differences in the extent to which various products and associations are retrieved and used.

Typical Products, Context-Independence & Accessibility in Brand Category Representations

Previous category research suggests that many brand category representations are dominated by, and disproportionately reflect, the characteristics of the most typical product in the brand category (Rothbart and Lewis 1988; Smith and Zarate 1992). In many situations consumers give greater weight to prototypically good exemplars when making judgments about the brand category as a whole (Rothbart and Lewis 1988), and particularly, when judging or evaluating new instances of the category. Certain typical products in a brand category, as well as some of their stronger, more accessible associations, are relatively *context independent (CI)* when consumers consider the brand name. Other, less typical, products and associations may be more *context dependent*, only becoming salient in certain situations or contexts or when explicitly made salient

¹This conceptualization of context independence is closely related to the notion of *accessibility* in Feldman and Lynch's (1988) accessibility-diagnostics framework and to the work of a number of attitude researchers (e.g., Hodges and Wilson 1993).

(Barsalou 1982).¹ As a result, brand category representations may be less likely to represent the true breadth, or variability, that exists in the brand category in terms of both products and associations. Consumers may rely on a form of “*prototype heuristic*” (Cherniak 1984; Smith and Park 1992) in evaluating a new extension which may negatively impact those that are somewhat dissimilar from the typical exemplar(s). In many cases only a subset of the information available in a brand category’s knowledge base is used in a concept representation (Barsalou 1982; Sadler and Shoben 1993) for making related judgments. However, recent research on context effects suggests that in the case of multiple product brand categories temporarily salient exemplars and associations may influence consumers’ judgments (Boush 1993; Dawar and Anderson 1994).

Brand Breadth and Individual Product Accessibility

At issue are two types of information that may be made accessible by having consumers consider the entire brand category, each of which may influence brand extension judgments.

Brand Category Breadth. First, when all of the products in the brand category are considered, the true breadth of the brand category is made salient. If this information is seen as diagnostic, consumers should base their judgments on a broader conceptualization of the brand category. In general, wider categories allow for inclusion of a wider range of information than narrower categories (Meyvis and Janiszewski 2004; Park and Hastie 1987; Schwarz 1995). Including both typical and less typical products in the representation of the brand category should influence the standard against which the extension is judged. Recent brand extension research has found mixed evidence for the greater acceptability of brand extensions for broad brands versus narrow brands (Boush and Loken 1991; Dacin and Smith 1994; Meyvis and Janiszewski 2004; Sheinin and Schmitt 1994). However, the focus of this research is on examining judgments of the *same* extension from the *same* brand in different brand category context conditions.

Individual Product Salience. The second factor influencing perceptions of the extension is the relative salience of the brand’s less typical products. When the brand category is highlighted, less typical exemplars are available to play a more significant role in judgments of the new extension (Heit 1992; Whittlesea 1987). In most situations, the brand name or the prototypical products, and their associations are likely to be most salient and to influence brand extension judgments. In this case the first sufficiently diagnostic information retrieved is used for the judgment (Feldman and Lynch 1988). However, as an individual encounters the full range of products in the brand category, they are more likely to consider less context independent individual products and associations which are now more salient (e.g., Barsalou 1986; Lord et al. 2004).

Relevance/Diagnosticity of the Brand Category Context

The perceived *diagnosticity*, or *relevance*, of this new information must be considered as well (Broniarczyk and Alba 1994; Feldman and Lynch 1988). The brand category context should be seen as diagnostic for consumers’ judgments and processing when there is a *discernible link* between the extension and the brand category. In this context, it is the presence of some perceived similarity between the extension and an existing product in the brand category that is hypothesized to be the determining factor. Without this connection to the brand category, the extension should not benefit from the increased accessibility of either the category’s breadth or of its less typical products and associations.

We focus on moderately atypical, or poor fitting, extensions that are not similar to any of the brand’s typical products. In most situations, the typical products are the ones which influence brand-related thinking, and the extension would be viewed as a poor fit and

evaluated relatively poorly. Having consumers consider the entire brand category is expected to change these judgments.

Hypotheses. The previous sections suggest that an extension will be judged differently across different brand category contexts.

Fit. Consumers’ fit judgments of an extension with a link to the brand category are expected to be influenced by expanded brand category contexts, highlighting either a single atypical member of the brand category or the entire brand category. The extension should be rated higher with respect to fit in these contexts than in the context where just the brand name is present. Each of these contexts emphasizes one of the conceptual factors (brand breadth or individual product salience) to a greater extent than the other. When the entire brand category is highlighted (all-brand-products condition), the breadth of the brand category will likely be most salient, although the similarity between the extension and the similar atypical existing product in the brand category is likely to be salient as well. When just the atypical existing product is highlighted (atypical-product condition), the similarity between it and the extension is likely to be most salient, although this context may also increase perceptions of the breadth of the brand category. Although it is difficult to make predictions about which factor may be stronger, the effects on judgments are expected to be greater when the full brand category is presented.

- H1:(a) Fit judgments for a brand extension with a link to the brand category will be greater when the full brand category is made salient than when either a single atypical product or no brand category elements are highlighted. (b) Fit judgments for a brand extension with a link to the brand category will be greater when a similar atypical product is made salient than when no brand category elements are highlighted.

Fit ratings for an extension *without* this explicit link to the category should not be affected by any of these expanded information contexts, since with no link to the brand category, the more salient information should not be seen as diagnostic for fit judgments.

- H2: Fit judgments for a brand extension without a link to the brand category will be no different when the full brand category is made salient versus when a similar atypical product is made salient or when no brand category elements are highlighted.

Evaluation. Past research suggests that typical category members are linked more closely to the affect of the category (cf. Barsalou 1983; Loken and Ward 1990). As a result, extension evaluations should follow a pattern similar to the one described above for the fit measures.

- H3:(a) Evaluations of a brand extension with a link to the brand category will be greater when the full brand category is made salient than when either a similar atypical product or no brand category elements are highlighted. (b) Evaluations of a brand extension with a link to the brand category will be greater when a single atypical product is made salient than when no brand category elements are highlighted.
- H4: Evaluations of a brand extension without a link to the brand category will be no different when the full brand category is made salient versus when a similar atypical product is made salient or when no brand category elements are highlighted.

STUDY & EMPIRICAL RESULTS

Two brand categories (Haagen-Dazs and Levi's) were selected through a series of preliminary pretests. In order to test the hypotheses presented above, the study made use of a 2 X 3 X 2 factorial design. The first factor was the *type of extension*. Pretests were used to develop two extensions which differed in one critical respect. One extension was chosen to have a link, or connection, to the brand category by being similar to an atypical existing product in the brand category (linked extension). The second extension was not seen as being similar to any existing product in the brand category (non-linked extension). For the second factor, the brand extensions were presented (between-subjects) in one of three different *brand category information contexts*. In the brand-name-only condition, the brand extensions were presented with only the brand name mentioned. This context acts as a control condition against which the other conditions can be compared. In the all-brand-products condition, the extensions were described in the context of all of the existing products in the brand category. The extensions were also presented in an atypical-product condition which mentioned the brand name and a single atypical existing product. Finally, the last factor in the design was *brand category replicate presentation order*. The two brand categories were used as within-subjects replicates in this study.

Pretests. In order to develop the stimuli for this study, a series of three pretests were carried out.

Pretest 1 and 2. In the first pretest, 24 subjects generated a list of potential brand extensions for use in the remaining pretests. The purpose of the second pretest ($N=19$) was to find two extensions for each of the brand names. Eight extensions were tested for each brand. Subjects rated each extension's similarity to each of the existing products in the two brand categories on a scale from 0 (very dissimilar to) to 10 (very similar to). The Haagen-Dazs linked extension was *flavored coffee* (similar to Haagen-Dazs *liqueur*, $M=6.11$) and the non-linked extension was *hot chocolate mix*. The Levi's linked extension was *shoes* (similar to Levi's *socks*, $M=6.47$) and the non-linked extension was *cologne*. The two pairs of extensions were equally evaluated and were seen as equally poor fitting extensions. The Levi's brand was associated with a broader set of products (6.89 vs. 4.47, $t(18)=3.26, p<.005$) on an 11-point scale rating the perceived number of items available under the brand name (Brand X offers only one product-Brand X offers a wide variety of products; cf. Sheinin and Schmitt 1994).

Pretest 3. A final group ($N=41$) rated the perceived breadth of the brand categories after reading one of two descriptions of the brand: with all of the products mentioned or with the single, atypical, product mentioned. Although, the full brand category description lead to greater brand category breadth perceptions, this measure was included in the main study as a check on this in the context of the different brand extension announcements. Finally, subjects rated the stimuli to be used in the main study on four 7-point scales. The stimuli were rated as simple, easy to understand, believable, and clear for both brand categories ($M_s=5.76$ to 6.00).

Experimental Procedure. Undergraduate students ($N=193$) participated in the study during class time and were randomly assigned to the same experimental condition in both brand category replicates. The study used mock-ups of new product announcements from *The Wall Street Journal*, introducing the extension in one of the three contexts described above. Subjects were asked to "form an overall opinion of the new product, the brand and its existing products, and the announcement." Both the new product information and the brand category context were included in the new product announcements which focused on introducing the new product and presented a minimal amount of neutral product information.

Dependent Variables. Existing measures of similarity (overall), typicality, fit, and coherence were used to measure consumers'

judgments of the "fit" of the brand extensions. Evaluations of the extension were measured on three 0-10 semantic differential scales (unfavorable/favorable, very negative/very positive, poor/excellent). Respondents were asked a series of closed-end questions, ranging from 0 (disagree) to 10 (agree) regarding the process they used in evaluating the extensions, e.g., "In evaluating the new brand extension I compared it with Levi's jeans" (Wansink and Ray 1996). Perceptions of the breadth of the brand category were measured on the scales from Pretest 2. Finally, respondents also rated each new product announcement on the four scales described in Pretest 3. The non-summed, individual fit items were analyzed using a principal components factor analysis with a varimax rotation. For both brand categories, all six of the items loaded on a single factor (all loadings $>.632$). Correlations among the six revealed an extremely close relation between the items, and the coefficient alpha for a measure summing the six individual items was above .93 for both brands. As a result, analyses were conducted on this composite fit measure (FITCOMP).

Believability Screening. The new product announcements were seen as simple, easy to understand, and clear for the Levi's replicate ($M_s=5.73, 5.84, 5.69$) and for the Haagen-Dazs replicate ($M_s=5.83, 5.82, 5.70$). The product announcements were rated as believable in both brand categories (Levi's $M=5.66$; Haagen-Dazs $M=5.67$). However, in spite of the high overall means, there were individual respondents who did not find the announcements believable. For these respondents, the entire survey was likely to be suspect so this question was used as a screening device. There were no significant differences in the number of screened respondents across the 12 experimental conditions in the two brand replicates and cell sizes ranged from 21 to 27.

Order Effects. Order main effects and interactions were not significant in either brand category replicate and the data was collapsed across order conditions.

Category Breadth Ratings. Changes in category breadth perceptions were central in the conceptual development of the hypotheses, however, it was unclear whether presenting a brand extension in the context of the full brand category would have the same impact on brand breadth perceptions as presenting the extension in the context of a single, atypical, existing product. Both the brand category and atypical product contexts were expected to increase ratings versus the brand name only condition. For the linked extension Levi's brand breadth judgments were not significantly different in the all-brand-products ($M=7.14$) and atypical-product contexts ($M=7.29$; $t(44)<1$) though both were significantly greater than in the brand-name-only context ($M=5.50$; $t(42)=2.28, p=.026$ and $t(44)=2.55, p=.013$ respectively). For the non-linked extension the results were somewhat different. Once again breadth ratings in the all-brand-products ($M=6.86$) and atypical-product ($M=5.92$) contexts were not significantly different ($t(44)=1.29$), however, although the breadth ratings were higher in both these contexts than in the brand-name-only context ($M=5.71$), only the increase in the former approached significance ($t(41)=1.53, p=.133$).

Why were these breadth effects different for the two Levi's extensions? It seems as if the nature of the extension itself may have some influence on breadth perceptions. It is possible that the cologne extension was viewed as different (more so than the linked shoe extension) from the Levi's brand category. In this situation, since its

²Although in Pretest 2 both the shoes and cologne extension typicality ratings were moderate, and equivalent, in the main study brand-name-only (i.e., control) conditions, shoes were rated as a marginally better fit ($M=5.39$) than cologne ($M=4.25, t(41)=1.96, p=.057$).

introduction already represents a broadening of the category, it may have overwhelmed the presented brand category or atypical product context information.²

For the Haagen-Dazs linked extension, brand breadth judgments were significantly greater in the all-brand-products ($M=6.43$) than in the atypical-product context ($M=3.80$; $t(44)=3.13$, $p=.003$) and both were greater than in the brand-name-only context ($M=2.39$; $t(42)=5.21$, $p=.000$ and $t(46)=1.90$, $p=.062$). For the non-linked extension, although the breadth ratings were higher in the all-brand-products ($M=6.36$) and atypical-product contexts ($M=4.91$) than in the brand-name-only context ($M=4.88$), only the increase in the all-brand-products context was significant ($t(44)=2.05$, $p=.044$). In contrast to the Levi's condition, the all-brand-products context increased breadth perceptions even for the non-linked extension. Haagen-Dazs hot chocolate mix may not have been seen as different from the Haagen-Dazs brand as cologne was for the Levi's brand.³ As a result it may not have overwhelmed the additional product information to the same extent.

Hypotheses Testing. In order to test the hypotheses, a series of planned comparisons between the two expanded brand category context conditions and the brand-name-only context were conducted.

FITCOMP. In the Levi's brand replicate, although the results were directionally as expected, there was only partial support for H1(a): the linked extension's fit was significantly greater in the all-brand-products condition ($M=6.51$) than in the brand-name-only condition ($M=5.39$, $p=.043$), however, it was not significantly greater than in the atypical-product condition ($M=6.00$). The Haagen-Dazs data did not support H1(a): the linked extension's fit was not significantly greater in the all-brand-products condition ($M=5.04$) than in either the brand-name-only condition ($M=5.08$) or in the atypical-product condition ($M=5.51$). H1(b) was not supported in either brand replicate, since fit judgments in the atypical-product condition were not significantly greater than in the brand-name-only condition.

H2 predicts that there would be no differences in fit judgments of a non-linked extension across any information contexts. In support of H2, none of the mean fit judgments for the Levi's extension ($M_s=4.02$, 4.07, 4.25 for the all-brand-products, atypical-product, and brand-name-only conditions respectively) or the Haagen-Dazs extension ($M_s=5.61$, 6.52, 6.17 respectively) were significantly different.

Fit Measure Summary. There was a noticeable difference between the results for the two brand replicates. In spite of the fact that the Haagen-Dazs brand was perceived as being broader in the two expanded contexts there were no effects of these "expanded" contexts on the linked extension fit judgments. The closed-end processing responses were examined. Acknowledging that retrospective processing question have limitations, the data provide some interesting insights into the observed fit results. There were very few differences in the responses to any of these questions across the three brand extension information conditions for either the non-linked extension or for the linked extension. This was to be expected for the non-linked extension since the information about the products in the brand category was not expected to be diagnostic. Unexpectedly, there was only one significant and one marginally significant increase for the linked extension. Subjects reported comparing this extension marginally more often to "liqueur" in the all-brand-products context ($M=2.81$) than in the brand-name-only context ($M=1.26$; $t(42)=1.69$, $p<.10$). They also reported comparing the

extension to "all Haagen-Dazs products" more often ($M=4.52$ vs 2.44; $t(42)=2.09$, $p=.04$). These processing results while consistent with our conceptual perspective, show that the context had little impact on processing of the extension. One possible explanation for this focuses on the nature of the products in the Haagen-Dazs brand category. All of the products in this brand category, with the single exception of the atypical product, *liqueur*, are frozen desserts. It is possible that presenting the entire brand category simply reinforced the association consumers have between Haagen-Dazs and "frozen desserts". In the all-brand-products context, consumers may have acknowledged that Haagen-Dazs made more products than they usually thought, but since they were all frozen desserts, this information may not have "helped" judgments of the extension. This would suggest that the extension should have been seen as a better fit in the atypical-product context than in the all-brand-products context, since the "frozen dessert" associations may not have been as salient. In fact, the means were consistent with this line of reasoning, although not significantly so.

The Levi's results were much more consistent with the two fit judgment hypotheses. Again, the results of the closed-end processing questions provide some additional insight into these effects. As conceptualized, for the linked extension there was a significant increase in reported comparisons to "socks" (i.e., the atypical existing product), to "a different Levi's product (other than jeans or socks)," or to "all Levi's products" in both the all-brand-products and atypical-product conditions when compared to the brand-name-only condition. Despite the fact that additional information about existing products in the brand category was presented, the lack of a link between cologne and the brand category caused the information to be seen as less diagnostic. For the non-linked extension, no piece of information was used significantly more in either expanded condition. Fit judgments of the Levi's linked extension were greater when presented in the all-brand-products condition as compared to the brand-name-only condition. However, there was no significant difference between extension fit judgments in the all-brand-products and atypical-product conditions and breadth judgments in both conditions were virtually indistinguishable. This raises the question of whether there are any differences between the all-brand-products and atypical-product contexts. In spite of the equal breadth judgments, there is evidence that something may be changed when all the products are presented. According to the processing questions, subjects compared the linked extension to "a different Levi's product (other than jeans or socks)" and to "all Levi's products" to a greater extent in the all-brand-products condition than in the atypical-product condition. These data suggest that factors other than breadth may be influencing brand extension fit judgments. Broader categories tend to be more flexible, allowing less typical exemplars to be considered better members of the category than they would be in a narrower category (Honeck and Firment 1989). The all-brand-products context also provides explicit information about all the specific products that make up the brand category. This information about the entire distribution of products in the brand category may provide additional flexibility with respect to acceptance of a new extension above and beyond the information provided in the atypical-product context.

Brand Extension Evaluations. For both brand replicates, neither H3(a) nor 3(b) are supported. No differences in evaluations for the linked extension were observed across any of the information contexts (Levi's $M_s=6.83$, 6.46, 6.44 and Haagen-Dazs $M_s=5.97$, 6.18, 5.86 for the all-brand-products, atypical-product, and brand-name-only conditions). In both replicates, and consistent with H4, no differences in extension evaluations were found between any of the information contexts for the non-linked extension (Levi's $M_s=5.18$, 5.08, 5.29 and Haagen-Dazs's $M_s=6.65$, 7.15, 6.89).

³In the brand-name-only condition, Levi's cologne was seen as a poorer fit ($M=4.25$) than Haagen-Dazs hot chocolate mix ($M=6.17$; $t(43)=3.11$, $p<.05$).

Extension Evaluation Summary. The main evaluation effect was not supported in either brand replicate. It is possible that evaluation effects are more distal, occurring gradually after fit judgments have already been influenced. Over time, extension evaluations might reveal the same effects. It is also conceivable, however, that the magnitude of the fit judgment effects observed in this study were not large enough to produce changes in extension evaluations. A final possibility is that extension evaluation effects may be limited to situations where extensions are evaluated more poorly to begin with. In the Levi's replicate, both the non-linked extension ($M=5.29$) and the linked extension ($M=6.44$) were evaluated above the scale midpoint in the control conditions. It may be that if an extension is already evaluated somewhat positively improvements in fit perceptions do not carry over to extension evaluations. In these situations, other factors, like direct experience, may be required to change extension evaluations.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Overall, the results of the study provide moderate support for the influence that different brand category contexts have on consumers' brand extension judgments. There are a few themes which emerge from the results.

Brand Category Replicates. As previously reported, there was a different pattern of results for the two brand category replicates. The results for the Levi's brand replicate were more consistent with the hypotheses. These differences suggest that other important brand category-specific factors may exist that can influence the extent to which different contexts influence brand-related judgments. Investigating these additional factors is an important future research topic.

Linked vs. Unlinked Extensions: Brand Category Relevance. The strongest results in the Levi's brand replicate were the differences in the effects the various brand category contexts had on judgments of the two types of extensions examined. Only the linked extension was affected by changes to the context in which the extension was introduced. The processing questions provided further evidence of this difference. These differences did not carry over to extension evaluations in contrast with the prediction made by H3.

All-Brand-Products vs. Atypical-Product Contexts. It was hypothesized that the effects of changing the brand category context would be greater in the all-brand-products context than in the context where a single atypical product was mentioned. The data addressing this distinction were somewhat unclear. Supplemental processing measures provided some evidence that the all-brand-products context had a greater impact on brand-related judgments, but the evidence is certainly not conclusive on this issue.

This research takes an important step in acknowledging the role of individual products, the relative salience and accessibility of these products, and individuals' temporary brand representations, in brand-related information processing, all of which have been previously under-examined aspects of brand research.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Living Legacies: Exploring Influences on Family Consumption Behavior

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SPECIAL SESSION OVERVIEW

Family legacy offers a unifying construct through which to view diverse areas of family consumer research. Family legacies are studied across disciplines including family therapy (Gold and Morris 2003; King and Wynne 2004;), psychology (Bennett, Wolin and McAvity 1988), family studies (Piercy and Chapman 2001), accounting (Swaim 2004), communication studies (Vangelisti, Crumley and Baker 1999), literature (Stone 1988) and family nursing (Plager 1999). With its origins entrenched in the psychology and family therapy literatures, researchers often focus on how to change or re-edit the family legacy, as a way of transforming negative and constraining themes. Few researchers have examined positive outcomes related to family legacies.

Plager (1999) defines legacy as “a living tradition, an aspect of the family’s life world reshaped over time in a family’s particular situation and influenced by family, culture, and society” (p. 52). Family legacies are built, preserved, enacted, and fluctuate. They are living traditions that both the tacit and explicit consumer behaviors of families continuously amend and rework. Finally, and most importantly for consumer researchers, the family myths, life themes, and group conceptions that form a significant part of legacies influence people’s lives as consumers and beyond (Bennett, Wolin and McAvity 1988; Papp and Imber-Black 1996). While intergenerational studies in consumer research reveal that consumption practices are transferred between generations (Moore-Shay and Lutz 1988; Moore, Wilkie and Lutz 2002), fewer studies could be classified as exploring the centrality of family legacies in this arena (Curasi, Price and Arnould 2004; Kozinets et al. 2005). Whether family members wholeheartedly embrace their family legacies or vehemently reject them, research suggests that family members are undeniably influenced by their family legacies (Stone 1988).

Exploring new theoretical and empirical views of family consumption behavior as it relates to families’ intergenerational legacies, the session addressed family legacies in the form of lasting themes or family myths that shape behavior and through an examination of both alienable and inalienable wealth that represent and constitute intergenerational family legacies. Collectively, the papers represent meso-level theorizing of family consumption behavior. The papers drew on a variety of disciplinary and methodological approaches that made the session dynamic and enlightening.

We began our exploration of family legacies with a presentation by Amber Epp, co-authored with Eric Arnould, underscoring how family legacies, conceptualized as lasting themes, influence consumption behavior. This presentation examined both the processes of influence and consumption-related outcomes. In other words, these researchers examined *how* family legacies influence consumption behavior in families. The first presentation extended on prior theoretical research that posited a model of family identity enactment (Epp and Price 2005) and described the results of a study based on projective techniques. The second presentation by Carolyn Curasi addressed the distinctive value of inalienable wealth in embodying and transmitting family legacies across generations of family. This paper, based on an ongoing study of inalienable wealth, examined dyadic depth interview and survey data. The third presentation by Tonya Williams explored alienable assets, in the form of money, as a resource for building and transferring family

legacies. Williams used in-depth interview data and investigated the role of inter vivos monetary gifts in transferring shared familial meanings. To summarize, the session examined legacies of beliefs, values, and family meanings that can be passed across generations of family and are central to a collective sense of identity.

Drawing on his knowledge and research on families, Suraj Commuri served as discussion leader in the session. Commuri’s thoughtful commentary sparked discussion on the career of commitment to a legacy, considering the formation, acquisition, adaptation and reformation of legacies over time. Specifically, audience members contemplated the process of legacy transformation, survival and failure in light of disruptions, such as when associated objects, possessions or alienable assets are destroyed.

“Enacting the Family Legacy: How Family Themes Influence Consumption Behavior”

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Consumer researchers have demonstrated links between families’ consumption behavior and their collective identities (Belk 1988; Epp and Price 2005; McCracken 1989; Moisio, Price and Arnould 2004). Constituted within a family’s identity, overarching family themes or legacies have been recognized by scholars and clinical practitioners alike. Family themes can reflect shared values related to work, religion and family life (King and Wynne 2004). For instance, common legacies reported by the families in our sample included legacies of close/supportive, faith/service, health/athletics, hard work, and others. While family legacies are powerful drivers of behavior (Papp and Imber-Black 1996), we know little about their influences on consumption-related behavior in particular. As such, the research question guiding this paper is “how do family legacies/themes influence family consumption behavior?” Specifically, we examined the intersection of socialization processes, family legacy enactment and consumption outcomes.

This project draws on a model of family identity enactment, which posits that families enact their identities in various communication forms such as rituals, narratives, intergenerational transfers, and everyday interactions, and that consumer activities serve as symbols of family identity enactment (Epp and Price 2005). Our current paper extends this idea by examining family legacies as the embodiment of a family’s identity. It argues that consumption behaviors are one way in which families enact their legacies.

We employed a projective technique which is an appropriate method for “understanding consumers’ inner thoughts and feelings...[about] what consumers often cannot or will not verbalize in more direct, verbal measures such as interviews and surveys” (Chang 2001, p. 253). Following Belk, Ger and Askegaard (1997, 2003), we used projectives to elicit participants’ family themes. Forty participants constructed collages representing their families’ identities and wrote essays detailing their interpretations. The interpretations were filled with narratives about their families, and family legacies were prominently featured in the data. Analysis of written narratives is consistent with the dominant methods for studying family legacies (Androutsopoulou 2001; Vangelisti et al. 1999).

To outline our theoretical contributions, we review relevant literature across disciplines beginning with how family legacies are

passed between and within generations of family. The literature addressing this process mirrors socialization processes in consumer research that focus on family communication patterns (John 1999; Moschis 1985). For instance, a wide body of research connects the transmission of legacies to family storytelling (Fiese et al. 1995; King and Wynne 2004; Vangelisti et al. 1999). In addition, Bolea (2000) asserts that each generation influences the philosophies and themes of descendants through direct messages and replication of behavior. Similarly, Stone (1988) describes evidence of families using a family member as a model for the legacies or themes they wish to reproduce. Other forms of transmission include “kin keeping” practices like sharing family photos or passing on family recipes, music, or rituals. Finally, family legacies can be preserved, constructed and enacted in the transmission of families’ inalienable wealth (Curasi et al. 2004).

While our findings confirm the transmission of legacies through narratives, family interaction, modeling, and verbal instruction, we found that enacting and passing on legacies within the family is complex. Specifically, our data reveal the relationship between a family’s legacies and individual family members’ commitment to those legacies is dynamic. In some cases, individuals embraced and/or extended the legacies and in other cases, participants rejected the legacies. Thus, consumer socialization is challenged, contested and fueled by activities related to family legacies. In addition, scholars should pay attention to family legacies because they moderate the formation and development of both familial and individual identity projects.

A few important questions emerged from this data that we could not address in this study. First, how do differences in commitment to family legacies relate to consumption outcomes? We might speculate that when individuals embrace family legacies, we would see continuity in family identity, a continuance of intergenerational transfers and loyalty to products, brands, or activities that support that legacy. On the other hand, when family members reject legacies, we might observe tension between individual and family identity, adoption of alternative consumption behaviors, and dissipation of intergenerational transfers related to the legacy. Second, what might we learn by adopting a developmental perspective? Just as dominant narratives and ideologies are challenged, reshaped and sustained, examining family legacy enactment over time might suggest that family legacies that are inconsistent or rejected are, at that particular point in time, being challenged by individual family members. This would suggest that rejection/inconsistency is part of the process of reshaping legacies over time.

Researchers have also demonstrated direct links between family legacies and behavioral outcomes. For instance, as Papp and Imber-Black (1996) argue, central themes underpin individual and family decisions and behaviors. As such, our behaviors, and subsequent stories about our behaviors, reinforce the family legacy (Stone 1988). Further, themes “regulate interaction with the external world and can influence interpersonal involvement within the family” (Bennett, Wolin and McAvity 1988, p. 212). Emergent themes in our data offer indications of the diverse and evocative influences that family legacies have on consumption behavior, particularly related to collective identity. In particular, families in our study selected consumer activities based on their fit with the legacy: shaping the activities and services families elected to participate in, the products and brands they selected, their attitudes toward media and in a few cases, their decision-making processes. Interestingly, legacy types were differentially related to consumption outcomes. For instance, legacies of sophistication, frugality, and hard work were reflected in the attitudes family members had

toward consumption. Whereas, legacies of health, education, hard work, and closeness were related to the products these families purchased. This is surprising because it seems that if legacies provide a blueprint for action, each of the legacies should direct consumption behavior. The content of the legacy should not matter, but it does! More research is needed to delineate these differential relationships.

Papp and Imber-Black (1996) demonstrate that themes operate at many levels and trace the evolution of themes intergenerationally. The last pattern that emerged from the data was that in families with strong intergenerational influences, legacies were reflected in more categories of consumer behavior. For these participants, legacies that could be traced through their families to their grandparents or even great-grandparents seemed to be more pervasive with regard to consumption outcomes. The intergenerational literature reveals that families transfer brands, attitudes and behaviors across generations (Moore, Wilkie and Lutz 2002). However, consumer researchers have yet to delineate what differentiates families who engage in intergenerational transfers from those who do not. We speculate that family legacies offer one underlying process for explaining intergenerational consumption practices.

“Maybe it IS Your Father’s Oldsmobile: The Construction and Preservation of Family Identity through the Transfer of Possessions”

Carolyn F. Curasi, Georgia State University

In recent years there has been a growing body of literature providing insights about familial and individuals’ cherished possessions. These investigations, however, are typically qualitative projects with small purposive samples that could be influenced by self selection bias. This research project seeks to examine the pervasiveness of some of the most common themes emanating from these previous investigations. In exploring family possession transfers and the associated family identity that may also transfer, many literature streams inform this investigation including: cherished possessions; identity and values; intergenerationally transferred possessions; family communication; storytelling; and human memory.

Possessions play a profound role in the construction and preservation of personal identity (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981; Mehta and Belk 1991; Belk 1988; Gentry, Baker, and Kraft 1995; Kleine, Kleine, and Allen 1995). We are able to extend ourselves and thus our identities through our possessions, our family members and the cultures within which we are embedded (Belk 1988). Some familial possessions serve as symbolic vehicles with the ability to extend the familial group forward in time. Through the achievements of our ancestors we are able to bask in the glories of their accomplishments (Curasi, Price and Arnould 2004; Weiner 1994).

Individual’s values are deeply patterned and personal, essential for understanding our personal identity. We become committed to those identities that best enable us to express values we feel most strongly about (Erickson 1995; Gecas 1986; Hitlin 2003). Although the role of possessions in constructing and preserving personal identity has received a great deal of attention, the role of possessions in the construction and definition of family identity has received relatively little research attention (Epp and Price 2005).

Possessions transferred intergenerationally are bundled with object stories, serving as a means to educate and socialize younger family members (Price, Arnould and Curasi 2000). The stories we hear in early childhood become important frames of reference or mental models that later influence our behavior, including our

consumption behavior (Connerton 1995; Schank 1996; Zaltman 2003). We remember by telling stories (Engel 1999; Schank and Abelson 1995) and thus, family stories attached to tangible objects such as family heirlooms can be a very effective way to communicate rich life lessons to younger family members.

This project took place in two phases. First, qualitative data were examined for overarching themes. In addition, family possession origin stories were examined for the lessons and values communicated by the ritual retelling of these stories. In the second phase of this project the pervasiveness of the main themes generated in the first phase of this project were examined with data from a random, national mailed sample collected in the spring of 2005. Two hundred and fifty three respondents between the ages of 18 and 93 responded, for approximately a nine percent response rate.

Possession stories commonly included lessons that served to teach and communicate with younger family members about strongly held family values. These possession stories were thick with messages about family values, and illustrated family values such as: the status and esteem of the family lineage and name, valuing of art and culture, the innate ability of the lineage to overcome hardship; the importance of carefully selecting a spouse; patriotism; and the importance of family and marriage; and the valuing of religion.

In addition, supporting previous investigations, many of our informants communicated their desire to know that their cherished family possessions would be passed forward through their lineage. Our informants discussed their hope that younger family members would understand and pass forward the possession stories as well as the favorite object. In depth interviews informants discuss their heirlooms as being their heritage, reflecting their personal identity.

The quantitative results suggest that many of the responses of informants in the qualitative research can be generalized to a far larger population. For example, to the statement, "My most cherished possessions reflect who I am," sixty-seven percent of our sample agreed. Almost as many, sixty-one percent, of our informants also agreed with the statement, "My family possessions communicate our family values." A very large percentage of respondents, eighty-six percent, agreed with the statement, "I hope my loved ones will care about my cherished possessions." Ninety-five percent of respondents also revealed they plan to pass on family possessions to family members. Responses to these statements as well as others in the survey provide preliminary evidence that the ideas and intentions of many informants in previous interpretive investigations can be found in the general population. Respondents also reveal a strong symbolic element to their most cherished possessions that gave these items a value that far exceeded their monetary value.

Consistent with a growing body of qualitative research, a majority of respondents: feel that their cherished possessions reflect who they are; hope that their loved ones will care about their cherished possessions; plan to pass on family possessions to family members; and feel their family possessions communicate their family values. The comments, attitudes and hopes reflected in qualitative research projects were found to be pervasive in the national, random mailed survey.

Values are communicated and transferred via the stories that are bundled with cherished possessions. These stories serve as an extremely effective format with which to teach and communicate family identity and family values (Connerton 1995; Zaltman 2003). Thus, this research suggests that consumers are socialized about those values that their older family members hold dear via the storytelling rituals associated with intergenerationally transferred possessions. Because the human mind functions not by processing letters and words but through processing images, and metaphors,

attaching storytelling to cherished family possessions increases the potential for future family members to be educated about the values viewed as important by the older members of the family (Connerton 1995). This research suggests that there is a pervasive desire to learn family stories and to pass those forward through the lineage.

This research stream could benefit from data that includes respondents that were under-represented in this sample, such as Hispanics and African-Americans as well as a larger percentage of younger informants.

"Money and Meaning: The Role of Social Bonds and Capital in Inter Vivos Gifting"

Tonya P. Williams, Northwestern University

...as I was graduating from college, I was about 22, and my Dad told me to invest at least \$100 each month... my Dad's instruction is partly responsible for me deciding that I wanted to become a millionaire by the age of 40. (African-American, Male, 30s)

I grew up in a family business—the family was a part of the business and the business was a part of the family.... (White Female, 40s)

My aunt owned this salon—she moved into the building when it was first built and I worked with her when I was younger...I came back...when she retired...I kept some of her clients too... (African-American Female, 50s)

...on my 8th birthday my grandfather anointed me the future leader of two large corporations... inheriting Coca-Cola stock developed [business] interests which are now managed by the 4th generation of our family... (White Male, 80s)

Consumer research includes several facets of the consumption experience, yet the literature is sparse on the role of assets in consumption. In the lives of these informants and extant literature we observe that assets encompass, imbue, and transfer meanings (Belk and Wallendorf 1990). I examine inter vivos asset gifting to construct a theory of how alienable assets transfer meaning in contemporary American families. My research considers the allocation of assets to mental and emotional budgets and the role of the respective budgets in meaning transfer.

Gifts are the most common type of assistance between generations (Cheal 1996). Gift giving is an embedded process of social exchange and communication (Mauss 1967; Sherry 1983) serving to establish, maintain, and alter social roles (Otnes et al. 1993). Further, gifts serve higher-order needs of love and self-actualization (Belk 1996). The propensity to provide an inter vivos asset gift is related to an individual's access to means, desire, and available transfer options. Wealth in America is equally distributed across three categories: business and real estate, home equity, and stocks and bonds, though there are differences in asset composition across class (Weicher 1997). Very wealthy Americans have income producing assets, such as businesses, real estate, equities, or trusts, typically involving enduring relationships. The majority of the population have assets resulting from specific transactions requiring minimal relationship persistence, such as the purchase of principal residences, automobiles, or life insurance (Kennickell et al. 1996). Though few inherit, many receive inter vivos asset gifts.

Americans' acquisition thirst has been studied broadly, however there is a dearth of research concerning assets individuals use to achieve goals. Money has a social component, though few

researchers have considered money beyond a vehicle of exchange (Zelizer 1989; Zhou and Pham 2004). Gifts of alienable assets have not been broadly studied, however relationships supporting gifting of heirlooms have been examined and contributed to theories of meaning transfer (Curasi et al. 2003; Price et al. 2000). Researchers have also shown that alienable assets are imbued with meaning and emotion (Belk and Wallendorf 1990), yet the literature is silent regarding gifts of alienable assets as vehicles for transferring meaning.

Family, consumption, and wealth accumulation have been primarily examined through the frame of the life cycle model, and non-income related influencers. Family and non-income related influencers have been included in the study of meaning creation and transfer in consumer behavior (Curasi et al. 2003; Otnes et al. 1993; Price et al. 2000). Consumer researchers have examined gift giving as transferring family legacy, or achieving symbolic immortality through tangible possessions. This literature has focused primarily on the transfer of inalienable possessions (Weiner 1992) and the implication for family relationships (Curasi et al. 2003). Though this literature speaks to meaning transfer processes, it does not address how meaning is maintained across generations when assets have salient alienable characteristics.

The role of money as a vehicle for meaning as well as a resource for consumption is a critical piece of the consumer behavior puzzle. Through understanding how individuals acquire and account for resources, I present a model of alienable assets as vehicles of meaning transfer. The model put forth describes how assets traverse market and family space as well as mental and emotional budgets in the creation and transfer of meaning across relationships.

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Brand Dislike: Representing the Negative Side of Consumer Preferences

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ABSTRACT

There has been a recent increase in consumer research on the topic of brand dislike: it can be defined as the negative judgment expressed by the consumer and/or implied in the choice not to buy. The sparse literature in this field is fragmented into different streams of research that will be reviewed in this paper: a) consumer criticism and resistance b) dislike as a means of communicating and constructing self image, and c) consumer/brand relationship. After the literature review, the method and results from fieldwork will be presented. The data converge towards a unitary and consistent framework, in which various levels and factors can be interpreted in the light of the theoretical perspectives outlined above.

INTRODUCTION

Brand dislike can be considered as a “dark side” of consumer preferences because the literature has not dedicated the same effort to this topic as has been devoted to the analysis of positive attitudes and evaluations. The purpose of this paper is twofold: first of all, we will summarize extant, fragmented literature within a single framework. Secondly, relying upon qualitative data, we will give a descriptive picture of what brand dislike means, from the customers’ perspective.

FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE

The research available on negative evaluations of products and brands is very limited, especially when compared to the research done on positive attitudes. This asymmetry is understandable, particularly in the marketing field: companies and institutions are very much interested in the practical consequences of positive forms of knowledge. They want to know what we want and are willing to buy (choose, vote, etc.).

On the contrary, this asymmetry is difficult to justify on a theoretical level considering that, in order to better understand and explain purchase and consumption behaviours, it is necessary to put both positive and negative aspects in the same framework. This statement will appear more relevant at the end of the literature review, reported below.

Actual research on negative attitudes towards brands and their related behaviours is fragmented in a number of perspectives, as emerges from the following examples.

Think about Disney from the point of view of the participants in the Burning Man event (Kozinets 2002, 25): they dislike this brand because of its overt commercialism; furthermore, activists dislike Nike because this company doesn’t respect some basic human rights: “the Nike campaign is about dignity and respect. And giving people enough money to live on” they specify (Kozinets and Handelman 2004, 695).

From another line of reasoning, Lara doesn’t like Kickers because it gives her the wrong image (Hogg and Banister 2001, 93).

A further different approach arises from Fournier’s research (1998, 363): Jean dislikes Bon Ami because she noticed that this brand started scratching the sink. After trying Comet, she discovered that this brand really is better.

These examples belong to different research traditions and perspectives and they will be reviewed in the following pages for the purpose of integrating them into a single frame.

Burning Man participants and activists can be observed from the perspective that Arnould and Thompson (2005) label consumption as a practice of ideological reproduction and resistance. Brand dislike appears if and when consumers opt for lifestyles that disregard dominant consumerist norms or directly challenge corporate power. Researchers have only recently started to pay attention to different strategies practiced by individuals or groups in response to marketplace ideology, perceived as a structure of domination.

These consumers explicitly reveal their skepticism toward the marketing system and they engage in resistance practices in order to distance themselves from structures and systems they consider oppressive and coercive. Several authors have tried to assess whether the results of resistance strategies are effective as emancipatory consumption practices (Firat and Dholakia 1998; Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Murray and Ozanne 1991; Ozanne and Murray 1995) or whether they reproduce the dominant ideology (Holt 2002; Kozinets 2002).

Following Thompson (2004), we can take a slightly different position: do these practices affect the power structure within the marketplace? Moving from modernity to postmodernity, marketers realized that consumers are less willing to behave according to company-generated patterns, passively accepting their authority. Consumers don’t want to receive directions on how they should live or why brands should be central in their life (Brown 2004). They want to experience consumption as a context of personal fulfilment and self-creation. As a consequence, the branding paradigm used by marketers had to shift, from modern to postmodern.

According to Holt (2002), the postmodern branding purpose is twofold: a) brands should not be presented as cultural blueprints, but as cultural resources, as useful components for creating and managing consumer self concept; b) branded cultural resources have to be perceived as authentic, “as invented and disseminated by parties without an instrumental economic agenda, by people who are intrinsically motivated by their inherent value”.

However, this postmodern branding paradigm is now running into trouble too, and the reason is not that brands don’t respect the search for personal sovereignty, as in the modern branding perspective, but because of a problematic interpretation of authenticity: “brands now cause trouble not because they dictate tastes, but because they allow companies to dodge civic obligations” (Holt 2002, 88). Activist organizations, but also mainstream consumers, even though with less commitment, call for a new idea of authenticity as a quality of the company and they especially ask for deeper integration between the values associated with the brand and the actions of the company. The focus of postmodern resistant consumers then is on the morals and ethics behind the brand and on the social and environmental implications of its use.

Turning back to Thompson (2004), the cultural struggle for authenticity is hard to fight for ordinary consumers given the complexity of a globalized and decentralized economy; only activists and their organizations are able to act effectively in this direction. They can play an active role in increasing consumers’ concern over contradictory marketing practices and inducing companies to cope with it. In Thompson’s view (2004), the most important aspect of this process is the redistribution of power within the market system. If activists are effective and mainstream con-

sumers receptive, companies can be forced towards the post postmodern branding paradigm: “brands will be trusted to serve as cultural source materials when their sponsors have demonstrated that they shoulder civic responsibilities as would a community pillar” (Holt 2002, 88).

Another perspective from which to look at consumer criticism towards brands is rooted in consumer identity projects, as identified by Arnould and Thompson (2005): consumers use brands and other marketing materials to create and manage a multifaceted and often fragmented sense of self. Dislike and distaste play a major role in this process (Wilk 1997). The creation of meanings and social relationships via consumption involves not only positive attitudes and choices but negative ones too. According to Bourdieu (1984, 56):

“In matters of taste, more than anywhere else, all determination is negation, and tastes are perhaps first and foremost distastes, disgust provoked by horror or visceral intolerance (‘sick-making’) of the tastes of others... Aesthetic intolerance can be terribly violent. Aversion to different life-styles is perhaps one of the strongest barriers between the classes.”

Consumers use positive and negative meanings attached to their consumption choices to create and maintain social and cultural identities (McCracken 1986); consumers also use these meanings to establish similarity and differentiation and, thus, to ask for inclusion in and exclusion from specific social settings. Wilk (1997), for example, showed that distaste and refusal are often more important than taste and choice because they are more effective as social indicators, even though likes are much easier to communicate than dislikes.

In this stream of research, it is also important to consider Hogg’s contribution (1998) on consumers’ negative choices within and across product categories: this author differentiates between *non choices*, which include products and services that are not bought simply because of availability, accessibility and affordability, and *anti choices*, which include products and services that are explicitly refused because they are not compatible with other choices. As such, they are not consistent with the consumer’s sense of self.

In Hogg’s research, consumers are able to identify typical associations between branded products and social roles (e.g. Ralph Lauren and trendy students). According to such associations, they dislike and refuse brands if they refer to a group from which they want to keep their distance. Furthermore, consumers clearly identify wrong associations, that is to say branded products that could never be related to a specific social role. More recently, Hogg (Banister and Hogg 2004; Hogg and Banister 2001) focused her attention on the role of the undesired self in the determination of anti choices: it is through the formation of distaste and the associated negative stereotypes that consumers are able to define themselves.

In short, the findings of this second stream of research support the importance of negative consumption experiences as a means to create and manage self concept and as a source for brand dislike.

Finally, the last stream of research that deals with brand dislike is rooted within the general framework of Consumption Culture Theory (Arnould and Thompson 2005), but does not specifically fit into one of its four main areas: in her seminal article, Fournier (1998) introduced relationship theory into consumer research and demonstrated its usefulness for understanding the role brands play in consumers’ lives. From this perspective, this approach has contributed to the renewal of an old topic in consumer research (brand loyalty) according to a more socially oriented perspective.

According to Fournier (1988), sometimes brands get personal qualifications and, therefore, they become active partners of the consumer. As a consequence, consumers’ choices and behaviors regarding brands are based on affective factors and bonds rather than on cognitive cues: on the shelves in the supermarket, consumers can meet friends, enemies and acquaintances, and not objects to be evaluated in a comparative manner. Fournier’s (1998, 363) conceptualization of brand relationship quality is a definitive important construct for understanding the contribution of brands in the creation of meanings in every day life.

Based on this perspective, the consumer-brand relationship can deteriorate and generate negative feelings for two reasons: entropy and stress. In the entropy model, the relationship terminates because of the failure of both partners to maintain and rejuvenate it; in the stress model, on the contrary, relationships break up due to environmental, partner or relational episodic factors. Similar indications are also presented by Fajer and Schouten (1995).

More recently, analyzing the evolution of consumer-brand relationships, Aaker et al. (2004) show different development patterns for sincere versus exciting brands and particularly opposite consequences in case of transgressions. Whereas relationships with sincere brands suffer and deteriorate despite subsequent reparation attempts, relationships with exciting brands surprisingly show improvements in the wake of transgression.

In conclusion, we can observe that in this stream of research, interpersonal relationship theories are used to approach the topic of terminating person-brand relationships, illustrating the interplay of instrumental/functional and value-expressive/symbolic meanings that could cause them and lead to brand dislike.

Several explanations of brand dislike can be drawn from the literature reviewed above, ranging from ideological commitment against unethical practices to product failure episodes. It is possible to integrate these perspectives within a single framework: consumer criticism and resistance can be seen as an extreme of a continuum of brand dislike factors, on the other side of which we find consumer/brand relationship perspective. The former is a typical *collectivistic* approach to brand dislike: consumers take care of values, rights and individual wealth that are not strictly related to their own personal interests. The latter is a more *individualistic* perspective: consumers do not interact with brands that prove to be inadequate partners. Social communication through disliked brands is somewhere in between because there are collectivistic as well as individualistic reasons for keeping one’s distance from a brand in order to fix one’s role within a social setting (Fig. 1).

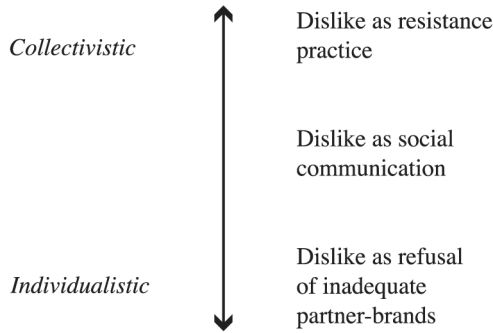
With this frame in mind, we have developed a research project to describe brand dislike from the consumer’s perspective.

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

What is still lacking in consumer research is a phenomenological account of brand dislike. In this study, after reviewing the literature within a unitary frame, the second purpose is to describe brand dislike from the consumer’s point of view in order to fill such a gap. Starting from different theoretical explanations pooled together into the collectivistic-individualistic frame, our research goal is to provide a description of brand dislike. The focus is on the thoughts, feelings, and activities evoked by consumers when asked to reflect on and visually represent disliked brands, both as lived experiences and general opinions.

We employed two qualitative methods in the present study: collages and introspective essays. The main goal is to elicit factors of brand dislike from consumers’ experience by means of methods with different capabilities: collages were made as a group project and employ images, while introspective essays are individual verbal tasks.

FIGURE 1
A UNITARY MODEL OF BRAND DISLIKE



Collages are based solely on images and they are absolutely free: there is no bias or filter between the conceptualization and the representation of the meaning (Belk et al. 1997; Havlena and Holak 1996). Similarly, introspective essays allowed us to evoke consumers' experiences and feelings without being specifically directed by an interviewer (Lupton 1996).

Projective techniques, then, helped us to better understand the nature of brand dislike; in this phase of our research, in fact, traditional methods, both qualitative and quantitative, may be limited. They are simply not well suited to eliciting consumer fantasies or revealing characterizations of consumer brand dislike (Belk et al. 1997). Hence, the projective measures sought to evoke fantasies, dreams and visual imagination in order to bypass the reluctance, defense mechanisms, rationalizations and social desirability that seemed to block the direct verbal accounts of some of those studied (Belk, Ger, and Askegaard 2003).

Data were collected in two undergraduate classrooms in economics and humanities schools. One hundred fifty one (151) students participated: equally distributed between males and females, between 20 and 25 years old. Each subject filled out the retrospective essay first and then, a few weeks later, took part in the collage project. We asked students to write down one liked and one disliked brand and then provide a description of the reason for their choice.

Collage making is a group task: we asked each group of around ten people to negotiate a common set of meanings of the concept of brand dislike, which had to be represented as a joint project. We gave each group the same Italian magazines and they had to cut out any material they wished to use to make the collage, expressing the concept of brand dislike. For this reason, some images are repeated in more than one collage. They were encouraged to let themselves go and express their feelings, intuitions, imaginings, fantasies and associations. Following the completion of their collage, they publicly explained their interpretation of it.

Both reports and collages were coded with Atlas.ti. The interpretation was conducted individually and then collectively by three researchers.

RESULTS: FACTORS AND LEVELS OF DISLIKE

Data from written reports and collages were grouped into three distinct levels, according to the object against which consumers addressed critical statements:

- *product brand*: subjects criticize brands that show an unfair price/quality ratio, whose products perform poorly, and that do not provide effective customer care services, etc.;
- *user brand*: subjects criticize brands that are associated with user stereotypes they do not like and they do not want to be linked with, and that do not let them be viewed by relevant others as they would like to be;
- *corporate brand*: subjects criticize brands that belong to companies that pursue behaviors and activities that they judge illegal, immoral, unethical, etc..

Factors of Dislike: Product Brand Level

At the product level, brands have been criticized for different reasons, ranging from their disproportionate price or unfair price/quality relationship to performance drawbacks.

Andrea (m, Sky). Recently prices increased. [...] with the same amount with which I was able to see movies, sports, soccer, specialized and cultural channels, now I see half of the programs. And I have to fill their wallet, because state-owned television is so dull.

Andrea complains due to the violation of price fairness: the *give* component in this exchange process is not adequate (Zeithaml 1988). However, even though the exchange is definitely disappointing, the relationship is still alive, given the absence of alternative brands. In Fournier terms (1998, 362), this is a case of enslavement: the consumer has negative feelings but persists in the relationship because of circumstances.

Davide (m, Trenitalia¹). Price/quality relationship is not good, because the price recently increased with virtually no benefits from the point of view of the service.

In this excerpt also, the focus is on the exchange side of the relationship, with attention devoted to both *get* and *give* components. However, in this case also, the relationship between the consumer and the brand is still in progress, mainly for the same reasons: Trenitalia is a monopolist and there no alternatives.

¹The national, state owned railways.

Both Andrea and Davide dislike their brands because of poor and declining value compared to the monetary sacrifice they are asked for: they are locked into the relationship and they feel frustrated.

Brand dislike is also related to performance problems derived either from the product per se (e.g. technical problems, unhealthiness, and hideousness) or from customer care services.

Alessandro (m, Sony). I don't like it because in my experience with hi-fi and tv Sony products I often underwent failures and technical drawbacks. Customer care service has proved to be slow and expensive and, in one case, they were not able to meet my expectations: in fact, the failure occurred once again. In the end, compared with the safety and reliability reputation of the company, my requirements have not been adequately satisfied by Sony products.

Alessandro (m, Aprilia). Because of these problems, I often had to bring the scooter to an Aprilia Center to have it fixed. But until now they have not been able to solve the problem and—as a result—most of the time the scooter is not usable and is subject to continuous technical adjustments. Regarding excessive oil consumption, I got in touch with the Aprilia headquarters, because local works were not able to fix the problem. Well, they refused to help because they claimed it was not their fault, but the fault of the local Aprilia staff which was not capable of solving the problem!

In both cases (Sony and Aprilia), dislike depends on a relationship deterioration generated by dyadic stress factors (Fournier 1998). Failure to keep a promise (Sony) or perception of scarce attention from the partner (Aprilia) generates strong negative feelings towards the brand.

In summary: a) exchange unfairness and b) relational troubles may generate brand dislike. In both cases, dislike refers to functional/instrumental aspects rather than cultural, value oriented or expressive ones. In all of these cases, dislike is not necessarily followed by the dissolution of the relationship, although Sky and Trenitalia are monopolist and consumers have virtually no alternative.

Factors of Dislike: User Brand Level

Agnese introduces us to the user dimension of brand dislike.

Agnese (Prada). Every young consumer started buying and wearing Prada and my hate has increased until becoming absolute intolerance. This brand is the symbol of a generation of boys and girls that can afford a pair of shoes that costs more than 200?!

This is a classic case of prototypical role-to-product association (Hogg 1998) and Agnese's strong refusal of Prada is rooted in the negative judgment she expresses about a specific group that she doesn't like and doesn't want to be a member of.

However, while Agnese refers to brand meanings in negative terms in order to establish distinction and (in this case) exclusion from a specific social group, Irene's dislike for Nike is related to her desire to create a sense of self via consumption.

Irene (f, Nike). I believe that these shoes and garments have become a means of homologation instead of something to express one's personality.

This informant criticizes Nike's attempt to impose preferences and styles in the market and tends to portray herself as a real postmodern consumer, able to creatively play with brands.

As illustrated by Thompson and Haytko (1997, 35), critiques of mindless conformity or perceived manipulative techniques by marketers "help each participant to see his or her self as an active creator of a personally unique style, rather than as a passive, trend-following consumer".

More in general, in this section brand dislike is represented as something strictly related to the creation and management of self concept and oriented towards social communication: Agnese and Irene complain that certain brands are associated with bad people and/or are not effective for self representation within the social context.

Factors of Dislike: Corporate Brand Level

At the corporate level, a number of factors emerge, all of which converge towards a general line of criticism that can be labeled as ideological (Murray and Ozanne 1995): subjects do not necessarily experience direct drawbacks or disadvantages, but they take care of the effects of unfair behaviors on a more general level.

Firstly, consumers dislike brands due to the fact that they believe the company has infringed written or ethical norms. In this perspective, abuses related to exploitations and transgressions are very important.

Alphonse (m, Nike). It is a huge multinational, but because of this they cannot be justified when they take advantage of their power in less developed countries and, even worse, against children.

As well illustrated by Alphonse, consumers recognize that global companies wield extraordinary influence, both positive and negative, on society's well-being. They expect firms to address social problems linked to what they sell and how they conduct business (Holt et al. 2004). People may turn a blind eye when local companies take advantage of employees, but they won't stand for transnational players like Nike adopting similar practices.

In effect, it's the largest, most visible companies in any category that are frequently classified by their informants as labor rights abusers, monopolistic threats to competition, and/or cultural imperialists (Kozinets and Handelman 2004).

Alessandra (f, Nestlé). One of their most successful strategies is that of distributing free samples of powdered milk in Third World hospitals, increasing the practice of bottle-feeding.

Federico (m, Ferrero). It is a multinational that allowed the production of some of its products in China without asking for controls on job conditions, which are dramatic according to some witnesses. The company buys cocoa through distributive channels that do not provide proper economic rewards to farmers.

Multinationals per se are often considered unreliable and, in addition, subjects declare that they do not trust them. This holds for companies in general and relates to a general form of unreliability and even to more practical aspects of fallibility.

Fabrizio (Nestlé): As soon I was aware of what Nestlé did in Africa, then they said that they had stopped, but I don't believe it, I stopped buying. Fabrizio does not believe that Nestlé had really stopped the unethical behavior he criticized.

FIGURE 2
THE FISH WITH THE LETHAL SPIT



FIGURE 3
A “LEGNANO” BICYCLE PRINT ADVERTISING



In addition, brand dislike can be generated by an unfair use of marketing practices, especially advertising. One of the groups used a picture of a fish that hunts another (smaller) fish by *spitting poison* to catch it: it is used as a metaphor for the company trying to hook the consumer (Fig.2).

Consumers criticize product claims, perceived as fallacious and misleading and, in general, advertising for its deceptive nature.

Agnese (f, Cepu²). They represent studying in a wrong way: they let the consumer perceive a degree or a diploma as an easy task, easy to get without sacrifices. And it's not like that. Their slogans do not sound realistic and feasible.

Davide (m, Trenitalia). Their advertising campaigns are a pure insult to consumers, because they do not represent the real situation, full of delays and technical troubles.

From one of the collages,³ the detail reported on the right (bicycle manufacturer ad) is used to emphasize the redundant use (and abuse) of female features to increase arousal and attention, but that do not fit the context and/or are not relevant in terms of product attributes (Fig. 3).

Sometimes consumers engage in acts of anti-brand equity (Dobscha 1997; Dobscha and Ritson 1998): the more money the manufacturer spends on advertising and brand building, the less I like that brand, as explained by Riccardo in regard to Vodafone.

Riccardo (m, Vodafone). Vodafone campaigns are obsessive. They broadcast even three ads in the same sequence.

Individuals also dislike brands because of the nature of company advertising that tries to exercise an authority over consumers' choices, proposing and often imposing an ideal lifestyle, a sort of "ought-to-be" realm.

²The company provides training and support services to students who do not pass university courses.

³The majority of pictures and concepts in the collages is related to product brand level factors: in this sense, the collective nature of this task (compared to the individual nature of introspective essays) may have exerted a significant role in knowledge elicitation: collages best represent factors that are related to the collectivistic pole of the continuum described in fig 1.

FIGURE 4
TELEVISION PASSIVE VIEWERS



Svetlana (f, Mulino Bianco). They have created an image of an “ideal household” which is not plausible. It is too sugary and grotesque to have any real relation with actual families.

Filippo (m, Nike). I do not agree with their effort aimed at convincing us that if we wear their products, we are different from those who don’t, and better.

In *modern time*, advertising was asked to present detailed instructions on how to live; such instructions were potentially important to consumers because they provided them with valuable information on desirable manners, styles, entertainment, and lifestyles.

Knowing what was new or popular might have been a means of gaining prestige and acceptance or might have facilitated social mobility. As reported by Holt (2002), in *postmodern time* consumers don’t like to accept corporate impositions and, when exposed to them, they might react with a negative feeling of dislike.

Such a stance is clearly implied in the representation that one of the groups gave of the typical family, made of plastic dummies entirely dominated by the TV. They explicitly urge us to make “better use of our heads” (Fig. 4).

Finally, consumers criticize brands because of the presence of counter values in the advertising used to build them.⁴

Federica (f, Armani). Armani ads represent the elit, as opposed to simplicity, freedom, comfort and moderateness.

Themes involving having or terminal materialism have also increased lately at the expense of doing or instrumental materialism. On the basis of these findings, it appears that ads did not show an escalating image of the good life as much as they increasingly employed pleasure, luxury, and terminal materialism to sell their products and services.

One of the groups represented such a theme with a sort of pyramid on top of which there is a *perfect woman*, who is considered as a sort of target for the young girl in the middle of the picture:

⁴From one of the collages, subjects list their preferred values as follows (no priority order): courage, friendship, family, love, nature, joy, culture.

advertisements show her products (luxury cars, watches, jewels) and models (top models, tv show stars) that portray the road to the top. Underneath there are obscure images of crowds of hardworking men and children and poor people (Fig. 5).

Factors that emerge from the data can thus be ordered according to three different levels that are strictly related to the framework that emerged from the literature review (Fig. 6).

In summary, looking at brand dislike from the consumers’ perspective produces a number of possible factors that can be positioned on the continuum between *collectivistic vs. individualistic* orientations. At this point, without any further and more in-depth analyses, it’s a matter of context and personal characteristics, which can explain the emergence of such factors. In the final section, some directions for future research will be proposed to obtain a more thorough understanding of these results.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The main result that emerges from the analysis is a complex but coherent framework that is broken down into three levels. In this sense, the paper’s purpose of giving a descriptive picture of the consumers’ perspective on disliked brands has been achieved. Moreover, this picture is strictly integrated in the theoretical framework proposed above.

From a descriptive point of view, the first group of brand dislike factors fits in the product brand level: subjects are unsatisfied with some product or service characteristics and they end up disliking the brand. While some of these problems reveal a sort of mismatch between expectations and performance, others are more related to the monetary exchange that sometimes may produce a sort of skepticism towards the company and its brands.

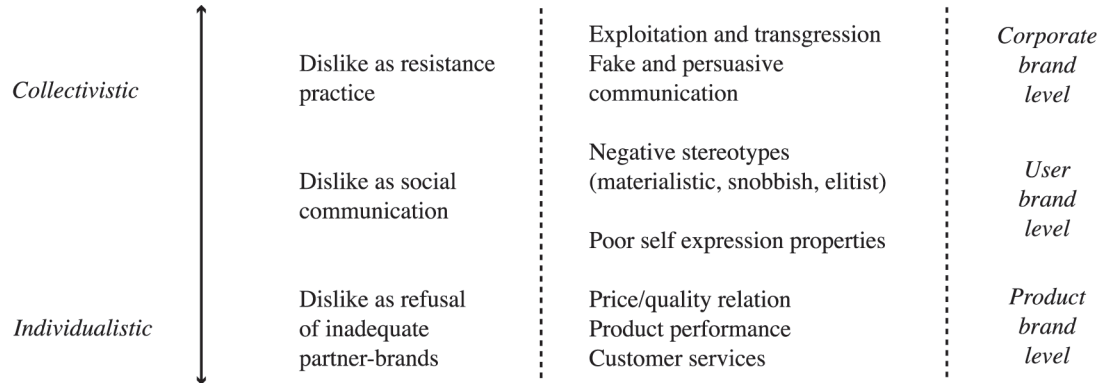
The second factor is related to the user brand level: subjects often associate the disliked brand with a sort of negative stereotype, someone who they do not want to be involved with. For instance, consumers criticize a brand because of its elitism: it is not targeted at them; it’s for someone else, someone more affluent. In other cases, the brand is criticized for its commonness: subjects are convinced that that particular brand is not capable of portraying them how they really want to be.

And, finally, the last dislike factor is related to the corporate brand level: no matter what the product characteristics are, consum-

FIGURE 5
 “PERFECT WOMAN” COLLAGE



FIGURE 6
 LEVELS AND FACTORS OF BRAND DISLIKE



ers criticize companies because of their supposedly unfair behaviors and abuses.

The main implication from a descriptive point of view is that consumers develop negative brand attitudes for a number of reasons, some of which are more individualistic (functional, egotistic) and others which have a more collectivistic and ideological nature (social, cultural, ethical). For instance, poor product performance belongs to the individualistic realm, while the exploitation of third world children belongs to the collectivistic one. Besides, consumers can also fall somewhere in between: sometimes they criticize brands because they are not able to express their personality (individualistic), while in other cases they are associated with

negative, materialistic and snobbish stereotypes they do not want to be associated with (collectivistic).

From the point of view of theoretical implications, this analysis of brand dislike both supports and integrates the evidence available in consumer research. We found that informants experience the different dislike factors illustrated in the literature review; nevertheless, the subjects' descriptions also integrate previous contributions in that—within the same analysis—we can find very different dislike factors at the same time, all of which can be rooted in different levels of ideological sensitivity (collectivistic vs. individualistic). This result seems interesting in the light of consumer resistance research. Until now it has been empirically analyzed with

the help of individuals and groups strongly involved in social and/or environmental issues (Dobscha and Ozanne 2000; Holt 2002; Kozinets and Handelman 2004); the fact that the results of this research study come from ordinary consumers gives new insights into the relevance of this trait in the mass market.

Another interesting implication that arises from this study, which needs to be better developed, is that in some cases consumers tend to separate product from brand relationship: they keep up the relationship with the brand despite negative evaluations of the product. Sometimes this occurs because of a lack of alternatives, but in general the relationship with the brand can be strong enough to consider product drawbacks insufficient reason to switch brands. Research on brand community (McAlexander et al. 2002; Muniz and O'Guinn 2000) strongly supports this line of thinking.

In the same perspective, the opposite case has to be carefully analyzed, even though we did not come across it directly in our data: sometimes consumers express very negative opinions about brands (even at the corporate level), but still buy and use the product.

This research presents some specificities and limitations, dependent on the nature of the (convenience) sample in terms of age (20-25), social role (students), and culture (Italy). Moreover, the study is essentially descriptive and needs to be developed further in three directions:

- a) after the qualitative research, quantitative methods are actually employed to measure brand dislike (in general and at the brand level) and to identify the weight of its three groups of factors. Only preliminary results are available at the moment;
- b) data will be collected on a larger and diversified scale (international comparisons and multiple stratified samples are going to be developed);
- c) further empirical analyses will address the relationship between dislike and behavior, with particular reference to the strength of this relationship, according to the different levels of the construct (corporate, product, user).

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Schadenfreude as a Consumption-Related Emotion: Feeling Happiness about the Downfall of Another's Product

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Schadenfreude is the joy a person experiences when he or she observes another's downfall. Prior research on *schadenfreude* has focused largely on interpersonal judgments of an academically and socially successful target before and after a personal failure. We were interested in whether the emotion *schadenfreude* is generated spontaneously not only based on the downfall of an individual, but by the downfall of an individual's product. For example, if one is jealous of a neighbor's recent deluxe kitchen renovation, does news that the new appliances are malfunctioning bring one joy? And, if *schadenfreude* is experienced after witnessing a product failure, are the antecedents of this emotional response the same as they are for personal failure? This research extends the literature on *schadenfreude* by exploring its role as a consumption-related emotion, and by identifying specific emotional antecedents, such as resentment and jealousy, that drive the experience of joy after witnessing product failure.

Social comparison theory provides the conceptual framework for our research (e.g., Festinger 1954; Suls and Wheeler 2000). In the *schadenfreude* literature, the experience of this emotion was greater when the target was portrayed as being superior as opposed to average (e.g., Brigham et al. 1997). High status products are desired not only for their refinements, but for the positive image they help their owners project to others (Corrigan 1997; Belk 1988). When people consume and display status symbols, this may prompt observers to engage in upward social comparisons. Such upward comparisons can result in positive emotional responses such as admiration, but frequently prompt jealousy and other negative emotions such as anger and resentment. If a person then observes an envied status symbol fail, a disconcerting upward comparison may turn into a gratifying downward comparison, resulting in *schadenfreude*.

Literature in the area of services marketing has examined in depth the emotional reactions of consumers when they personally experience a product or service failure (e.g., Oliver and Westbrook 1991), the negative word-of-mouth a wronged consumer may spread after a failure (Richins 1983; Curren and Folkes 1987; Anderson 2003), and the implications of such failures for brand image (e.g., Folkes 1984). These product or service failures do not happen in social isolation, but are sometimes witnessed by others. As far as we know, there is no literature addressing how consumers respond to observing *others'* product or service failures, and how likely they are to spread malicious gossip about the product or brand after witnessing such events. (We employ the term malicious gossip to distinguish such behavior from negative word-of-mouth, which has traditionally been conceptualized as being prompted by a consumer's *own* product or service experiences). In the kitchen renovation example above, how likely would the jealous neighbor be to recount the story about the failure of the high-priced appliances to his or her friends, co-workers, or other like-minded neighbors? In this research we explore the role product-related *schadenfreude* plays in prompting malicious gossip, and suggest what kind of content this gossip is likely to contain. Our contribution to the literature on word-of-mouth is the exploration of how

observations of, rather than personal experiences of, and emotional reactions to others' product failures might also serve to prompt the spread of negative product-related information.

Status competition between individuals can take place on many dimensions, one of which is the purchase and display of status symbols. Multiple theories can be employed to predict sex differences in the modes of status competition, including but not limited to the evolutionary psychological perspective (e.g., Kenrick, Trost and Sundie 2004) and biosocial theory (e.g., Wood and Eagly 2002). Because men are more likely to compete with one another via displays of economic resources, they may experience more joy when another's status product fails—particularly if the owner is another man.

The objectives of the present study included:

- Exploring the extent to which observing the failure of a high (versus a low) status product evokes *schadenfreude*
- Assessing the extent to which the relationship between status symbol failure and *schadenfreude* is mediated by negative emotions induced by the target's product ownership
- Measuring the relationship between dispositional envy (a chronic tendency to be envious) and *schadenfreude* provoked by status symbol failure
- Assessing the extent to which *schadenfreude* provoked by failure of a status symbol prompts malicious gossip about the owner and his or her failed product
- Exploring sex differences in emotional reactions to the failure of others' status symbols

Participants in the study were 395 Southeastern university students (177 men, 218 women), randomly assigned to the conditions of a 2 (car type: high status (Mercedes CLK) vs. lower status (Ford Focus)) x 2 (sex of target: male vs. female) x 2 (sex of participant: male vs. female) between subjects design. Participants learned about a student similar to them that had recently acquired either a new Ford Focus or Mercedes CLK Coupe, and then subsequently experienced a public product failure when the car broke down at an upscale shopping mall. Emotional responses to both the student's car ownership, and the subsequent downfall, were collected. Participants rated their likelihood of spreading malicious gossip regarding such a product failure, and provided written responses indicating what specifically they might communicate to others regarding such an event. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares (PLS), a structural equation modeling technique (Chin 1998, Hulland 1999, Wold 1982).

Participants felt more *schadenfreude* after witnessing the failure of the high-status product, as opposed to the low-status product. This effect was mediated by negative initial feelings about the student's car ownership. The strongest predictors of

schadenfreude were the negative initial emotions jealousy and resentment. Participants pre-disposed to feel envy felt more schadenfreude, and this effect was partially mediated by the negative initial feelings. Men felt more schadenfreude than women, irrespective of the sex of the target. Experiencing schadenfreude after observing the product failure significantly predicted a willingness to spread malicious gossip about such an incident, and independent coding of the open-ended responses indicated that the gossip would frequently involve negative statements about the product/brand.

An Exploration of Consumer Forgiveness Following Marketer Transgressions

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Do consumers forgive and forget marketer transgressions? Transgressions are defined as violations of relationship-relevant norms, and refer to the breaches of the implicit or explicit rules guiding relationship performance and evaluations (Aaker, Fournier, and Brasel 2004). Although existing research provides some evidence to support the service recovery paradox, i.e. a successful recovery can strengthen the consumer-brand relationship (Maxham and Netemeyer 2002), there is conflicting evidence that suggests service recovery efforts cannot compensate for poor service delivery, and that consumer perceptions of the brand and future repurchase intentions are lower than they would have been if the transgression had not occurred (Andreassen 2001). This suggests that the service recovery paradox occurs less frequently than thought, and that some consumers hold grudges against marketers following a transgression (Andreassen 2001; Aron 2001).

Research on the role of consumer-brand relationships within the context of marketer transgressions also remains inconclusive. It has been suggested that consumers in close relationships with marketers are more willing to forgive marketer transgressions (Mattila 2001). It is also believed that relationships provide a 'buffer effect' when failures occur, with prior positive experiences mitigating consumer evaluations of service recovery (Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekar 1998). However, a recent longitudinal study found that consumer-brand relationships suffered in the wake of transgressions (Aaker et al. 2004). This suggests that relationships can both buffer and magnify consumer responses to transgressions. Given that no service system is perfect, transgressions are possible within service encounters (Mattila 2001). Furthermore, as the frequency of interactions between the consumer and brand increases within the course of a long-term relationship, so does the likelihood of a transgression (Aaker et al. 2004). This leads to the question of whether and how consumers forgive firms for transgressions that befall their shared relationships.

The existing literature captures some aspects of consumer responses to marketer transgressions through studies on consumer complaint behaviour, service recovery and subsequent consumer evaluations of the marketer. However, none explicitly examine the phenomenon of whether and how consumers forgive brands that transgress relationship norms. A transactional focus, and an overemphasis on the concept of satisfaction and its behavioural outcomes related to service failure and recovery, has resulted in the neglect of the rich array of emotional experiences and emotional coping strategies that consumers may adopt in response to marketer transgressions (McCullough and Gwinner 1998; Westbrock and Oliver 1991).

To address the identified limitations and expand our understanding of how consumers respond to marketer transgressions, the present article explores the phenomenon of consumer forgiveness. The concept of forgiveness offers value to marketers because forgiveness is believed to occur within a relational context, and transgressions are proposed to affect the trajectory of the relationship (McCullough and Worthington 1999). Given that marketers are forming closer relationships with customers, and consumers form strong bonds with brands (Fournier 1998; Fournier and Mick 1999), forgiveness may better capture the range of cognitive and emotional reactions to a transgression, and provide the basis to restore the relationship to its original pre-transgression state, or minimise bad

feeling and harm. This notion of forgiveness will provide a relational focus to understanding consumer responses to marketer transgressions, providing new insights into consumer's cognitive, emotive and behavioural experiences, if, and when they come to forgive brands following a transgression. Insights into the concept of forgiveness could be utilised by scholars and marketers to improve consumer welfare and quality of life given the health and psychological benefits of forgiving documented in some medical and psychology literature (Pettitt 1987; Safer 1999; Witvliet, Ludwig, and Vander Laan 2001).

As the research aim is exploratory, data was collected via qualitative research methods. Previous research that sought to understand consumer emotions and coping strategies found qualitative in-depth interviews (as opposed to quantitative methods) provided the 'richest' data (e.g. Mick and Fournier 1998). Twenty semi-structured interviews were conducted with consumers who believed they had experienced marketer transgressions. Each interview was between thirty minutes to one hour in length and was audio taped and transcribed. Data analysis was conducted based on the seven qualitative manipulation operations described by Spiggle (1994).

The results provide evidence to suggest that the concept of forgiveness can be applied to the context of consumer-brand relationships, revealing themes that represented the triggers, processes and outcomes associated with the experience of marketer transgressions. The findings show that marketer transgressions extend beyond core service failures. For example, transgressions include various breaches of expressed and implied relationship norms. Following a transgression, consumers adopted various coping strategies and processes in re-evaluating the brand relationship. These were: service recovery, re-evaluations of the brand's trustworthiness, apportioning blame, and reinterpretations of the brand into stereotypes. Consumers' conceptualisations suggested forgiveness of a brand essentially involves the release of negative emotions associated with the transgression and becoming motivated to act constructively toward the relationship. A number of transgression-related outcomes were revealed, including strengthened relationship, renegotiated relationship, forced stay, exit, avoidance, revenge, and loss of faith. The results also provided evidence of various consumer benefits associated with the experience of forgiveness.

In identifying the triggers, processes and outcomes associated with consumer forgiveness, this exploratory study makes several significant contributions to theory. It is, to the authors' knowledge, the first empirical study conducted to observe the phenomenon of consumer forgiveness. In doing so, we respond to the limitations of existing marketing literature by extending the study of consumer reactions to marketer transgressions beyond product and service shortfalls. We also respond to the need to understand consumer emotions associated with marketer transgressions, including consumers who do not voice their complaints. The findings also offer a new, relationship approach to understanding consumer reactions to marketer transgressions that is lacking within most existing studies. The study of relational phenomena such as forgiveness extends existing knowledge to provide insights into consumer-brand relationships and the transformations that occurs following marketer transgressions. Furthermore, this study extends the Hirschman (1970) model, which is often utilised to explain

outcomes of marketer transgressions (and service recovery), beyond the three behavioural outcomes of exit, voice and loyalty. The study of forgiveness therefore contributes to an improved understanding of consumer responses to marketer transgressions and provides important foundations for future research. Marketers can benefit from assisting consumers to achieve forgiveness even though exit may occur. Such activities reduce harmful word-of-mouth and ongoing ill feeling towards the brand. We suggest that future investigations should extend these insights to benefit consumers in a move toward transformative consumer research.

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Regulatory Focus, Feature Positive Effect, and Message Framing

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Message framing effects have been widely documented in numerous research areas. Most extant work on message framing distinguishes message frames predominantly along the outcome valence dimension and has studied positive vs. negative frame. Positive messages highlight positive consequences (i.e., gains) of complying with the ad advocacy, for example, "Don't smoke. Quitting smoking reduces your chances of having a heart attack." In contrast, negative messages highlight negative consequences (i.e., losses) of not complying with the ad advocacy, for example, "Don't smoke. Smoking increases your chances of having a heart attack."

Unfortunately, empirical evidence regarding the relative effectiveness of positive vs. negative message frame is mixed. The research efforts seeking to define the boundary conditions for the relative persuasiveness of positive vs. negative messages have largely been unsuccessful so far as well. Given the robustness of message framing effects yet the mixed empirical evidence, we speculate that (1) the framework that distinguishes only between positive and negative messages might have been limited; and (2) message framing effects might be governed by fundamental factors that go beyond information processing motive factors such as issue involvement.

We note that a crucial qualitative difference between message frames has largely been ignored, specifically, behavior outcome type (benefit vs. cost). Message frames with the same valence are not necessarily being equal, but can call attention to quite different behavior outcome types. Research has shown that individuals have markedly different sensitivity to different behavior outcome types (benefits vs. costs). Surprisingly, behavior outcome type as a primary dimension for theorizing has mostly been neglected in message framing research.

In this research, we introduced this key parameter into message framing research and made refined distinction between message frames. Specifically, we distinguished message frames along the dimension of outcome type (benefits vs. costs) in addition to the dimension of outcome valence (positive vs. negative) and studied the relative persuasiveness of four distinct message frames, namely, (1) a benefit-positive frame, which emphasizes the attainment of benefits because of complying with the message advocacy, for example, "Don't smoke. Have a good time." (2) a benefit-negative frame, which emphasizes forgoing benefits because of failing to comply with the message advocacy, for example, "Don't smoke. Smoking spoils a good time." (3) a cost-positive frame, which emphasizes the avoidance of costs because of complying with the message advocacy, for example, "Don't smoke. Avoid being annoying." and (4) a cost-negative frame, which emphasizes the incurring of costs because of failing to comply with the message advocacy, for example, "Don't smoke. Smoking is annoying."

In search for fundamental factors that govern message framing effects, we examined the role of two factors. The first factor is Feature Positive Effect, that is, individuals find it easier to mentally represent a perceptual input when it is depicted as the presence of features rather than as the absence of features. This effect has been repeatedly demonstrated in numerous areas of research with animals and humans, but has never been studied in persuasion contexts before. A second factor is consumer regulatory focus. According to Regulatory Focus Theory, at any moment in time, an individual is guided primarily by one of two regulatory foci: a promotion focus

and a prevention focus. Regulatory focus is theorized to be a goal orientation and is at a relatively higher level in goal hierarchy than specific information processing motive factors such as issue involvement. Activation of a specific regulatory focus in individuals has been shown to significantly impact their affects, cognitions, and behavior.

We conducted two experimental studies with a total of 1,162 high school students in the context of antismoking TV ads targeted at youths. A total of 719 ninth graders from three local high schools participated in Study 1. The design was a 2 x 2 x 2 between-subjects randomized factorial. Control groups who watched ads of non-smoking-related public service announcements were included to serve as benchmarks. Subjects were primed to activate either a promotion focus or a prevention focus using a standard procedure from the literature. Results from this experiment supported the predicted Feature Positive Effect, that is, message frames emphasizing the presence of behavior outcomes (namely, a benefit-positive frame and a cost-negative frame) were more persuasive than message frames emphasizing the absence of behavior outcomes (namely, a benefit-negative frame and a cost-positive frame) and a control group.

In addition, consistent with Regulatory Focus Theory, it was found that, for promotion-focused youths, a benefit-positive antismoking message emphasizing the attainment of benefits because of refraining from smoking cigarettes was the most persuasive among the four frames and a control group; while for prevention-focused youths, a cost-negative antismoking message emphasizing the incurring of costs because of failing to refrain from smoking cigarettes was the most persuasive among the four frames and a control group. The increased persuasion was attributed to heightened perceived diagnosticity of information matching to youths' regulatory focus.

Study 2 sought to replicate and extend the findings from Study 1 using a different method. Rather than manipulating regulatory focus, subjects' chronic regulatory focus was measured using an established scale from the literature. Study 1's manipulation of regulatory focus represented a clean approach to study the impact of this variable. As suggested in Regulatory Focus Theory, regulatory focus tends to be a quite stable individual difference factor. Thus, in Study 2, regulatory focus was measured, in order to examine how such a dispositional trait might moderate the persuasiveness of differently framed antismoking TV ads. Subjects were 443 students from another two local high schools. Results from Study 2 were virtually identical to those in Study 1 and provided convergent evidence supporting our main propositions about message framing effects.

Does the Frame of a Comparative Ad Moderate the Effectiveness of Extrinsic Information Cues?

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Comparative ads simultaneously communicate both positive information about the sponsor and negative information about the competition, and as a consequence could be framed in either a positive or negative fashion. When a comparative ad is negatively framed it focuses on the inferiority of the competitor and encourages consumers to think about potential losses they will incur as a result of using the competitor's brand (e.g., "MCI had over twice as many network outages as AT&T"). In contrast, when an ad is positively framed it focuses on the superiority of the sponsor and encourages consumers to think about their potential gains (e.g., "AT&T had less than half as many network outages as MCI"; Shiv, Edell, and Payne 1997). In both frames, the information content conveyed is the same; only the valence differs.

The valence difference caused by the message frame has a significant impact on consumer evaluations, preferences and choices. This has been demonstrated repeatedly in a variety of situations ranging from evaluations of ground beef to health related behaviors (see summary articles by Kuhberger 1998; Levin, Schneider and Gaeth 1998). Yet, despite the width and breath of this stream of research over the past 25 years, there is limited research into interactive effects of framing. The majority of the studies which do exist examine *how factors moderate* the effect of framing on outcomes (e.g., Maheswaran and Meyers-Levy 1990, Raghurir and Menon 2001, Shiv, Edell and Payne 1997). We only know of one study which has examined the moderation from the perspective of *how framing moderates* the effect of message cues (Grewal, Gotlieb, and Marmorstein 1994). That study suggests that the effectiveness of a new brand comparing itself to an established brand may be contingent upon the manner in which the message is framed.

The study found that when a comparative ad is framed positively (vs. negatively) people are less likely to use price in forming their evaluations of performance risk (Grewal, Gotlieb and Marmorstein 1994). Grewal, et al.'s explanation for the moderating effect of framing flowed from Prospect Theory (Kahneman and Tversky 1979). They argued that consumers who are risk averse (e.g., exposed to a positively framed message) conduct a more thorough analysis of the available information prior to making a decision in order to ensure a well-thought out evaluation that minimizes risk. They went on to hypothesize that a consequence of this more thorough analysis is that consumers are less likely to be affected by a single extrinsic cue, such as price.

The importance of their finding is significant. If their result holds, it means that framing can moderate the effectiveness of information cues on consumers' evaluations, preferences, and choices. As such, framing would be a critical contingency factor. Thus, understanding the moderating impact of frame is important from a theoretical perspective.

Although Grewal et al. provided initial evidence concerning the effects of message framing, the article tested only one extrinsic cue, and only alluded to the underlying process leading to the result. To have a more complete understanding of the moderating impact of framing, we extend Grewal et. al.'s paper in four critical ways—by (1) testing whether framing similarly affects the use of other extrinsic cues, (2) determining the effect when there are multiple

extrinsic cues, (3) determining the effect when extrinsic information is not explicitly provided, and (4) providing process evidence for the results.

Three experimental studies are conducted. Study 1, which used 240 subjects, is a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ between-subjects design which manipulates message framing (positive vs. negative), length of the product warranty in comparison with an industry standard (shorter vs. longer), and reputation of the retailer (strong vs. weak). Study 2 was $2 \times 2 \times 2$ between-subjects design ($n=186$) which manipulated message framing (positive vs. negative), reputation of the retailer (strong vs. weak) and price (discount versus no discount). Using the reputation and price we manipulated the consistency/inconsistency of the extrinsic cues. Finally, study 3 ($n=86$) used a 2×2 between-subjects design with message framing (positive vs. negative) and whether the individual prices of the warranty and product were bundled (individual prices not provided) or unbundled (individual prices explicitly available) as the factors. In all studies, performance risk was the key dependent measure. Studies 1-2 also collected process data.

Findings indicate that Grewal et al.'s result replicates for retailer's reputation, but consistent with our hypothesis, not warranty length. Findings also indicate that framing impacts whether consumers consider the consistency of the multiple extrinsic cues, as well as whether they consider if information is explicitly available or not. All results can be explained by the fact that positively framed messages engender more thorough analysis of message cues than negatively framed messages and impact how extrinsic cues are used. Process supports this conceptual underpinning.

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Affect as Information: The Moderating Roles of Self-Regulatory System and Diagnosticity of Affective Valence

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

While individuals often incorporate their affect into judgments (e.g., Schwarz and Clore 1983), and a variety of determinants of this effect have been put forth (e.g., Gorn, Goldberg, and Basu 1993, Pham 1998), the role that individuals' self-regulatory systems play in this relationship has received little attention. We hypothesize that reliance on affect as information differs according to individuals' self-regulatory systems and, more specifically, by differences in individuals' focus of attention and perceived diagnosticity of affective valence that are associated with these different systems.

In particular, motivational theorists have proposed that two distinct self-regulatory systems underlie individuals' motivation and behavior (e.g., Gray 1982, Carver and White 1994, Higgins 1997). For example, Gray (1982) shows that individuals' behavioral inhibition system (BIS) inhibits behavior to avoid negative or painful outcomes, and that individuals' behavioral activation system (BAS) activates behavior to approach positive or pleasurable outcomes. Related to this work, self-regulatory focus theory (e.g., Higgins 1997), which refers to the dominant process through which people approach pleasure and avoid pain, suggests two motivational strategies according to individuals' predominant promotion versus prevention self-regulatory focus. Prior research also suggests that self-regulatory systems (both BIS vs. BAS and prevention vs. promotion self-regulatory focus) influence individuals' internal versus external focus of attention.

Additionally, Pham and Avnet (2004) show that the type of goals consumers have may determine their reliance on affect, showing that promotion (vs. prevention) focused consumers increase their reliance on affect when evaluating ads, whereas prevention (vs. promotion) focused consumers increase their reliance on the substance of the message. Yet, self-regulatory systems may not only determine reliance on affect in general, but more specifically, individuals' reliance on affect of a positive versus negative valence. For example, Gray (1982) and Carver and White (1994) show that individuals with a predominant behavioral inhibition system (BIS) are generally more likely to feel emotions of a negative valence, while individuals with a predominant behavioral activation system (BAS) are generally more likely to feel emotions of a positive valence. We propose that individuals who more generally or consistently feel positive affect may become less likely to rely on it for informational value because it no longer offers diagnostic information. Conversely, individuals who in general have a greater tendency to experience negative affect may be expected to be less likely to use their negative affect as information.

Based on the above discussions on differences in focus of attention and trait affective valence we hypothesize that self-regulatory systems determine whether individuals use affect as information in judgments. In particular, individuals with a predominant BAS or promotion self-regulatory focus are relatively more likely to rely on their affect regardless of its valence because they focus on their internal states to a greater degree. On the other hand, externally focused individuals with a predominant BIS or prevention self-regulatory focus are likely to rely on their affect only when it is diagnostic and made salient by its mismatch to their trait affective valence. We tested these predictions in a series of

studies investigating the use of positive and negative affect in product satisfaction judgments.

Study 1 measures respondents' self-regulatory system using Carver and White's (1994) behavioral activation system / behavioral inhibition system scale. As expected, we find that product satisfaction of participants with a predominant behavioral activation system was influenced by their affect regardless of its valence. Apparently, since these individuals tend to be more internally focused, they were more likely to monitor their affect and use it as information. However, the satisfaction judgments of participants with a predominant behavioral inhibition system, who tend to be more externally focused, were influenced by affect only when its valence mismatched their trait affective valence.

Study 2 replicated and extended these by making participants' promotion versus prevention self-regulatory focus temporally accessible. Consistent with Study 1, the results show that with a temporarily accessible promotion-focus, participants became more internally focused and relied on both positive and negative emotions equally when evaluating their product satisfaction. However, following a prevention-focus prime, participants became more externally focused and relied on their emotions only when they were of a positive valence and hence were not compatible with the primed ought-self.

Lastly, in Study 3 we focus on the differential impact of negative affective priming on satisfaction judgment of individuals with a predominant behavioral activation (vs. inhibition) system. The study provides further support for our hypotheses, demonstrating that the tendency to incorporate temporary negative emotions into satisfaction judgment is reduced for individuals with a predominant behavioral inhibition system that is more externally focused and hence is associated with feeling more negative emotions in general.

Overall, in three studies we show that individuals with a chronic (studies 1 and 3) or temporarily induced (study 2) behavioral activation system / promotion self-regulatory focus are likely to rely on both positive and negative emotions for information. We hypothesize that this effect is obtained because these individuals are relatively more likely to monitor their internal states. On the other hand, the three studies show that individuals with a chronic or temporarily induced behavioral inhibition system / prevention self-regulatory focus only rely on positive (vs. negative) emotions for information. We hypothesize that this effect is obtained because these individuals are relatively more likely to focus on the external environment and may not find affect of a valence that they are generally more likely to experience salient and diagnostic. Instead, only affect that mismatches their trait affective valence is perceived to be diagnostic and will be incorporated into judgments.

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Is a Picture Worth a Thousand Words?

Influence of Graphic Illustration on Framed Advertisements

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ABSTRACT

Statistical framing of product efficacy and graphic illustration were examined to explain the conditions under which messages would be more effective in a healthcare product advertisement. Using different health contexts (skin care and traveling) and statistical formats (percentage and frequency), two experiments investigate how consumers respond to positively and negatively framed messages with different forms but equivalent information about product efficacy. Framing effects were enhanced by graphic aids when statistics were presented in a percentage or a frequency with a small number size. The moderating role of graphic illustration on framing effectiveness was eliminated when statistics were presented in frequency with a large number size.

INTRODUCTION

Consumers in modern society are frequently required to make healthcare decisions that involve grave potential risk. Discussing risks and benefits of treatment or healthcare options has become an increasingly important part of healthcare communication. For a long time, consumer researchers and public health campaigners try to figure out if there are specific optimal ways for information presentation that can be adopted to maximize the effectiveness of message for well-informed communication and what kinds of manipulations of risk and benefit information may increase message persuasiveness because of people's subjective interpretation of information (Kahneman, Slovic and Tversky, 1982; Fischhoff, Bostrom and Quadrel, 1993; Naus et al., 2002; Lowe and Ferguson, 2003; Gurmankin, Baron and Armstrong, 2004).

An individual's judgments and decisions are influenced greatly by how information is presented or framed (for a review paper, see Levin, Schneider and Gaeth, 1998). A 50% chance of survival (positive frame) is logically equivalent to a 50% chance of mortality (negative frame). However, each statement influences differently on the attitudes formed, and decisions made by the message reader (Moxey et al., 2003). Positive labeling of probability leads to an encoding of the information that tends to evoke favorable associations in memory while negative framing of the same probability tends to cause unfavorable associations (Levin and Gaeth, 1988). This phenomenon has shown to extend on medical and healthcare scenarios (Edwards et al., 2001) and diversified consumer purchase contexts (e.g., Levin and Gaeth, 1988).

The objective of present study was to investigate moderators of information formats of product efficacy on framing effectiveness in *advertising* contexts. Using appropriate message frames could increase the persuasiveness of messages to consumers, thereby increasing sales (Martin and Marshall, 1999). Understanding of framing effects may provide direct applications in creative and effective execution of advertising copy and layout (Arora, 2000). This research tested the idea that consumer responses to a new product advertisement could be influenced by message framing and presentations of graphs and statistics, and determined whether different graphic illustrations and different statistical presentations described in a message modified framing effects. The question centered in this research was: "could different statistical formats about product efficacy and graphic displays influence consumers' evaluations and attitudes?"

A healthcare context is emphasized in this research because of the market value and the importance for public policy and

communication. The healthcare market has changed irrevocably in the last two decades with the emergence of 'healthcare consumers' who, rather than being passive, have taken a more active role in their own healthcare (Moorman and Matulich, 1993). Health expenditures have outpaced the growth of the economy in 2002 (Department of Health, 2003). Over-the-counter (OTC) pharmaceuticals and consumables had the highest growth rate in 2002 primarily because of new product introductions expanding the market. Consumers demand more information, more choices and more involvement in decision-making (Moorman and Matulich, 1993). An important marketing issue arising here is how to present information to best educate consumers about healthcare and convince them to purchase related healthcare products or services.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

Statistical Formats of Product Efficacy and Framing Effects

Across various contexts of consumer healthcare decisions, researchers suggest that attribute framing influences subjects' perceived willingness to accept a particular treatment (Levin et al., 1998). Levin et al. (1998) labeled it as attribute framing because only a single attribute within any given context is the subject of the framing manipulation and suggested that it represents the simplest case of framing, making it especially useful for gaining a basic understanding of how descriptive valence influences information processing. Positively framed messages stimulate more positive response than negatively framed ones to risk-avoidant options such as immunization (Donovan and Jalleh, 2000), condom usage (Linville, Fisher and Fischhoff, 1993), and adaptation of surgical procedures (McNeil et al., 1982; Wilson, Kaplan and Schneiderman, 1987; Marteau, 1989; Jacoby et al., 1993; Llewellyn-Thomas, McGreal and Thiel, 1995; O'Connor, Pennie and Dales, 1996; Krishnamurthy et al., 2001). Those risk-averse options may alleviate health problems and lead to longer life. A positively framed option generates positive associations and thus seems more attractive than a negatively framed option. People are more likely to approve of the choice when survival or success rates are emphasized than when the mortality or failure rates are emphasized.

Previous studies demonstrate that risk formats may influence consumers' attitudes and healthcare decisions (Stone, Yates and Parker, 1997; Feldman-Stewart et al., 2000; Evans et al., 2000). Halpern, Blackman and Salzman (1989) investigated the influences of various presentations of oral contraceptive risk information on perceived safety. They found that estimates of the probability of risky events were affected by multiple sources of error and interpretation of different forms but equivalent statistical information. A majority of previous framing studies manipulated attribute framing through percentage presentation (e.g., Levin and Gaeth, 1988; Jalleh, 1992; Linville et al., 1993; Donovan and Jalleh, 2000; Sanford et al., 2002). The persuasive effects from the use of the positive or negative framing remain unclear in different statistical formats (i.e., frequency).

Frequency is defined as the number of times a given case, value, or event occurs relevant to the whole sample (e.g., 7 in 10 or 700 out of 1,000). Frequency may also be stated as a ratio of numbers of individuals occurring in a specific class to a total sample under a survey. Siegrist (1997) showed that risk information via a

frequency format (e.g., 600 out of 1,000 people will die) leads to more risk-averse behavior than that via a percentage (incidence rate) form (e.g., 60% of people will die). Schapira, Nattinger and McHorney (2001) further indicated that frequency formats have several advantages over probability because of its attributes of ease of interpretation, simplicity and the ability to provide a human contextual quality in statistical information. Similarly, Gigerenzer (2002) and Hoffrage and Gigerenzer (1998) indicated that people find using information presented in frequency easier than using information in percentage format, and make less biased judgments of risk when using information in frequency format.

Frequency can be presented in different number sizes (i.e., with different denominators). People respond differently to equivalent forms of relative frequency information presented in superficially different ways. McFarland and Miller (1994) administered a test on social perceptiveness ability and found that the manipulation of group size changed participants' self-assessment of the ability to accurately interpret social situations. Participants were provided with fictitious feedback either that their performance was ranked in the 30th percentile or that they ranked 300th among 1,000 people. In interpreting information that represents relative frequencies, people tend to be more sensitive and responsive to frequencies in a large number size (e.g., 300 out of 1,000) than those in a small number size (e.g., 3 out of 10). These judgmental tendencies show that the number size of frequency serves as an anchoring point that determines subsequent decisions. The concept of "base-rate neglect" is often used to explain the cognitive judgmental tendency described above that people underutilize relative information about population statistics and instead overutilize other salient information such as the number size of frequency (Kahneman and Tversky, 1973). Yamagishi (1997) analyzed the rankings of 11 common causes of death given by undergraduates and suggested that a risk would be judged as more serious when the deaths are expressed by frequencies with large number sizes (e.g., 1,286 out of 10,000) than those with smaller ones (24.14 out of 100). Because of "base-rate neglect", individuals' judgments have been influenced by altering the anchoring points (i.e., the actual numbers of deaths, irrespective of the actual rates) (Elwyn, Edwards and Kinnersley, 1999). It implies that the higher magnitude of the denominator presented would be more influential on consumers' perceptions than the lower one.

It is expected that statistical formats would affect the way people interpret information and influence message persuasion. When a frequency format is presented in a positively framed message, frequency with a larger number size should arouse more attention and will be judged as more favorable than that with a smaller one, which leads to higher effectiveness. Alternatively, in a negatively framed message, frequency presented in a higher magnitude of number should make potential harmful consequences more serious which could lead to less favorable attitudes towards the promoted alternative and thus decrease the message effectiveness. The hypotheses are specifically presented as follows:

- H1: Different statistical formats would moderate the relationship between framing and message effectiveness.*
- H2a: Frequency framed positively with a larger number size would be more effective than that with a smaller number size.*
- H2b: Frequency framed negatively with a larger number size would be less effective than that with a smaller number size.*

The Moderator of Graphic Illustration on Framing Effectiveness

The other communication format factor investigated in the present study has widespread appeal among marketing practitioners and is related to vividness effects. Vividness effects occur when material is exhibited in the form of picture (Block and Keller, 1997). Researchers across disciplines agree that visual representation in appropriate graphs could contribute to information comprehension, problem solving, and effective communication (Pinker, 1982; Tufte, 1983; Kosslyn, 1989; Schapira et al., 2001; Edwards, Elwyn, and Mulley, 2002). There is an increasing trend in communicating health risks to employ a visual representation of risk, rather than just a bald statement of the relevant statistics (Edwards et al., 2002). After all, 'a picture is worth a thousand words.' Researchers proposed that the presentation of risk information in a graphic form could be an effective means of increasing risk-avoidant behavior (Keeney and von Winterfeldt, 1986). Stone et al. (1997) empirically demonstrated the efficacy of such recommendation by showing that graphic techniques of demonstrating risk information could be more effective than simply providing numerical information highlighting the risk reduction accorded by a safer product.

Some specific graphic types are suggested to assist consumer processing of quantitative information and increase the effectiveness of risk communication (Edwards et al., 2002; Schapira et al., 2001). Schapira et al. (2001) suggested that human figures add contextual implication to the numeric information presented and increase personal salience because of depiction of human beings in the graph. Frequency with human figures was easy to identify with, was understandable, and conveyed a meaningful message. Similarly, crowd figures (e.g., showing how many of 100 people are affected) were found useful in Edwards et al. (2002). In contrast, bar graphs are perceived as more analytical, more difficult to understand, and less influential. Feldman-Stewart et al. (2002) conducted a study to determine which formats for displaying quantities such as probabilities of treatment risks and benefits are perceived more accurately and easily by patients. The results showed that vertical bars, horizontal bars, numbers, and systematic ovals were equally well perceived for making a choice, whereas random ovals caused slower and less accurate performances. Stone et al. (2003) further adopted pie charts to demonstrate risk information, suggesting that it represents the percentage information accurately. Based on these findings, appropriate graphs and charts could enhance vividness effects and facilitate persuasion in comparison to the typical, exclusively verbal presentation of information. When a healthcare marketer communicates with a consumer about product efficacy, visual presentation of graphic display in the information would increase the effectiveness of message delivery.

H3: Graphic illustration would strengthen framing effects.

Interrelationship among Framing, Statistical Formats of Efficacy and Graphic Illustration

When both statistical formats of statistics and graphic aid are incorporated in a framed message, a three-way interaction effect is expected to occur since both information presentations could affect the people's evaluations. As discussed above, frequency with a large number size and an appropriate graph would boost framing effectiveness. Therefore, when both variables are considered, a synergy might occur and increase message persuasion. Nevertheless, earlier empirical results with a qualitative approach (i.e., focus group interviews) indicated that frequency in a graph with lower denominations have positive attributes of simplicity, directness, and ease of interpretation (Schapira et al., 2001). Graphs with large number sizes are perceived as depicting risk of lower magnitude.

Focusing on the denominator, participants noted that more figures presented with success (probability of successful rate) when the larger number size are used (i.e., 100 or 1000 compared to 10) (Schapira et al., 2001). People have a general intuition that larger samples lead to more accurate estimates of population means. It seems possible that when frequency is framed with a larger denominator in a graph, the larger denominator might dilute the salience of graphs on framing effectiveness. Therefore, the contradicting strengths of effects from graphic display and frequency with different denominators need to be further explored.

STUDY 1

Experiment 1 examined the moderating role of graphic illustration on framing effects by following the traditional manipulation of attribute framing which presents statistics in percentage. A 2 (message framing: positive vs. negative) X 2 (graphic display: without chart vs. with chart) factorial design was employed. Pie charts were chosen as the visual representation based on an earlier pilot study with a convenient sample. Skin care was selected as test product category and a new product named as *PerfectSlim* was selected with efficacy at 80%.

Prior to the experiment, the treatment booklets were randomized. Participants were assigned to one of the four experimental conditions above. The study was conducted at the ground floor of a large department store where cosmetics and accessories were sold. Female customers were selected as the sample. The sample consisted of 213 females; age ranged from 17–68 years with the mean age 35.8. Participants were approached and asked to participate in a survey for consumer research. Participants were instructed to follow the instructions on the booklet, read a scenario of a new skincare product, and respond to the questions that followed. Participants read a three-part booklet containing a survey on skincare routines and skincare product history (a pre-manipulation questionnaire), description of the new skincare product, and a survey on product evaluations (a post-manipulation questionnaire). When they finished, booklets were collected. The experiment lasted about 10 minutes.

Message Manipulations (Independent Variables)

The first paragraph was consistent across 4 experimental conditions and was stated as follows: “At night the body is relaxing and needs less energy, and sugars are more easily stored. An innovation PERFECTSLIM has been specially formulated for an evening application to stimulate the body’s natural drainage and reduce the appearance of cellulite, through the massage application technique. Body contours are refined and the stomach looks smoother. Scientific tests have proven the high effectiveness of the PERFECTSLIM formula.” Meeting the criterion that the framing involves an attribute of the framed object and avoid ceiling effect of extreme values (e.g., 90%) (Levin et al., 1998), the description of the new skincare treatment was presented in a positive (negative) frame with percentage was that “Reported reduction of the appearance cellulite: 80% agree” (“Reported reduction of the appearance cellulite: 20% disagree”) (Figure 1).

Pre-manipulation Measures

1. *Perceived health status and health consciousness.* Participants evaluated their skin health and weight control separately in two questions on a 4-point scale (poor, fair, good and excellent). The questions regarding health consciousness were adopted from the Health Consciousness Scale (Gould, 1990) and were modified into four questions targeting skincare measured on five-point scales (“does

not describe you at all” (0), “describes you a little” (1), “describes you about fifty-fifty” (2), “describes you fairly well” (3), and “describes you very well” (4)).

2. *Individual perceptions of skincare issues.* Participants were asked to identify skincare problems they were worried about and worrying degree of each acknowledged problem in 7-point semantic scales.
3. *Previous experience of skincare products.* Participants answered the questions whether they ever purchased or used ten skincare products (e.g., sun protection, softening toner, and anti-cellulite, anti-acne and oil control) and how much they usually spent on them every month to provide a basic understanding of purchase history and to represent one’s involvement.
4. *Background demographics.* Questions assessed participants’ age, occupation, income, and tendency towards new products.

Post-manipulation Measures

1. *Opinions of the information presentation.* Five specific questions assessed participants’ evaluation on the presented message. Respondents were asked “What do you think of the information above as a way of describing this new product?” to see whether the information made it easier to understand the product, whether the information was meaningful, confusing, informative, and whether it added nothing on 7-point scales. After reverse coding for some questions, a composite score was created by calculating the numerical average of the five scales.
2. *Manipulation check on framing.* One question assessed the difference of the information framing. Participants had to state whether the advertisement they had seen reported how test women felt about the new product (either agreed with product efficacy or not).
3. *Behavioral intention.* The likelihood of buying, using the advertised product and recommending it to family or friends were measured on a three-item 7-point semantic differential scale consisting of likely/unlikely. It was an indicator of message effectiveness.

Results

High Cronbach’s alphas (opinions of information presentation=0.88, and behavioral intention=0.93) indicated that the scales used in this study were reliable. The result of chi-square test for framing manipulation was significant ($p < .05$). Participants in the negatively framed conditions judged messages as emphasizing the chance satisfactory results of the product would fail to provide, whereas those in the positively framed conditions judged the messages as emphasizing the satisfactory results of the product would provide. The framing manipulation was successful.

An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) controlling for purchase experience of skincare products was performed (please see Figure 2 for detailed results). The results are consistent with previous findings that positive framing is more effective than negative framing in presenting probability with $F(1, 212) = 33.78, p < .01$. Presenting information in a positive or negative way resulted in differences in the position of the anchoring point, and thus determined people code the alternative as entailing a loss or a gain, which led to different levels of behavioral intention. A significant interaction effect between framing and graphic illustration was found on participants’ behavioral intention with $F(1, 212) = 41.14, p < .01$. The results supported H3 that graphic display could enhance framing effects.

FIGURE 1

Negative frame in percentage presentation with graphic display (pie chart)

PERFECTSLIM may fail to provide satisfactory results for 20% of test women on reduction of the appearance cellulite:

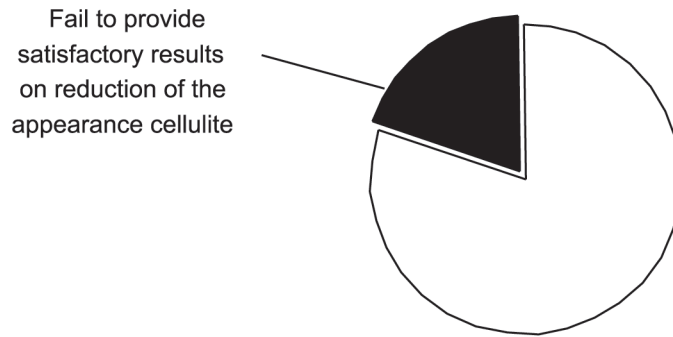
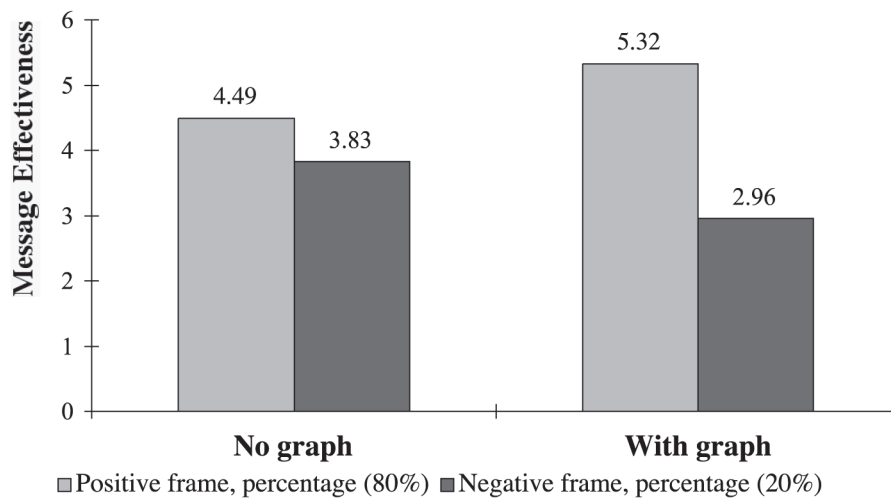


FIGURE 2

Influences of Graphic Display and Probability Format of Product Efficacy on Framed Ads



STUDY 2

Study 2 was designed with the objectives of considering multiple types of framed statistics to test the robustness of the moderating effect of graphic illustration in the relation between framing and persuasion found in Study 1. A traveling context was chosen to increase the external validity and generalizability of this research. The experiment tested the relative effectiveness of positively and negatively framed messages to promote a product in different statistical formats of efficacy probability in a 2 (message framing: positive vs. negative) X 3 (statistical format of medicine efficacy: percentage vs. frequency with a large denominator vs. frequency with a small denominator) X 2 (graphic display: without graph vs. with graph) between-subjects design. Each participant responded to one hypothetical medical alternative with a level of efficacy set at 75%.

Scenario of a New Medical Alternative

A new medicine for travel health was chosen. Health and well-being have been considered as one of the major risk factors in tourism and perceived risk in health was found to be the most important risk factor in travel experience (Lepp and Gibson, 2003). It is widely acknowledged that adverse health effects may significantly tarnish tourists' experience of a holiday and destination (Lawton and Page, 1997). Taking preventive preparations by purchasing related healthcare products become one effective risk-reduction strategy tourists may adopt. The context of traveling could facilitate an understanding of consumer attitudes towards healthcare decisions. Melatonin was selected to be tested product in this study. Replacing sleeping pills, melatonin is a new hormone replacement therapy for combating jet lag without serious hazards or side effects of drugs. Although it was approved by FDA in the

United States, it was not available in the Taiwanese market where the study was conducted. It avoided any possible confounding effects due to prior familiarity or attitudes of participants towards the sponsored product.

Participants consisted of 553 undergraduate students (219 males and 234 females) from business courses in a large university. The experiment was a between-subjects design. However, seven participants had to be removed from the analysis because of incomplete questionnaires. In the final sample of 446 respondents, age was ranged from 17–26 years with the mean age 22.1.

Message Manipulations

The first paragraph was consistent across 12 experimental conditions and was stated as follows: “Many people suffer from jet lag. It is caused when you travel through multiple time zones. Altitude and pressure changes at each landing and take-off also upset body systems. Anecdotal evidence indicates that jet lag makes travelers more susceptible to colds, flu and stomach upsets. Melatonin is a natural homeopathic remedy helping fight jet lag. It comes in the form of pleasant chewable tablets. It does not need to be taken prior to travel, and does not conflict with other medication. Scientific tests have proven the high effectiveness of the Melatonin.” The description of medicine was presented in a positive (negative) frame with percentage was that “Melatonin may provide satisfactory results for 75% of the people with your health condition” (“Melatonin may fail to provide satisfactory results for 25% of the people with your health condition”). When frequency was presented in a large denominator, description in a positive (negative) frame was that “Melatonin may provide satisfactory results for 225 out of 300 people with your condition.” (“Melatonin may fail to provide satisfactory results for 75 out of 300 people with your condition.”) On the contrary, when frequency was framed in a small denominator, medicine description in a positive (negative) frame was, “Melatonin may provide satisfactory results for 3 out of 4 people with your condition.” (“Melatonin may fail to provide satisfactory results for 1 out of 4 people with your condition.”)

Several graphic formats were pre-tested to determine their congruity with different statistical formats (i.e., percentage and frequency) and compare their effectiveness. Pie charts were found congruent with percentage format of probability, and the icons with human figures were compatible with a frequency format. These two charts were selected as appropriate graphs for probability of medicine efficacy (refer to Figure 3 for one example of message manipulations).

Administration Procedure

The researcher came along to courses that lecturers agreed for experiment at the beginning of the lectures. The experiment was conducted during the last week of the term in early June. The timing enhanced personal relevance and interests regarding the travel health scenario since summer was the high season of student traveling. Students were asked to voluntarily participate in the experiment. Participants were instructed to follow the instructions on the booklet, read a medical scenario, and respond to the questions that followed. Participants read a three-part booklet containing a survey on travel attitudes and experiences (a pre-manipulation questionnaire), description of melatonin (the new medical alternative), and a survey on product evaluations (a post-manipulation questionnaire). They were reminded, “Although it might be difficult to make a decision with this limited information, do your best. There are no right or wrong answers. It is important, however, that you be honest and take the task seriously in order for the data to be

meaningful.” When they finished, booklets were collected. The lectures continued. The experiment lasted about 20 minutes.

Pre-manipulation Measures

1. *Perceived health status and health consciousness.* Participants evaluated their general and travel health separately in two *questions* on a 4-point scale. Questions regarding health consciousness used in Study 1 were modified into four questions targeting travel care.
2. *Individual perceptions of health risk.* Derived from previous studies (Rosenstock et al., 1988; Slovic et al., 1989), six items assessed participants’ travel health attitudes by measuring perceived susceptibility, perceived severity and routine medicine-taking. Before further data analysis, some questions needed to be reversed-coded to ensure uniformity in coding.
3. *Previous experience of traveling healthcare products.* Participants answered the questions whether they ever purchased or used seven travel healthcare product categories (e.g., sun protection, travel sickness, and pain relief) to provide a basic understanding of purchase history.
4. *Background demographics and travel history.* A series of questions assessed participants’ age, gender, birthplace, number of trips during the past 12 months, number of international trips by plane, and number of regions they visited before.

Post-manipulation Measures

1. *Opinions of the information presentation.* The same questions adopted in Study 1 were used.
2. *Manipulation check on framing.* One question assessed the difference of the information framing. Participants had to state whether the leaflet they had read emphasized better results of melatonin would bring or not.
3. *Manipulation check on presentations of medicine efficacy.* Participants identified the statistical format of medical efficacy (with chart or not, with what kind of chart, frequency or percentage).
4. *Behavioral intention.* In addition to the three questions used in Study 1, the likelihood of discussing the alternative with physicians on a 7-point semantic differential scale consisting of likely/unlikely was incorporated into the intention scale.

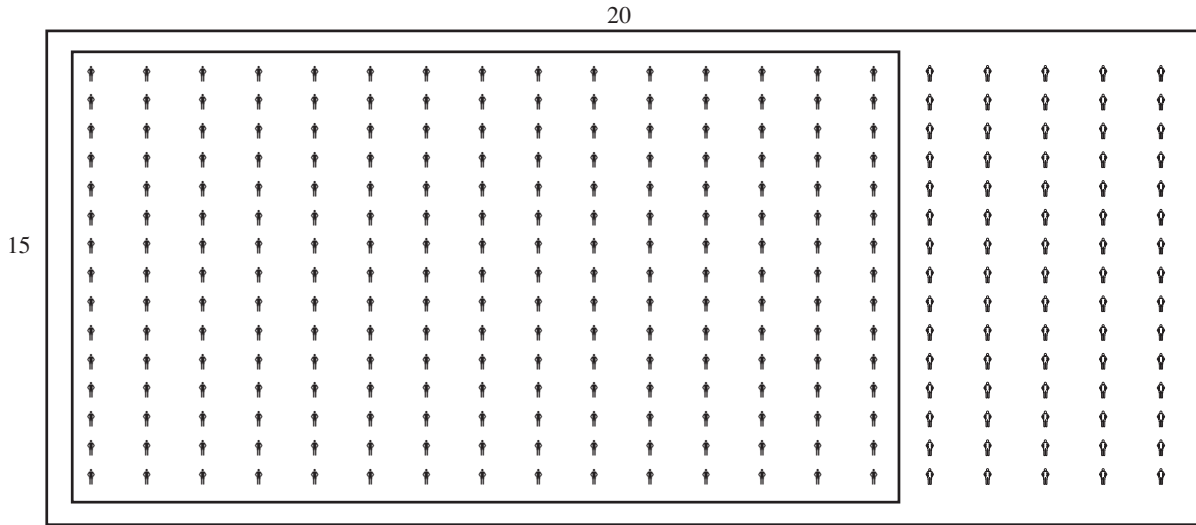
Results

An initial set of analyses was conducted to determine whether any of the demographic or pre-manipulation variables moderated behavioral intentions. The variables of health consciousness and individual perceptions towards health risks were determined to be controlled variables in the further analyses. The reliability of the scales was also checked and the following Cronbach’s alphas were obtained: individual perceptions of health risk=0.75, opinions of information presentation=0.83, and behavioral intention=0.91. The result of chi-square test of framing manipulation was significant, confirming that participants in the negatively framed conditions judged the messages as emphasizing the chance the satisfactory results of the medicine would fail to provide, whereas those in the positively framed conditions judged the messages as emphasizing the satisfactory results of the medicine would provide. Similar procedures with significant chi-square tests were found to confirm the success of manipulations of statistical format presentations and graphic illustration.

FIGURE 3
Examples in Graphic Illustrations of Different Statistical Formats and Framing

Positive frame in a large denominator with graphic display (human figures)

Melatonin may provide satisfactory results for 225 out of 300 people with your health condition:



Provides satisfactory results for 225 out of 300 people with your health condition

TABLE 1
Means of All Experimental Conditions

	Without graphic illustration	With graphic illustration
Positive frame, percentage (75%)	4.61	5.18 *
Negative frame, percentage (25%)	3.97	3.04 **
Positive frame, frequency in a small number size (3 out of 4)	4.01	4.52 *
Negative frame, frequency in a small number size (1 out of 4)	4.33	2.96 **
Positive frame, frequency in a large number size (225 out of 300)	5.21	5.30
Negative frame, frequency in a large number size (75 out of 300)	3.34	3.14

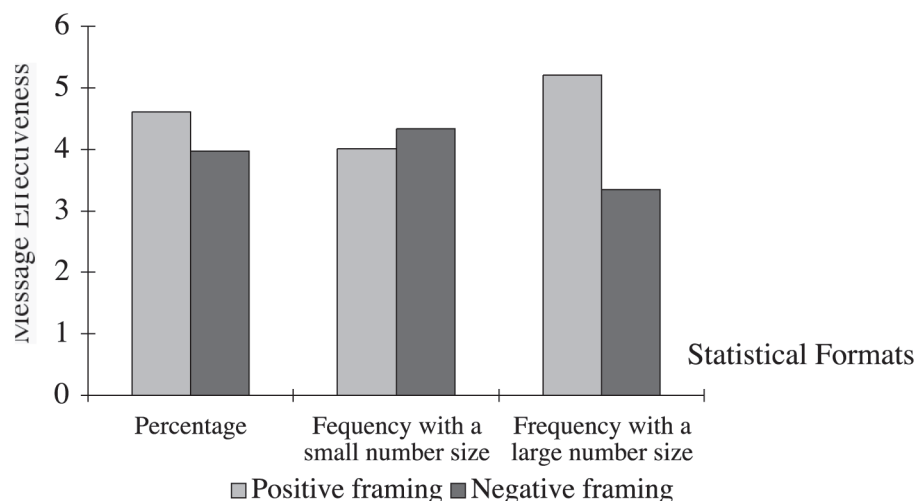
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

An overall analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) controlling for health consciousness and individual perceptions towards health risks was performed. A significant three-way interaction of framing, statistical formats of medical efficacy, and graphic display was found on participants' behavioral intention with $F(2, 445)=31.49, p < .01$. Treatment means are summarized in Table 1.

Post-hoc tests with Bonferroni adjustment were conducted to test the rest of proposed hypotheses. When efficacy was presented in different statistical formats, a significant difference between

positive and negative framing was observed ($F(2, 445)=7.29, p < .05$). These results lend support for the main effect of statistical framing (H1) that information of medicine efficacy presented differently would influence framing effectiveness (Figure 4). Furthermore, a significant interaction effect between frequency and its number size was also found ($F(1, 445)=7.21, p < .05$). When statistical information of medical efficacy was presented in a larger number size, framing effects were enhanced (difference of framing effects in statistics with a larger number size= $5.21-3.34=1.87$ vs.

FIGURE 4
Influence of Statistical Formats on Framing Effectiveness



difference of framing effects in statistics with a smaller number size= $4.33-4.01=0.32$). Statistics framed positively and presented in a larger number size was more persuasive ($M=5.21$) than that with a smaller one ($M=4.01$). Conversely, statistics framed negatively and presented in a larger number size became less persuasive ($M=3.34$) than that with a smaller one ($M=4.33$). The results were consistent with predictions of H2a and H2b.

Graphic illustration was found to facilitate framing effects ($F(1, 445)=5.91, p<.05$), supporting H3. One interesting finding reveals that framing effects were enhanced by graphic display only when statistics were presented in percentage or in relative frequency with a small number size and no significant graphic effects were found with statistics presented in relative frequency with a large number size. The interaction between framing and graphic display became insignificant when the number size of the frequency was large (Figure 5). Participants appeared to focus on the increased number of figures in the larger denominator with larger numerator, regardless of graphs. Only main effect of framing was found significant. This finding is similar with prior work demonstrating a response range effect on subjective risk assessments (Yamagishi, 1997). Yamagishi reported that risk estimates were grater when ascertained on an X out of 100 scale compared to an X out of 10,000 scale. What it was found here was that the relative frequency information with a larger denominator dominated the message effectiveness and diluted the effect of visual representation of graphic aid. Without the graphic display, participants relied on not only the framing effects but also the statistical formats. Relative frequency with a large number size was more influential in decision making. With the aid of appropriate graphs, message effectiveness mainly depended on the way the statistics were framed (chance to provide satisfactory results vs. chance failed to provide satisfactory results). Visual representation of graphic aid could have more impacts on persuasion than the statistical formats (probability vs. frequency with different number sizes). Indeed, a picture could be worth a thousand words. The two studies above suggest potential biases in perceptions of a new product based on the way the efficacy

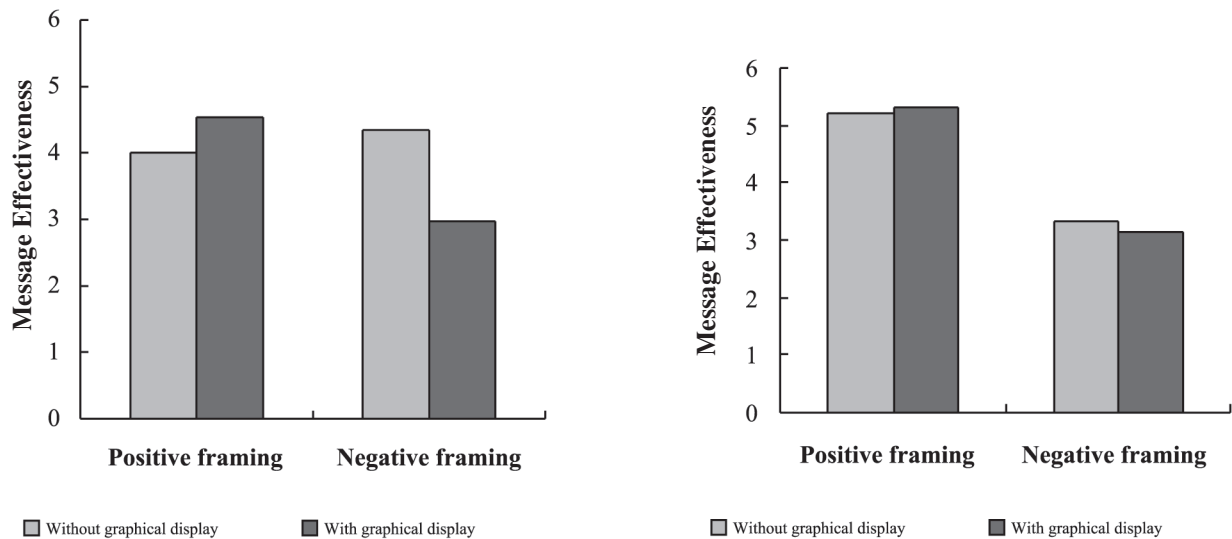
information is framed, the aid of graphic display (i.e., highlighted human figures and pie charts), the size of the number size the statistics presented in, and the interactions among these three communication format variables.

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This paper examines the importance of the context in which a new product is presented to individuals. Partially replicating the results of previous research, the results showed that framing an alternative positively led to higher persuasion than framing it negatively. In addition, two moderators of this process were introduced, i.e., statistical formats of efficacy information (percentage vs. frequency) and the visual representation of graphic display. In line with earlier research, statistical formats may influence healthcare decisions (Stone et al., 1997; Feldman-Stewart et al., 2000; Schapira et al., 2001). In addition, relative frequency information may increase favorableness in the judgment making. Presenting frequency information with a larger number size was found to increase message persuasion. The provision of a chart representing the outcome rate further increased the persuasiveness of health communication in the case of positive framing but reduced that in the case of negative framing. Framing effects were enhanced by graphic aid only when statistics were presented in percentage or in relative frequency with a small number size. When statistics were presented in frequency with a large number size, only the main effect of framing remained significant. The increased number of figures might dilute the vividness effects of graphs.

Future research should test the generalizability of the three format factors with different level of product efficacy (less than 50% or very high efficacy such as 99.9%). Sheridan et al. (2003) suggest that framing affects could still be found when the balance of potential harms and benefits is a close call (50%). Additional studies on health communications should test the effectiveness of those factors in quasi-experiments or field tests across various products. The present study limited in the conditions of high congruence between statistical formats and graphic illustration

FIGURE 5
Moderating Role of Graphic Illustration on Framing Effectiveness



(i.e., probability presented in pie charts, and frequency presented in highlighted human figures). A full factorial design considering low congruence circumstances (i.e., using bar charts to present frequency or using crowd charts to illustrate percentage information) should be examined in future. Only one dimension of product efficacy (potential gain) was investigated. One proposal for future research is to incorporate risk information (potential loss of side effects) with these framing factors. It is important to understand under what conditions the messages would be effective and when and why statistical format and visual representation of graphic display are likely to facilitate or inhibit message framing and the effectiveness of the copy strategies. Researchers should also explore how those framing variables could influence consumers' understanding, belief, trust, or confidence in the information received (Gurmankin et al., 2004). Assessment of numeracy or prior exposure to risk concepts should be incorporated in future research as a possible moderator on framing effectiveness.

The meaningful communication of product efficacy information has an important role in the practice of marketing. This is especially so when a patient chooses to take an active role in a healthcare decision where risks and benefits must be considered (Schapira et al., 2001). First, information must be presented clearly. Care is required to avoid an overload of information. The visual presentation of graphic information has been explored. This study provides new insights into information formats when interpreting numeric efficacy information presented in different formats and graphic displays used in advertising communication. A picture could be worth a thousand words when appropriate statistical formats are chosen. In addition to the purpose of persuasion, statistical formats should be chosen to optimize consumer understanding and ability to use the information effectively. For general public, we would be able to look beyond the scene regarding advertising campaigner' framed messages. After all, it makes little mathematical difference how information is expressed. It does, however, make a psychological difference.

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Two Wrongs Make a Right? Accidental Consensus in Predictions of Others' Preferences Under Uncertainty

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

To make effective decisions under uncertainty, marketers often must accurately predict other people's decisions under uncertainty. To illustrate, consider the managers at a pharmaceutical firm that is deciding whether to start developing a new allergy drug. These managers must of course assess their *own* risk tolerance, determining whether the chances and consequences of a successful development attempt outweigh the chances and consequences of an unsuccessful development attempt. Importantly, these managers must also predict the preferences of many *others*, including consumers and executives at competing firms. For example, how would executives at other firms respond to the development of a new drug? Would these competitors bear the risk of attempting to develop a next generation of rival drugs, thereby threatening the new drug's profitability? According to most descriptive models of decision under uncertainty (e.g. Tversky and Fox 1995), the managers have to perform two key judgments related to likelihood in order to accurately assess this possibility: 1) predict their rival's probability of success in developing a new treatment and 2) predict the impact (weight) of that probability on their rival's actual choices.

The present research examines people's predictions of others' preferences under uncertainty. We examine two distinct self-other discrepancies that can influence the accuracy of predictions under uncertainty, one occurring in the probability judgment stage and the other in the probability weighting stage. Importantly, we show that these self-other differences work in opposing directions. Hence, we examine the joint operation of these opposing forces and observe that they can result in "accidental consensus" in terms of own choices and predictions of other's choices under uncertainty.

The recent literature on perceptions of ability suggests that when judging their ability to perform on a given task, people egocentrically focus on their feelings of task difficulty and fail to adjust their self-assessments for the fact that the task or event in questions would be as difficult for others (e.g. Kruger 1999). In study 1 we confirm that we can expect a similar effect of difficulty using indirect methods, such as in the separate judgments of probability that we are interested in. As expected, we find that participants were more positive in their self-assessments than they thought others should be when the task was easier. Conversely, participants were more negative in their predictions than they thought others should be when the task was more difficult.

In study 2 we examine self-other differences in probability weighting. Drawing on the research on affective reactions and probability weighting (Rottenstreich and Hsee 2001) we suggest that deviations from impossibility and certainty will have greater impact for the self than they will be predicted to have on others. Even a tiny probability of obtaining some outcome might generate a great deal of risk-related affect that seems to go beyond what is justified by the mere numerical difference between a zero probability and a just slightly higher probability. Likewise, even a tiny probability of not obtaining some outcome might generate a great deal of risk-related affect that seems to go beyond the mere numerical difference between a probability of one and a just slightly lower probability. But research on empathy gaps (Loewenstein

1996; Van Boven, Dunning, and Loewenstein 2000) suggests that, although people's reactions to risk and uncertainty may in part reflect such affective reactions, they may not appreciate that other people have similar affective reactions. As a result, they may predict that others will respond to deviations from impossibility and certainty in relatively muted ways. Put differently, people may fail to predict that others will do what they themselves do—overweight small probabilities and underweight large probabilities. We confirm this prediction in a study that contrasts risky choices made for self with predictions for choices of others. We find that given a small probability of winning, choices were risk-seeking but predictions were less so. In contrast, given a large probability of winning choices were risk-averse but predictions were less so. This pattern of self-other differences in risky choices implies a self-other difference in weighting of probabilities: as predicted, people fail to predict that others will overweight small probabilities and underweight large probabilities just as they themselves do.

In Study 3, we combine the methodology of the first two studies to examine predictions of others' preferences under uncertainty, where both judgments of probability and weights of those probabilities need to be made. Participants were presented with word puzzles that varied in difficulty. We first asked them to judge the probability of success solving a word puzzle and then state a cash equivalent for a gamble based on that word puzzle. Participants made these two judgments for themselves and for a random-other. First, in terms of monetary decisions, we find no difference decisions for self versus predictions for random-other. This result, a sort of "accidental consensus" is explained by the replication of the two opposing self-other biases demonstrated in studies 1 and 2. Replicating study 1, we observe an interaction of target by puzzle difficulty. On harder word puzzles, participants thought their own probability of success was smaller than that of others. On easier word puzzles, participants thought that their own probability of success was greater than that of others. Replicating study 2, we also find an opposing self-other difference in weighting of these judged probabilities, offsetting the differences in probability judgment. Further, in line with the empathy gap account, we find that self-other differences in weighting of probabilities are attenuated when one is asked to make decisions for oneself before predicting the decisions of others.

We discuss the implications of these findings with respect to self-positivity, prediction, and behavior. Our findings suggest, for example that, while managers might predict that other managers are less likely to have a successful product launch than themselves, they might nonetheless predict that other managers would be equally likely to actually proceed with the launch.

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When Losses Loom Even Larger: The Moderating Role of Relationship Norms

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Prospect theory states that people interpret outcomes not as end-states but as gains and losses relative to a reference point. Removing a good from the endowment reflects a loss while adding the same good (to an endowment without it) reflects a gain. Furthermore, the value function for losses is steeper than the value function for gains, $v(x) < -v(-x)$, where v is the value of x . As such, losses loom larger than gains resulting in people generally being averse to losses (Kahneman and Tversky 1979). Thaler (1980) termed this increased value of a good when it becomes part of the individual's endowment the endowment effect. Recent research has identified factors that moderate the strength of the loss aversion and endowment effect, for example, source dependence (Loewenstein and Issacharoff 1994), transaction demand (Mandel 2002), and symbolic value of products (McGraw, Tetlock, and Kristel 2003). The present research extends proposes one other potential moderator of loss aversion: the type of relationship that consumers form with the product.

A growing body of literature in marketing has drawn upon social psychology to understand consumer-brand relationships, and has noted that people differ in how they relate to brands (Fournier, 1998; Muniz, Jr., & O'Guinn, 2001). In particular, Aggarwal (2004) finds that consumers use norms of relationship as a lens to evaluate a brand: consumers' evaluations differ depending on the type of their relationship with the brand. Two types of relationships are examined: *exchange* relationships in which people provide benefits to others to get something back from them; 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).

In this research, we propose that the distinctive norms of exchange and communal relationships will also lead consumers to demonstrate different magnitudes of loss aversion. Norms of a communal relationship, relative to those of an exchange relationship, will result in a stronger loss aversion. Two reasons argue for this hypothesis. First, relationship norms lead consumers to treat gains and losses differently. Norms of exchange relationship suggest that people be attentive to the net balance of inputs and output in the relationship. This means that people are more likely to compute the *net* of gains and losses. Given that the value function of losses is steeper than that of gains, aggregating losses with gains is likely to result in the subsequent behavior being consistent with lower loss aversion levels. Second, different relationship norms may lead to the experience of loss being different for the two sets of consumers. When communal norms are salient the endowed option is akin to a friend or a family member and hence more likely to be incorporated into the consumer's extended self (Belk 1988). Due to self-enhancing bias that leads to enhanced evaluation of others with whom people have an association (Beggan 1992), an endowed product is likely to be enhanced in valuation more in a communal relationship. Furthermore, since people in a close relationship tend to devalue alternatives relative to their existing option (Johnson and Rusbult 1989), people are likely to demand larger dollar amount (due to devaluing of the alternative—the monetary value) to give up their current endowment.

Three studies test this overall thesis: norms of a communal relationship relative to those of an exchange relationship will make

consumers more loss averse. The first two studies use standard endowment effect experiments while the third study uses a more direct measure to assess participants' perceived loss aversion.

Study 1 uses students as participants and measures their relationship with the university. Participants are divided into communal and exchange groups based on a median split. Participants then go through the standard endowment effect experiment using a coffee mug with the university name and logo on it. Results show that both sets of participants show significant endowment effect. Further, even though there were no differences in their buying prices (\$4.08 vs. \$4.22), participants in the communal relationship stated a significantly larger selling price for the mug displaying stronger loss aversion than those in the exchange condition (\$9.12 vs. \$6.23).

Study 2 replicates the results of study 1 but instead of measuring the relationship norms study 2 manipulates them by using a scenario description of a social interaction. Endowment effect experiment using a plain mug conducted subsequent to this relationship manipulation shows that, as before, there were no differences in the stated buying prices of participants in the communal and exchange conditions (\$1.88 vs. \$2.04). However, loss aversion experienced by participants in the communal condition was significantly larger than that in the exchange condition, as revealed by their stated selling prices (\$5.32 vs. \$3.60).

Study 3 tests the overall hypothesis by more directly examining the participants' loss aversion coefficient. Adapting from prior research (Schmidt and Traub 2002), participants were administered two tasks that required them to provide dollar values that made two particular gambles worth playing. Greater loss aversion would suggest that participants should require greater dollar amounts to persuade them to gamble. Results show that participants in the communal condition indicated a significantly larger dollar amount (\$884) than those in the exchange condition (\$217) to play a gamble that had an equal likelihood to lose \$100. Similar results were observed for a gamble that had an equal likelihood of losing \$200 ($M_{com}=\890 vs. $M_{exch}=\$312$), further supporting the overall hypothesis. Furthermore, the three studies carefully ruled out alternative explanations like affect and perception of quality.

Our studies, to the best of our knowledge, are the first to demonstrate that mere salience of relationship norms makes consumers systematically more or less loss averse. Given that the salience of relationship norms can be influenced using different marketing tools, marketers can play a significant role in making consumers more loss averse towards their brand making them less likely to switch to competitive brands. This has huge implications on issues relating to brand loyalty—and opens up some exciting opportunities for future research.

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He Wants, She Wants: Gender, Category, and Disagreement in Spouse's Joint Decisions

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ABSTRACT

Family purchase decisions are examined in light of product category, differing individual preference intensities, past history, and couple preference intensity for jointly purchased products. Specifically, a 2x2x2 ANOVA with a covariate is used to explore spouses' predispositions in a series of joint purchase decisions. The results indicate that joint purchases are more likely to favor choices preferred by husbands than wives, especially when choices involve across product category selections. In situations where spouses differ in preference intensities for two products, the decisions also tend to favor males. This tendency is magnified when the joint decision involves across product category decisions.

INTRODUCTION

Consumers spend a whopping eight million dollars a minute in the United States (Wellner 2002). That figure encompasses nearly 110 million households, of which the majority are family household units. Recognizing the enormous economic impact of such expenditures, there has been a resurgence in research interest regarding family purchase-decision dynamics (Aribarg, Arora, and Bodur 2002; Arora and Allenby 1999; Seetharaman, Ainslie, and Chintagunta 1999; Su, Fern and Ye 2003). For instance, studies have shown that spouses may adjust influence strategies used in purchase decisions over time (Corfman and Lehmann 1987; Su et al. 2003). Marketers may gain insight into targeting communication messages (Arora and Allenby 1999; Petrevu 2001) and guiding personal selling activities (Aribarg et al. 2002) by better understanding the various effects of spousal influence.

In addition to spousal influence, marketers have also recently acknowledged the importance of differentiating product category in family purchase decisions (Aribarg et al. 2002; Seetharaman et al. 1999; Ward 2003). Aribarg et al. (2002) determined that product category may impact the effectiveness of salesperson strategies and Seetharaman et al. (1999) found that households display similar state dependence across product categories, with income and family size having little influence. Ward (2003) found that the perceived degree of conflict between spouses in purchase decisions is greater in across category choices than within category choices.

Purpose of Paper. This study extends the spousal family purchase-decision research by examining the impact of husbands and wives in joint decisions where decisions involve product choices both within and across product categories. In addition, previous research has indicated that how badly couples desire the product in question impacts the joint spousal purchase decision (Corfman and Lehmann 1987). However, Corfman and Lehmann did not investigate what happens when each couple individually differs in preference intensity for each product. Thus, this study looks at the impact differing individual preference intensity has on joint decisions, and how product category and differing preference intensity and product category interact in explaining joint product decisions. While this study focuses on the impact of the joint spousal decision process, the specific roles of husband and wives in the decision process will be investigated to further marketers understanding of the spousal communication process.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Since husbands and wives are separate individuals facing joint purchase decisions, it is proposed that in a significant number of cases a spouse may have desires for products which are not

comparable to those desired by his/her spouse. Given that the vast majority of households have limited discretionary income, it stands to reason that the wants/desires of both spouses cannot always be met, resulting in the couple being faced with making a decision which is not optimal for either person individually. Hence, one spouse must either concede to the other or the two must work out a compromise acceptable to both parties, but with which neither party may be completely happy. As a result of the potential for conflict between spouses in this process, gender differences may be relevant.

Previous evidence has been found to indicate that males and females differ in their information processing, however, researchers have not addressed the specific issue of whether males and females differ in across versus within category decision processing (Corfman 1991; Kirchler 1993). Although researchers found some conflicting evidence, men are generally expected to use coercion, direct reward and informational power, whereas women are often thought to use helplessness, personal rewards and referent power. Specifically, Meyers-Levy (1988) found that males were more likely to adhere to self-relevant information, whereas females were affected not only by self-relevant information, but also by "other-sensitive" information.

Based on the gender research findings presented, one would expect across category decisions to be more important to men than within product category decisions. Accordingly, in choices involving two differing product categories, males would be expected to be less willing to compromise towards the product category favoring the female than the female would be towards the product category favoring the male. However, in within category choices, males may be more willing to compromise given that both products are from the same product category and males may be less likely to experience a sense of loss regardless of which product is chosen. In this instance, females may be likely to have more impact on the final product selection. Based on the aforementioned discussion, hypothesis one states:

H1: In joint decision responses, across category product decisions should be more likely to favor the male than the female; whereas, within category product decisions should be more likely to favor the female than the male.

In maintaining the stability of the relationship, Corfman and Lehmann (1987) found that relative couple preference intensity was the primary determining factor in a joint decision outcome; that is, how badly the couple wanted an item had the greatest impact on product selection by the couple. However, Corfman and Lehmann did not investigate what happens when each spouse differs individually in preference intensity (differing gender preference intensities) on the paired decision products in the couple's joint decision. Based on the gender effects discussed thus far, this paper expects that when spouses differ in how badly each wants a specific product (differ in individual preference intensity for products), the final product choice will most likely favor the males. Thus, hypothesis two states:

H2: In joint decision responses where spouses differ in preference intensities for the products, the joint product decision should be more likely to favor the male than the female.

If gender differences are impacting results, then one would also expect a significant interaction between product category and differing gender preference intensities in explaining joint product choice decisions. In their previous studies, Corfman and Lehmann (1987) presented their participants with across product category decisions only. They did not distinguish between across or within product category decisions. It would seem that the impact of differing individual preference intensity on the joint product choice would be magnified in across product category decisions. The relative importance of the decision to each spouse, reflected by his/her differing preference intensity for each product, would seem to be of greater importance in across product categories than within product categories because of the "win/loss" aspect of the decision.

If spouses have differing preference intensities for the products, then conflict is greater in situations involving across product decisions, and each spouse would be less willing to compromise in paired decision choices involving across product categories. Prior research suggests that men are more likely to be self-relevant, whereas women are more likely to consider others when making a decision. Women are more emotional in an interpersonal context and men are more emotional in an achievement context (Kelly and Hutson-Comeaux 1999). This finding would seem to indicate that a man would be more determined to "win" when he differs in preference intensity with his wife and when the decision involves across category choices than within category choices. Wives are thought to be more likely to compromise than are husbands. Thus, hypothesis three states the following expected interaction:

H3: In joint decision responses, the decision will favor the male more when spouses differ in preference intensities for across category joint product decisions than when spouses differ in preference intensities for within category joint product decisions.

METHODOLOGY

A total of 69 couples were recruited from various church, school, and community groups in the Nashville, Tennessee, area to participate in this study with 61 couples completing the entire task. This study involves both husbands and wives participating in joint product decisions. The couples resulted in a sample size of 480 joint product decisions or observations, an average of 7.8 observations per couple.

Each couple received \$10 for their participation and an opportunity to win a \$500 grand prize. Participating couples consisted of participants in a range of ages, incomes, education, number of hours worked, number of years married, and number of children.

Stimuli

The stimuli consisted of products and services within a wide price range (\$15 to \$4,000) that represented purchases that couples would likely make over the course of their marriage. The products were grouped into eight separate categories for within versus across category evaluations. A total of 54 different products were evaluated by participants and included choices in home entertainment, furniture, kitchen appliances, non-home entertainment, household chores, office/education, and environment/health.

Data Collection

First Data Collection Phase. This research project involved a considerable time investment on the part of the participants. Each spouse first completed an Individual Product Questionnaire in which he/she evaluated the likelihood of purchasing 54 products over the next two years (100 point scales) and what price level they would be willing to spend for the product (selecting one of three

options). The couples also provided various demographic information. After the researcher received the Individual Product Questionnaires from the couples, couples were contacted and scheduled to participate in a joint interview session and Post-Questionnaire requiring both spouses to be present.

Second Data Collection Phase. The responses on the first questionnaire were used to create product pairings for the second stage of data collection, the joint interview. Based on their ratings of the 54 products/services, couples were randomly placed in one of two primary categories: (1) couples presented with choices of products from within product categories (29 couples), or (2) couples presented with choices from across product categories (32 couples).

The spouses were shown a series of products/services, two at a time. The joint decisions created were chosen for their propensity to generate conflict between the two spouses. Specifically, of the two products paired together, the female had initially preferred one product in the initial questionnaire and the male had preferred the other.

In a controlled meeting with the researcher, the spouses individually rated the likelihood of purchasing the items within the next two years, dividing 100 points between the two items (100 point constant sum scales). These numbers were used to indicate preference intensity for the products. A fifty-fifty evaluation was not allowed in that it indicated no decision for one product over the other. After evaluating the products individually, the couples then repeated the process except that this time they were presented the product pairings and told they were free to discuss the products with their spouses. The goal for the couple was to come to a joint consensus on which of the two products would most likely be acquired and to divide 100 points between the two products indicating their joint decision. The couple completed this step for each of the product pairings in order to create a decision history for the spouses.

The final step of the data collection was a Post-Questionnaire following the interview which spouses did independently. The Post-Questionnaire consisted of reality and manipulation check questions (5-pt. Likert scales) and influence tactic questions (7-pt. Likert scales).

Development of Variables

Joint Decision Response (Dependent) Variable. The joint decision response variable (DECISION) is measured based on the 100 points allocated by each couple to the paired decision choices. Responses below 50 favor the male's preferred product, while responses above 50 favor the female's preferred product. In this context, the couples were forced to come to a joint decision between the products as to which product was most likely to be purchased by the couple and then, also as a couple, to divide 100 points between the two products. It is important to note that when the paired choices were presented, one product represented the product that the male had favored in the Individual Product Questionnaire and the other product represented the product that the female had originally favored. Thus, this variable is able to capture whether the couple's joint product decision favored the male's or the female's initial product preference.

Explanatory Variables. The explanatory variables used in this study to test the hypotheses consisted of variables measuring the following attributes: cumulative past decision history, couple preference intensity for products, product category, and difference in gender level of preference intensity.

Corfman and Lehmann looked at past decision history numerous ways in their study. They concluded that a cumulative history variable resulted in the strongest results. The variable is measured by identifying cumulatively which spouse has won in their prior

joint decisions. For the first decision, and in cases when each has won the same number of decisions, this variable is coded 0. All models in this study were rerun using the other past history measures used by Corfman and Lehmann. Like Corfman and Lehmann, the cumulative history variable always produced the strongest results.

Corfman and Lehmann found that a couple's preference intensity for a product was one of the strongest variables in explaining product choices. Thus, this study includes preference intensity (PRE) as a continuous covariate variable to control for the perceived relative importance of each product to the couple.

Product category and gender preference intensity are the two variables of interest in this study. Product category (CATEGORY) is a dichotomous measure of the across versus within decision effects. All product choice decisions involved couples selecting between two products. These paired products were either from the same product category or from different product categories.

Gender preference intensity (GENDINTENSE) is a dichotomous measure of the gender effect of each spouse having different individual preference intensities for the joint products used in the joint product decision. When viewing the paired product choices and evaluating them individually, if both the male and female either rated product a (both assigned preference intensities greater than 50 points) or product b (both assigned preference intensities less than 50 points) as the preferred product, then both spouses are said to prefer the same product in the joint decision process. The spouses prefer the same product, thus their preference intensities should make the joint decision easier. However, if the male rated product a with more than 50 points and the female rated product b with more than 50 points (or vice versa), the spouses have differing gender preference intensities. He wants one product, she wants the other; therefore, a successful joint decision on the part of the couple will require more effort.

Research Design

A 2 (cumulative past history: female did not win vs female won) X 2 (product category: within vs across) X 2 (gender preference intensity: agree vs differ) between subjects design with one continuous covariate (couple preference intensity) is used in testing the hypotheses in this study. A second model examined the impact of separating the couple's preference intensity measure into its male and female components.

Since the 2 X 2 X 2 with covariate design contains three dichotomous variables and one continuous variable, it is an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) model. The ANCOVA model was developed by regressing PAST, PRE, CATEGORY, and GENDINTENSE on DECISION. Because of prior expectations and hypotheses, all two-way interactions among the three dichotomous variables were generated.

RESULTS

Main Effects. The ANCOVA model was run using 480 joint decisions (observations). Table one reports the Type II Sums of Squares, F statistic, and P-Value for each variable and interaction term, along with the overall model statistics.

Table two contains the means assigned to the joint product choice (CATEGORY) for each level of the dichotomous explanatory variables (main effects). Remember, a mean greater than 50 means that the joint decision favored the female, while a mean less than 50 means that the joint decision favored the male.

Results for the control variables are as expected and consistent with Corfman and Lehmann (1987). Couple past history (PAST) and couple preference intensity (PRE) are both significant in

explaining the couples' joint decisions. The Type III SS shows that couple preference intensity is the strongest variable in explaining the joint decision. The means reported in table two show that in cases where the female had cumulatively won in prior decisions, the current joint decision favored the male ($M=48.421$), while in cases where the female had not cumulatively won in prior decisions, the current joint decision favored the female ($M=51.424$).

The main effect for product category (CATEGORY) was significant, $F(1, 473)=20.52$, $p<.001$. Means revealed that the male's preferred product was significantly more likely to be chosen in across category product decisions ($M=49.389$) and that the female's preferred product was significantly more likely to be chosen in within category product decisions ($M=51.844$). Thus, hypothesis one is accepted.

The main effect for gender preference intensity (GENDINTENSE) is significant, $F(1, 473)=6.73$, $p<.01$. When both spouses have strong preference intensities for different products, males are more likely than females to have the final product decision favor their preferred products ($M: Agree=53.89$, $Disagree=22.94$). Thus, hypothesis two is accepted.

Interaction Effects. Interaction between product category and differing preference intensity appear to provide information in joint product decisions above that explained by their main effects alone. The interaction term CATEGORY x GENDINTENSE is significant, $F(1, 473)=17.89$, $p<.001$.

Table three contains the means for product choice across the four cells for each of the two-way interactions. Decomposition of the interaction for CATEGORY and GENDINTENSE suggests that the effect of differing individual preference intensities between spouses on joint decisions is magnified in across product decisions (see figure 1).

Although, joint decisions still favor the male when spouses have differing preference intensity for within product decisions ($M: Agree=54.169$, $Disagree=31.807$), this effect is even stronger in situations involving across category decisions ($M: Agree=53.589$, $Disagree=13.33$). When the couples have major differences in preference intensity for the products, the joint product decision is more likely to favor the males in both across and within category product choices, but significantly more so for those joint decisions involving across product category choices. Therefore, hypothesis three is accepted.

Although the prior research and theory did not indicate that additional interactions should exist in explaining joint product decisions, we ran the models with all two-way interactions. The two-way interaction between product category and past history was not significant, $F(1, 473)=.44$, $p<.51$. However, the two-way interaction between gender preference intensity and past history is significant in explaining joint product decisions, $F(1, 473)=10.55$, $p<.01$. Investigation of the decision means across the four cells of the interaction suggest that relationship between past history and joint product decision may not hold true in situations where the couples have differing preference intensities.

Model Rerun With Separate Male and Female Preference Intensity Variables. Based on Corfman and Lehmann (1987), we included couple preference intensity as a control variable in this study. However, results could differ if one separates this measure into its male and female components. The author reran the model using separate male and female preference intensity variables. These results are reported in table four.

The results were the same for the variables of interest in this study, although the model was somewhat stronger (R-square of .747 versus .734 before). However, breaking down the preference intensity into its male and female parts did produce some interesting results for that measure. Although both variables are significant, the

TABLE 1
JOINT DECISION 2 X 2 X 2 ANCOVA MODEL WITH ONE COVARIATE

<i>Explanatory Variables and Interaction Terms</i>	<i>DF</i>	<i>Type III SS</i>	<i>F statistic</i>	<i>P-Value</i>	<i>R-square</i>
PAST	1	3185.66	12.13	0.000	
PRE	1	290728.52	1106.68	0.000	
CATEGORY	1	5391.30	20.52	0.000	
GENDINTENSE	1	1768.53	6.73	0.009	
CATEGORYxGENDINTENSE	1	4699.70	17.89	0.000	
CATEGORYxPAST	1	115.69	0.44	0.507	
GENDINTENSExPAST	1	2771.29	10.55	0.001	
Overall Model Statistics	7	342261.37	186.12	0.000	0.734

TABLE 2
TESTS OF MAIN EFFECTS

Means for DECISION Across CATEGORY (Test of H1 and CATEGORY Main Effect):	
<i>CATEGORY=0 (Within Product Category)</i>	<i>CATEGORY=1 (Across Product Category)</i>
51.844	49.389
CATEGORY Main Effect:	F Statistic=18.31 P-value=.000 (1 DF)
Means for DECISION Across GENDINTENSE (Verification of H2 and GENDINTENSE Main Effect):	
<i>GENDINTENSE=0 (Couples Concur in Preference Intensity)</i>	<i>GENDINTENSE=1 (Couples Differ in Preference Intensity)</i>
53.891	22.940
GENDINTENSE Main Effect:	F Statistic=8.74 P-Value=.003 (1 DF)
Means for DECISION Across PAST:	
<i>PAST=0 (Female did not Cumulatively Win in Past Decisions)</i>	<i>PAST=1 (Female Cumulatively Won in Past Decisions)</i>
51.424	48.421
GENDINTENSE Main Effect:	F Statistic=13.29 P-Value=.0002 (1 DF)

Type II SS suggests that the male preference intensity for a product (MALEPRE) impacts the joint decision more than the female preference intensity for a product (FEPRE). This result would suggest that researchers using preference intensity as a variable should consider breaking down the variable into its male and female components in future research. Failure to do so could impact results.

CONCLUSIONS

Similar to prior research, this study finds that past history and couple preference intensity are significant in explaining joint product decisions. However, this study also finds that gender preference

intensity (differing preference intensity) and product category are significant factors affecting the joint decisions made by couples.

An intriguing finding from this study's results involved gender effects and the joint decisions that couples ultimately reached. Specifically, joint product choices were most likely to favor the male's preferred product in across category decisions and when the spouses had major differences in preference intensities for the products. Apparently, in those decisions when the products were from different product categories, males "won" more often than females, in that their preferred products were chosen more often than were the females. This finding lends support to earlier research

TABLE 3
SUMMARY OF JOINT DECISION MODEL RESULTS:

Means for DECISION Across CATEGORY by GENDINTENSE (Verification of H3):

Category =0	Gend intense=0	Category=0	Gend intense=1	Category=1	Gend intense=0	Category=1	Gend intense=1
54.169		31.807		53.589		13.333	

CATEGORY x GENDINTENSE Interaction: F Statistic=13.78, P-Value=0.000 (1 DF)

Means for DECISION Across CATEGORY by PAST Interaction:

Category =0	Past=0	Category=0	Past=1	Category=1	Past=0	Category=1	Past=1
52.069		51.161		50.716		53.542	

CATEGORY x PAST Interaction Effect: F Statistic=0.36, P-Value=0.547 (1 DF)

Means for DECISION Across GENDINTENSE by PAST Interaction:

Gend Intense=0	Past=0	Gend Intense=0	Past=1	Gend Intense=1	Past=0	Gend Intense=1	Past=1
55.232		49.990		20.179		32.727	

GENDINTENSE x PAST Interaction Effect: F Statistic=14.37, P-Value=0.000 (1 DF)

FIGURE 1
TWO-WAY INTERACTION OF CATEGORY CHOICE BY GENDER PREFERENCE INTENSITY SIMILARITY ON PRODUCT CHOICE DECISION

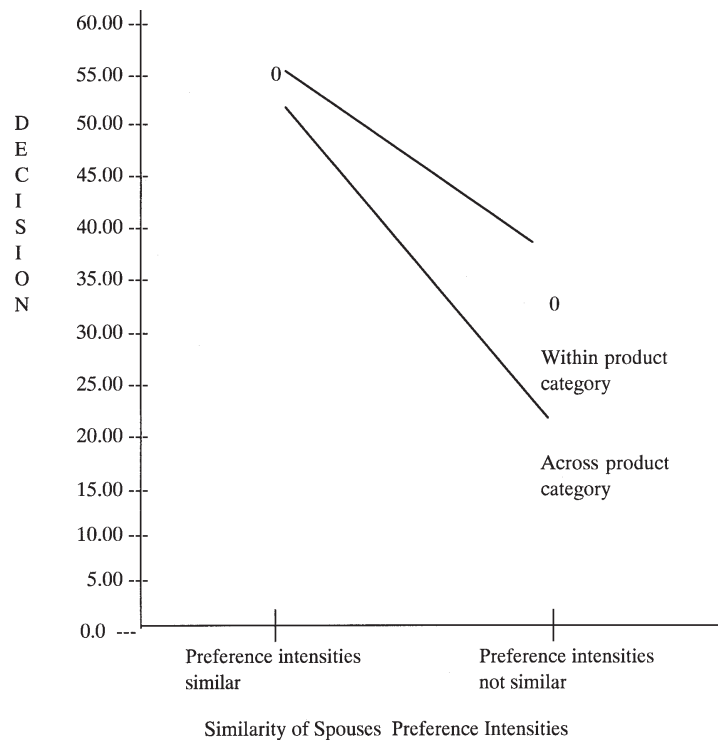


TABLE 4
JOINT DECISION MODEL WITH SEPARATE MALE AND FEMALE INTENSITY VARIABLES

<i>Explanatory Variables and Interaction Terms</i>	<i>DF</i>	<i>Type III SS</i>	<i>F statistic</i>	<i>P-Value</i>	<i>R-square</i>
PAST	1	3315.48	13.29	0.000	
FEPRE	1	52313.54	209.63	0.000	
MALEPRE	1	127968.18	512.80	0.000	
CATEGORY	1	4568.45	18.31	0.000	
GENDINTENSE	1	2181.98	8.74	0.003	
CATEGORYxGENDINTENSE	1	3438.80	13.78	0.000	
CATEGORYxPAST	1	90.42	0.36	0.547	
GENDINTENSExPAST	1	3585.54	14.37	0.000	
Overall Model Statistics	8	348719.23	174.67	0.000	0.747

*FEPRE measures the female's preference intensity for the paired product choice. MALEPRE measures the male's preference intensity for the paired product choice.

which suggests that men and women may follow alternative sex roles with males following goals having immediate personal consequences and females focusing on harmonious relationships with other parties (Meyers-Levy 1988). When faced with a win/loss product decision, the male may have been most concerned with achieving the product of his choice, whereas the female was more likely to focus on preserving the relationship.

In decisions where the spouses disagree in preference intensity for the paired product choices, preference intensity was a significant factor in determining which product was selected by the couple in the final joint decision. This finding is true in both within and across category decisions, but the effect is stronger for across category choices than for within category choices (interaction effect). Apparently, when men and women express strong preference intensities for product choices that differ from each other, men are more likely to ultimately gain the product choice they preferred in the joint decision than are women.

The strength of this finding was further exhibited by the significant interaction between gender preference intensity and product category. When spouses exhibited clear preference intensities for differing products, the decision response was significantly affected for both types of product categories—across and within. Both across and within product category choices were more likely to favor the male's preferred product than the female's preferred product. However, additional contrast results indicated that the effects were more pronounced in across category product decisions than for within category product decisions. Thus, even though across and within category decisions were more likely to favor the male when gender preference intensities varied, the result for across product category decisions was strong enough to be significantly different from within product category decisions.

Contributions

Some support was found for the notion that spouses, particularly males, are more concerned with the outcome of across category decisions than within category decisions. Another contribution of this research is to extend the research of Corfman and Lehmann (1987). This study extends Corfman and Lehmann by examining the impact product category has on decision choices and how individual spouses differing in preference intensity impact joint decisions.

This study found strong support for gender effects in spouses' joint decisions. Final joint product decisions were more likely to favor males than females when decisions involved across category product choices and when decisions involved strong differences in preference intensities between the spouses. Apparently, when the spouses do not feel as strongly about the product choice to be made, they are more likely to be influenced by their spouse or to compromise due to their lack of commitment and to preserve harmony in their relationship. It seems that although women have come a long way in both the workforce and the household, results showed that there is still a tendency for decisions to favor men over women in situations involving greater conflict.

Finally, researchers in the past have frequently not been able to conduct studies involving participation by both spouses. This study is one of relatively few that employed active involvement by both spouses (Corfman and Lehmann 1987; Kirchler 1993; Spiro 1983). With spouses reporting increasing levels of time poverty and lifestyles being busier than ever, it is increasingly difficult to gain cooperation by couples in completing this type of study. As a result, this study is more realistic in examining what happens when you bring a husband and wife together in a joint decision making process.

Limitations

Some limitations to this study should be noted. First, the results found here may have limited generalizability. This study was conducted in the Southeast where husbands and wives may have more traditional role expectations than in many other parts of the country. It would be interesting to determine whether the results found in this study hold constant in other geographic regions. Cultural and ethnic differences may also produce different results. Most of the participants in this study were from a white European, predominantly Christian background. There is some evidence that African-American and Hispanic couples may use different decision-making dynamics than do white couples (Cohen and Kaufman 1991; Webster 1994). Thus, participants from different racial or religious backgrounds may produce different results.

Although participants reported that they found the task realistic, the process was artificial and did not require actual expenditures on the part of the couple. Had actual monies been at stake, the results may have differed. However, by providing each couple with \$10 for

their participation and a chance to win a \$500 grand prize, the researcher attempted to ensure that the participants took the decision task seriously.

Participants were limited in this study by the researcher's choice of products on the initial questionnaire. Also, participants were presented with only two products at a time (similar to Corfman and Lehmann 1987). In reality, participants may be faced with many more than two purchase options at a given time. Accordingly, products that may have been much more relevant to individual couples may not have been included. Though an effort was made to include a wide variety of products that are commonly purchased by married couples, each couple differs in their product and service preferences. Thus, some couples may not have enough products of sufficient interest to purchase, thereby limiting the relevance of this decision making process for them.

Future research. The findings in this study suggest several avenues for future decision-making research. Although not significant in all instances in this study, there is strong evidence to suggest that across versus within product category choices should be explored further. In certain conditions category choices do make a difference to the decision making process between couples. These findings could be explored more with different product categories than those used in this study, or perhaps with a larger, more varied sample than that included in this paper.

Corfman (1991) noted that researchers are beginning to acknowledge the importance of across product category choices, but that the choice processes underlying the decision process are understudied. The current review was unable to discover research studies that compared across category product choices with within category product choices. Realistically, individuals are typically presented with choices involving several different options from two or more different product categories. In addition, gender effects appear to still play an important role in spousal decision processes.

These hypotheses tested the implications for across product category choices on a primary decision unit in society—the family. Gaining an improved understanding of spousal decision making in differing product categories with differing product preference intensities will not only contribute to our understanding of joint decision making, but may also have implications for people who market to couples.

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Conceptualizing and Exploring Couple Dyads in the World of Collecting

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ABSTRACT

Despite a growing body of literature on collecting, collections and collectors, we still know very little about collecting in the context of families and coupledom. This study offers a conceptualization to examine the social world of collecting couples, suggesting that their experiences may be understood by reference to three sets of forces which focus on aspects of the collector's social world, their need for legitimization and for material culture. Data from dyadic ethnographic interviews is discussed in the context of these forces and used to generate insights into the collaborative and co-operative behaviors of couples who collect.

INTRODUCTION

This study addresses a significant gap in the literature on collecting as a form of consumption behavior, namely the lack of research into dyadic behaviors within the world of collecting. We therefore focus on the consumption attitudes and behaviors of couples who collect, and begin by conceptualizing the social world and the shared meanings which couples ascribe to their collecting activity, and how coupledom influences the individual in this context. The study is informed by prolonged insider participant observation in the collecting world, absorbing the 'tales of the field' (Van Maanen 1988). In line with Penaloza's (1994) approach to ethnography, we take an *a priori* view of this world, that play, love and gender are salient themes/factors that underpin the attitudes and behaviors of couples interacting in their social worlds.

We begin by briefly describing the growing interest of consumer researchers in collectors, collections and collecting, before providing a literature review focusing on social identity, love, play, gender and social processes. After this, the theoretical orientations of the study are briefly set out, including a description of the methods of data collection and analysis. The findings from long-term participant observation, combined with data from ethnographic interviews with eight couples in an European setting are then presented, interpreted and discussed. The study of dyadic couples allows us to identify important under-theorized dimensions of collecting behavior, notably the dynamics of collaborative and co-operative behaviors amongst collectors, and the influence of the social world, in many guises, on the individual collector.

DEFINITIONS: COLLECTORS AND COLLECTING

Collecting has been defined (Arnould, Zinkhan and Price 2004:146) as the "selective, active and longitudinal acquisition, possession, and disposition of an interrelated set of differentiated objects (material things, ideas, beings, or experiences) that contribute to and derive extraordinary meaning for the set itself". Purposive collecting occurs when there is a strong element of aesthetic discrimination involved (Herrman, 1972:8) and when the owner has acquired sufficient objects of a kind and enough connoisseurship to impress the professionals active in the same field (Herrmann, 1972). This latter definition explicitly acknowledges the importance of social influences upon collectors. Public interest in collecting has grown exponentially in recent years, spanning themes from low culture to high culture. Pearce (1998) estimates that one in three members of the UK and North American population is, or has at some time been, a collector. Gender and socio-economic analysis suggests that collectors mirror national demographic trends with

few defining social or class characteristics and this seems to be the case in both the UK (Pearce 1998) and in the US (Baker and Martin, 2000, Slater, 2000).

With regard to the nature of collecting, there is much information about individual collectors, but our knowledge of couples as consumer-collectors is almost non-existent. Johnston and Beddows' short study (1986) of two couples-one male/female couple, one male/male couple-is a rare exception. To remedy this knowledge gap, we now set out a literature review that explicitly focuses on collecting as viewed in the wider context of family, groups and the social world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Our discussion of the literature starts by focusing on aspects of collecting at the primary conceptual level: subjects, objects and group influences. We then move from the primary level to the secondary conceptual level, where the primary themes interact by means of three mediating forces: the social world, a need for legitimization, and subject-object relationships within a material culture setting. Bringing together these forces has allowed us to generate new insights into the meaning of possessions and collecting relationships.

COLLECTORS IN THEIR SOCIAL WORLDS

Collectors and collections are found within a social consumption framework that operates in private family settings; in semi-public spaces such as collectors' clubs; in public spaces such as auctions; and in informal spaces such as fairs and car boot sales. The behaviors of individual collectors, and the consumption spaces in which these behaviors occur, have been explored by consumer researchers, yet we know very little about collecting in the context of families and coupledom. Most studies of collectors have remained focused on the individual, largely to the exclusion of the wider context of couples, family and group membership. Studies that do focus on shared experiences have addressed aspects of the sense of shared selves (Lastovicka and Fernandez, 2005), also wider aspects of collective behavior (Hogg and Abrams, 1998).

Linking up the literature to our conceptual approach, we examine the forces that mediate the collecting behaviour of dyads below, in order to show how collectors' experiences as dyads differ from that which might be expected from individual collectors. We seek to represent the full lived experiences of collectors, rather than narrower aspects of collecting.

1. The social world

The first set of relationships concerns the interactions between the individual or couple collector(s) of a particular category of object and other collectors of the same items. These social relationships between individuals, couple collector(s) and other collectors represent the influence of group pressure on the consumption experiences and behaviors of individual collectors.

The self-concept is derived from both social identity and personal identity (Turner, 1982), and the two components may be integrated, congruent self-identifications, or they may be distinct and contradictory (Hogg and Abrams, 1985). Therefore to examine personal aspects of identity affected by collecting without consideration of the social-identity function is unlikely to yield a full understanding of collectors and collecting. However, what we do

know is that material possessions and collections are part of the self-identity of UK and US collectors (Hirschman, 1980; Belk, 1988; Dittmar, 1992) and that self-identity through possessions changes over the course of an individual's life (Gentry, Baker and Kraft, 1995).

For some, collecting is significantly influenced by aspects of the social world: it may be a source of social prestige (Herrmann, 1972) and an opportunity to socialize with other collectors in ways that may yield satisfaction well beyond the economic aspects of their collections (Belk, 2001). Some collectors become active participants in collectors' clubs or interest groups, meeting on a regular basis with other collectors (Dannefer 1980; Baker and Martin, 2000; Slater, 2000; Kozinets, 2001). Collecting may also be viewed as a form of adult competition and play (Glancy, 1988, Olmstead, 1991, Pearce, 1998) and play may occur at the aesthetic or at the intellectual level (Pearce, 1998) and in a variety of social settings. Social aspects of play may occur as a result of the collector's decision to share access to their sacred things (Belk et al, 1989) or to attend the play-world setting of the auction (Glancy, 1988).

Many collectors live in households alongside other family members who also collect, and collecting has been noted as a potentially bonding activity for couple-collectors (Belk and Wallendorf, 1997). Collecting couples could be expected to demonstrate shared selves (Lastovicka and Fernandez, 2005) in respect of their collecting, and to derive common identities both from their coupledom, and from common membership of groups outside the family (Prentice, Miller and Lightdale, 1994). Such couples may collect the same or very similar themes and items, and they could be forecast to represent a special case of collecting behavior worth studying for the light that they potentially throw on collecting in particular, and consumption in general.

2. The legitimizing function

A second set of relationships concerns the role of group authentication, validation and approval of certain objects as being collectable. In the context of collecting, the "group" may consist of participants in a collecting society or club; the network of dealers who source and supply the collectables; the experts seen in various media; the "other half" of the husband/wife unit; the family; or indeed any combination of these. Objects may be categorized as sacred when they become collectable (Holt, 1995) and hence the legitimizing function may act, for some people, as the sacralizer. For some, collecting is an aspirational activity focused on the acquisition of cultural capital and the demonstration of good taste (Bourdieu, 1986). Objects have to become worthy of being collected, and this may be a function of expert opinion or a function of society's judgement on our taste in "things" (Rook, 1991). This implicit need for approval echoes McCracken's (1981: 582) analysis of the transfer of meaning from the "culturally constituted world" to the individual consumer, with fashion and taste serving to create a legitimacy climate mediated through "the trade" i.e. the companies and dealers in antiques and collectables. The trade makes objects and makes them available to meet collectors' demand, for the purposes of collecting. Collectors may also need to negotiate permission to collect from partners, as adding to the collection may incur significant expenditure, and also may impact upon the home environment, where individuals construct personal meaning through environmental schematization (Holahan, 1978) and the appropriation of space (Ingold, 1986) and place.

What is important to note is that the "group" performing the legitimizing function may be a couple, or a family, or a social set, or an expert set. All may have some degree of legitimizing power

stemming from personal or social relationships, or from expert knowledge.

3. Material culture and subject-object relationships

Material culture approaches to the consumption phenomenon focus on the relationship of individual collectors to their (usually) man-made objects (e.g. Lovatt, 1997, Pearce, 1998). This sphere of subject-to-object relationships is well-documented in the UK and the US: collecting is a culturally acceptable device for gaining an expanded sense of self (Belk 1988; Rigby and Rigby 1944); for improving self-esteem through a sense of mastery (Danet and Katriel, 1986); and as an act of love (Belk and Coon, 1993; Baudrillard, 1994; Slater 2000). The unifying theme for all collectors is the intrinsic need to re-stabilise the ego in order to regain self composure and equilibrium by means of acquiring possessions (Muensterberger, 1994) and they may be passionate, cool or even obsessive (Olmstead, 1991) about their collections.

Unlike ordinary objects of consumption, collections tend to take on an importance and character comparable in some respects to that of family members (Belk et al, 1991). The importance of 'love' attached to collections can be seen in the heartache associated with the disposition of treasured possessions by elderly consumers (Price, Arnould and Curasi, 2000).

Even children as collectors seem to be influenced by social factors (Baker and Gentry, 1996) and feel it is important to have their own possessions for developing their sense of self (Dittmar, 1992). However the detailed process of organizing and codifying a collection is usually a more solitary activity. Belk and Wallendorf (1997:251) have noted that collecting permits "experimentation with androgyny as an individual participates in the masculine hunt for additions to the collection as well as the feminine nurturance in curating the collection".

Table 1 captures the different effects and satisfactions generated by the three categories outlined above. Having conceptualized the social, legitimizing and material world of the collector into these three categories, we now go on to examine a neglected aspect of consumption—that of couples and the differing context that a dyadic relationship creates for a collector.

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION OF THIS STUDY

The research is ideographic rather than nomothetic (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000) in that it is an intensive study of relatively few cases followed by abduction, or identification of patterns (Hanson, 1958). In the tradition of ethnographic research, multiple data collection methods such as observational data, audio recordings, handwritten notes, and non-directive and directive ethnographic interview techniques (Holt 1997; Elliott, 1999) have been used. For analysis, we have tacked back and forth between the part and the whole, identifying emerging categories, and also examining existing categories derived from the literature review and our conceptual ideas, following the style of earlier researchers (e.g. Fournier and Mick 1999). The data has been iteratively analysed until it has reached the point of saturation, where new insights cease to emerge.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Participants: Couples were recruited through contacts established by means of one author's participation in the collecting world, and an overview of the couple dyads can be seen in Table 2. The sampling plan was purposeful (Thompson and Troester, 2002) in its aim of seeking couples at various stages of immersion in collecting and coupledom, rather than seeking a statistically representative sample. The couples were interviewed with the aim of exploring the nature of coupledom and its effects upon individual

TABLE 1
Effects & satisfactions

CATEGORY	EFFECTS & SATISFACTIONS
Social Relationships	Mutual satisfactions of common identity and common membership of the collecting world, within and outside the family.
Legitimizing Function	Satisfactions gained directly and indirectly through the transfer of meaning from the wider world to the individual collector; the need for approval and permission.
Material Culture	The satisfaction and security gained by the collector from “having things” and sharing living space with them.

TABLE 2
Overview of lifestage, occupation and collecting themes of each couple/dyad

Age profile of dyads	Male	Female
Dyad 1: mid-late 30s;	Carl: caretaker. Collects scout badges & scouting memorabilia	Dawn: main child carer; and part-time retail worker. Collects: juvenile character merchandise
Dyad 2: early 50s	Alec: self-employed draughtsman. Collects WW2 German militaria	Jane: an office manager. Collects: decorative chinaware
Dyad 3: late 50s	Barry: self-employed gardener. Collects: old picture postcards; lantern slides; Staffordshire figures	Lesley: part-time catering worker. Collects small decorative objects; pictures; textiles; Staffordshire figures
Dyad 4: mid 60s	Tom: retired schoolteacher. Collects: stamps; postmarks; postal history; minerals	Jill: retired schoolteacher. Collects chinaware; toy lorries; Russian enamels; minerals
Dyad 5: early 60s	Dave: accountant. Collects: postcards; local history; Viewmasters and slides; items connected to Venice and Cologne	Janet: schoolteacher. Collects: decorative items eg cats, ducks, penguins; Venice; Cologne; paperweights; picture postcards.
Dyad 6: late 50s, early 60s	Gerald: retired engineer. Collects pictures, prints and decorative items representing horses; military vehicles	Teresa: author Collects items connected to the 1940s eg clothing, menus, paperwork
Dyad 7: mid 40s	Richard: office manager. Collects football and cricket memorabilia	Jennifer: business manager. Collects vintage dolls
Dyad 8: late 50s, early 60s	Jack: ancillary service worker. Collects decorative ware and picture postcards	Sandra: schoolteacher. Collects decorative ware; and picture postcards

collectors as consumers. Their responses have been examined in relation to our conceptual ideas in order to provide further insights into the relationship between subjects, objects, and groups.

Interviews: The interviews lasted, on average, around two hours, and were conducted in dyads' homes. Pre-prepared or set questions were avoided in order to preserve the style of the ethnographic interviewing approach (Holt, 1997). However, some specific areas of interest were woven into the interviews, focusing discussion onto joint decisions about purchase, storage and display; the shared and separate meanings which surrounded their collection(s); and the expense represented by collecting. Direct and indirect but unscripted questions were used to probe these issues.

Couples were interviewed as dyads, and at intervals, as individuals, in their homes. Informal member checks (Wallendorf and Belk, 1989) were incorporated verbally during interviews, and return visits were made where appropriate.

FINDINGS

The meaning of collected possessions and collecting relationships for the dyads

Generating insights gained by focusing our study on the social world, on the need for legitimization and on material culture, we combine all of these to offer a deeper view of how collecting creates

meaningful life experiences for collectors. We also examine the social and personal collecting relationships that mediate the collecting urge.

Meanings aligned to social forces

Carl uses his collection to maintain the link with his former social world as a scout and scoutmaster, before family life created more demands on his time and his income. Collecting scouting memorabilia maintains his sense of belonging to the social world of the scout movement, despite no longer being active within it. Carl is very keen to show off his collection to anyone who takes an interest, but he feels despondent that few show any interest in it. Dawn, his wife has, for now, stopped collecting, but is still active in encouraging Carl to buy the objects that he is clearly desperate to buy. Indeed, she goes further by rationalizing the purchasing decision for him, as a sign of encouragement; otherwise, Carl is "worried sick" about spending money that he needs for the family. Stress caused by leisure activity can be high (Orthner And Mancini, 1990): Carl constantly battles with his collecting instincts, as they drive him to negotiate a path between caution in parting with money, and delight when faced with the chance to spend money on an object he desires. He thoroughly enjoys going to antique fairs, where he is likely to find something to add to his collection. But he will often actively decide to stay away from this social world in order to minimize the chance of seeing something to spend his money on: "You know, you're ripping yourself apart inside thinking 'I really like it but I can't really afford it', so if you don't go, you don't see".

Alec, as a collector of controversial militaria, is anxious to position himself as a serious connoisseur of historically accurate and rare items. He is aware of the tension between his interest in the German memorabilia and his display of that material in the family home. Alec gets pleasure from constructing "proper" and "tasteful" displays of historically accurate uniforms and weaponry, believing that this accuracy is vital to the integrity and credibility of his collections in the eyes of those who might see it. On the other hand, Jane, his wife, values most the items given to her by family, friends and ex-colleagues. To her, the sentimental value of objects—that represent past and present relationships—far outweighs any other aspect of her china collection. Whilst Alec can focus on quality of workmanship and the style aesthetic of the objects in his collection, Jane sees mainly the negative connotations that overwhelm any considerations of workmanship. Yet, Alec is also interested in the symbolism of the memorabilia of the objects, and its accurate curating, in the feminine style (Belk and Wallendorf, 1997). It seems that to co-exist with these things in the house, they have to be selective in the meanings that they ascribe to these items and the sacralizing (Belk et al, 1989) and demarcation of space in the home has to be negotiated (Joy et al, 1995). Jane says:

"There's no way I'd have a flag, open, with the swastika in the middle, in the house...no I wouldn't like that...I'm not...That's the only thing I don't like about it, I know the stuff's really nice and it's really well made, they were very industrious people and perfectionists...but that symbol to me means something horrible, whereas he can just bypass that and think of what the industrial side of it, the industrious side of it, and the attractiveness of it. But I can't get past that. I have trouble with it."

Barry's leisure activity is as a local history expert for the area where he was born and bred. He is invited to give talks to local societies, and expands his collection with a view to adding items that can be used for his talks. His purchasing is therefore driven, to some extent by his position in his social world, and the contribution

that collecting makes to his social capital. Lesley, his wife, actively supports Barry by accompanying him to his talks, and clearly gets pleasure from doing so. Barry worries for days if he thinks he has overspent on collectables, and Lesley has to encourage him to buy things for his collection: "I remember having to convince you about those lantern slides. I said to Barry 'Look there's about £200 left'. I said: 'Have that money'. He had all this sorting out to do and I was ill and everything. He would have regretted not having this." Lesley recalls another occasion: "We had a spell about 3 years ago. He was very quiet for about 4 days...He had spent some money and felt really bad"

A major worry for Tom is the prospect of losing the valuable postal history that he collects. He believes his collection to be historically important, and is worried at the possibility of it going up in flames, never to be recreated. This fear drives his social behavior. He prefers to think that his (or their) collection is of use to someone, so he and Jill have loaned it to a local museum so that it is actively used. Meanwhile, both Tom and Jill use their collections to give talks at the local collecting club, and get pleasure from this. As a couple with high cultural capital, they seek out diverse educational and informative experiences that allow them to achieve competence, acquire knowledge and express themselves creatively (Holt, 1998) through collectors' club memberships, but they have been disappointed by the competitive atmosphere of other clubs they have joined in the past.

A recurring theme for dyads such as Teresa and Gerald, Dave and Janet, and Barry and Lesley, is the encroaching tide of "things" taking over the household space and the pressing need to organize or dispose of hitherto treasured possessions that express shared and self-identity. Janet admits that the church-like atmosphere of parts of the house, created by the display of religious artifacts, was not to the liking of Dave or her daughters, and some items had to be packed away to make the house more homely.

Meanings aligned to the need for legitimization

The second set of interactions concern the role of group authentication, validation and approval of certain objects as being collectable i.e. those influences upon collectors that indicate that objects are worthy of collecting, and that he or she has permission to buy. Happy to trust his own judgement as an experienced collector, Carl is not worried about spending money buying something that is intrinsically poor: "it's only a thin, tinny-type rubbish really, in the sense of what it's made of, but it's lovely". He knows that even an item like this is well valued in the scouting collector circles. He sometimes wears one of his scout badges in the spirit of "Look at me!".

For Alec, the items he collects must be historically accurate; they must make up a "proper" display, as disparate bits and pieces do not add up, in his view, to a credible whole. He conducts historical research, using acknowledged sources, and targets expensive items from international auction houses. Tom and Jill have an agreement that they must have mutual permission before spending a significant amount of money on any object. This is perceived by Tom—who is the one most likely to spend large amounts—as a "regulator". He is quite prepared not to buy if Jill does not approve, and she makes her dislike of his stamp collection quite clear:

"He can't add to his stamps very much and I can't stand stamps. Remember he was paying £300 for a little stamp! Good God! It's only a bit of paper. It's not even pretty!"

But Jill is generally relaxed about Tom spending large sums of money on his postal history collection. She, on the other hand, delights in picking up unrecognized, cheap pieces of china on a

hunch. Tom is probably the collector who seems most concerned about investment, and he uses this to encourage Jill to spend, although she finds it difficult to spend a lot of money on collectables—it does not come easily to her.

Jill regularly seeks the approval of her expert friends—china dealers and collectors—who affirm and confirm her judgement in identifying obscure items. Whilst Tom asserts vehemently that he is not interested in the accolade of best collection in his field—*“it’s my own private collection and that’s it!”*, he does want his completed collections to be used and to be useful. He also likes his/their expertise to be recognized as such by experts, such as the university professors with whom he negotiated to secure a home for his and Jill’s collection of rocks or minerals, a collection now on permanent loan.

Carl seeks Dawn’s agreement to dropping in to visit antique fairs when they have a day out. On these occasions, Dawn often strongly urges Carl to buy an item if he sees something he likes, and she rationalizes the decision for him: he will never see it again; he will not be able to afford it if it comes up again; he can have it as a gift:

“She’d say ‘You’ve got to have it! You’ve got to have it’ and I’m saying ‘Hang on, hang on, we don’t know how much it is yet’ and you may go into this shop or pick it up off the stall, and it might have a price on. Then Dawn’ll say ‘Well you can have that for your birthday present this year and Christmas present next year, or.....’ and encourage me to try and have it, because she knows that I won’t spend money on.....£40 or £50 or £90 or £100, if I think my girls need a pair of socks, pair of shoes, a new coat, we’re going to take them out to the theatre, whatever. There’s a line got to be drawn and I have to draw it myself.”

Jennifer does not seek permission from Richard for any of her doll purchases, but she was nevertheless reluctant to say out loud the exact cost of her most expensive doll, and compromised by writing down the sum for the interviewer. Richard, meanwhile, spends only small sums that are too modest to require mutual consideration and which would be unlikely to harm family finances. A recurring theme between most of the couples, then, is the need to legitimize the expenditure incurred through collecting, either directly, through verbal agreement, or indirectly, through avoidance behavior of one sort or another.

Meanings aligned to material culture

This aspect concerns the relationship of individual collectors to their (usually man-made) objects—i.e. individual subject-to-object relationships. Carl gets “the buzz” from collecting objects and is “ripped apart” by the prospect of not being able to buy something he has seen. He tries not to leave a venue without buying something; he is scared of missing things if he does not go around an antique fair systematically, but acknowledges he would need to be a millionaire to buy it all. Commitment to family life heavily constrains Carl in terms of how much he may spend and how much time he can devote to collecting. He is constantly trading off his delight in the objects he wants to buy, the “buzz” he gets from them, and the dissonance he feels when tempted to spend beyond his means:

“It’s been wrapped up in a bag, and I’ve thought, ‘I haven’t got this badge and I’m over the moon’...someone else might say ‘How much? You must be mental!’ . But I’m happy, and I think ‘That’s my badge’ and you’re like proud to put it in your collection, one more off a list of million badges to buy.”

Whilst he has many prints and pictures on the wall, and badges in display cases, he has long sought a particular item: a metal bust of Baden Powell, founder of the Scout movement. This is an item to hold, as opposed to something he simply looks at. Dawn, whilst still deriving pleasure from her collections, has sold some objects to create space in their house.

Alec, like Tom, positions himself as a guardian of history; an expert collector who has to use premier auctions to source new items for his collection. Lesley and Barry, like Tom and Jill, already have some completed collections—for instance their collection of Staffordshire figures, which they recently completed when they found one particularly rare item, in good condition. Lesley now looks for small objects that will fit into their tiny cottage, or that can be hung on the wall. Barry’s slides pack up easily into boxes—he does not need to be able to see these, as display is achieved through his talks.

Tom’s worry about losing his collection through accident or misfortune is underpinned by his belief that these items are representational of history and of interest to the wider world. Although he likes to have the originals, he does not hesitate to allow his material to be photocopied—unlike many other collectors. Like Barry, Tom uses objects to recreate and to understand history, and this is a recurring theme in his conversations, as is the issue of how much he has paid for something, and its current market value. In fact, he uses the argument that as collectors, he and Jill are saving history whilst at the same time making an investment. Jill is not so relaxed about spending money on collecting, but happily supports Tom if convinced that he is buying good quality items for investment purposes, which implicitly minimises the downside risk.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Possessions, collecting relationships & conflict: interfaces

For most of the eight couples interviewed, the dominant mood is one of co-operation in creating joint, shared meanings from collecting. However, in situations where the concerns of two people appear to be incompatible (eg Tom and Jill, Alec and Jane), the final outcome may be a combination of each person’s assertiveness and co-operativeness and their conflict handling modes, which might range from competing, collaborating, compromising, and avoiding through to accommodating modes (Thomas, 1976).

Couples negotiate the issue of displaying controversial items by implicitly accepting the premise that consumption objects can be polysemic symbolic resources with multiple meanings (Holt 1997) that allow for significant variation in consumer interpretation and use. Normally, in gendered situations where family conflict must be resolved, it seems that the husband has the final say (Gentry et al, 2003) but in Alec and Jane’s case, Jane is exercising her power of veto regarding the display of Alec’s collection, due to the strength of feeling on her part. Tom and Jill also have very different notions of what is worth collecting and what is not, but they have collaborated to find integrative solutions on the matter of financial outlay as have Jane and Alec. Equally, Barry and Lesley seem to cope with their limited budget and shortage of house space by negotiating on a purchase-by-purchase basis, and there is a great sense of mutually accommodating behavior to resolve these problems.

Other couples use avoiding behavior: for instance Jennifer avoids discussing the cost of her purchases with Richard, and given their relative affluence, neither is willing to give or receive full information that might potentially spark off unnecessary conflict. Furthermore, many of the couples have reached agreement that shared consumption patterns need not involve consuming the same consumption objects, and that social meaning can be found in consumption/collecting *practices*, not necessarily in the consump-

tion/collection of *objects*. Carl uses avoiding behavior not in relation to his wife, Dawn, but in relationship to the objects that he desires, and he avoids seeing them in order to avoid being tempted to buy them. Dawn in turn simply accommodates Carl's collecting, despite having effectively stopped collecting herself, due to time and money pressures.

Few couples seem to be actively competing, although where there were common collecting themes shared within the dyad, there was a tendency for some husbands (eg Tom and Jack) to appropriate ownership of their wives' objects as part of their own collection. These transgressions were swiftly corrected by Jill and Sandra, their respective wives, with pointed comments such as "Whose collection?", an attempt on their part to reclaim their own cherished objects (Price, Arnold and Curasi, 2000), to establish limits to shared selves (Lastovicka and Fernandez, 2005) and perhaps also to discourage any possibility of their self-identity being appropriated, despite the verbal appropriation of the object by the husband. These mis-appropriations did not seem to happen when women talked about collecting, and in the cases above, occurred despite the fact that both Tom and Jack talked mainly of "our" collection. There seemed a greater tendency with some husbands for "ours" to become "mine".

In summary, our research supports the premise of Burch (1969) that leisure behavior is the product of both interactionist (relationship-based) and structural (social circles within communities) forces. These categories resonate with the social forces and the legitimization function expressed in our conceptualization and are clearly underpinned by the third element, material culture, and the subject-object relationships of collectors with their collections. Other frameworks also seem to fit our conceptualization of dyad consumption, as categorized below by Holt (1995)

- Consumption as play: using consumption objects as resources to interact with fellow consumers. This aligns with aspects of both material culture (objects collected for play) and the social world (the social interactions of collectors).
- Consumption as integration: integrating consumption objects into one's identity such that they become self-extensions. This aligns with subject-object relationships within material culture; also the social world whereby consumers employ product symbolism to define social reality and to ensure that behaviors appropriate to that reality will ensue (Solomon, 1983).
- Consumption as experience: objects are embedded in the social world, which imparts to consumers a shared definition of reality by structuring perceptions of "the way things are in that world". This aligns with our view of a legitimizing function that operates via the macro-level shared meanings that occur within the culturally constituted world (McCracken, 1981).
- Consumption as classification: engaging in actions that enhance one's sense of affiliation eg (Holt, 1995). This aligns with our findings on how the dyads engage with their social worlds and their engagement with , for instance, collecting clubs and societies, auctions, social events and public talks.

So, our conceptualization can be aligned to the literature in a way that enhances, in an original way, our understanding of collecting and collectors. We have used this approach to explore three different forces that influence the social world of collectors, their judgments about their collecting practice, and their role in shaping and filtering the rituals of purchasing and possession, as well as the various effects and satisfactions created. We have been intent upon

capturing and encompassing the whole "collecting experience", and examining the impact of the family and social influences upon the collector, and the impact of the collector on the dyad. The next stage of our search for knowledge and understanding of collectors will focus more closely on attitudes to conflict and the way it might be handled and the further consideration of how behaviors are deployed by collectors, within dyads and in social settings. These lines of enquiry are consistent with growing wider interest in how the family contextualizes and shapes consumption behaviors.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

New Perspectives on Compulsive Buying: Its Roots, Measurement and Physiology

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SESSION OVERVIEW

Compulsive buying and other dysfunctional consumption behaviors have attracted substantial attention of consumer and other researchers in recent years. However, most research to date remains descriptive, and many theoretical, substantive and methodological issues remain unresolved.

The first paper provides a theoretical framework, specifically escape theory, to explain why people engage in a self-destructive behavior, such as compulsive buying. Escape theory maintains that for some people, self-awareness can be very painful. Usually, these people have self-expectations that are so high they are unable to fulfill them. To block-out the painful self-awareness, these people become totally absorbed in a task, such as buying, without considering long-range consequences. The paper suggests that compulsive buying can be explained as a manifestation of escape theory.

Using the theoretical foundations of compulsive buying, obsessive-compulsive disorder and impulse-control disorder, the second paper addresses a development of a scale that is geared toward measuring excessive buying of those consumers who overspend, but are not pathologically ill. Excessive buyers are defined as those who are preoccupied with buying, but who are, at times, able to resist the urge to do so. Pathological buyers, on the other hand are completely unable to control their urges to buy. Using two studies, the authors show the scale is both reliable and valid. Moreover, by developing a scale to measure excessive buying as a construct containing elements of both obsessive-compulsive and impulse-control disorders, an important methodological contribution is made to the literature.

The final paper takes a broader look at dysfunctional/destructive consumption behaviors in general, of which compulsive buying is one example. The author provides a biogenetics perspective to explain why consumers engage in compulsive/addictive/impulsive and novelty seeking behaviors. Specific portions of human brain, and ultimately the human genetic endowment appear to be responsible for the tendency towards such behaviors. The paper further discusses implications for public policy and treatment programs.

While the first two papers provide new theoretical and methodological perspectives on compulsive and excessive buying behavior specifically, the third paper places compulsive buying in a larger setting of other destructive consumption behaviors and provides a biogenetics explanation for why such behaviors occur. As a set, the three papers importantly advance knowledge on what compulsive buying is, what its causal roots are, and how to measure it. While compulsive buying and other dysfunctional consumption behaviors are important consumer behaviors, they have been investigated predominantly in the psychological and psychiatric journals, and only sporadically in the consumer research literature.

Dr. April Lane Benson (author of the widely acclaimed book *I Shop, Therefore I am: Compulsive Buying and the Search for Self*; in clinical practice for 25 years and developer of a program called Stopping Overshopping) served as a discussant of the session and offered the perspective of a clinician who has worked extensively with patients whose lives are negatively affected by compulsive buying disorder.

EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

“A Theoretical Account for Compulsive Buying: An Application of Escape Theory”

Ronald J. Faber

The past 20 years has witnessed a huge growth in research on compulsive buying. However, most of this research has remained at a descriptive stage identifying variables that are related to compulsive buying, patterns of behavior, and related disorders. Factors linked to compulsive buying have included: 1) psychological factors such as low self esteem, depression, anxiety, and perfectionism; 2) biological ones reflected in the impact of drug therapies and neurotransmission, linkages to arousal, and personal and family histories of compulsive buying and related disorders; and 3) cultural ones such as gender roles, early childhood experiences and changing social norms and feeling of alienation.

One explanation for compulsive buying is that it serves as a form of mood manipulation for people who experience negative feelings (Faber and Christenson 1996). Research in psychology, communication and consumer behavior has found that people will engage in specific behaviors as a means to change undesirable mood states or to prolong more desirable ones. Studies of compulsive buyers have found that they are particularly prone to engage in this behavior when they are in negative mood states and their description of episodes of compulsive buying suggests that they experience these episodes in positive and arousing terms. Additionally, the compulsive buyers were far more likely to report that their mood states moved in a positive direction as a result of shopping than did the matched general consumers. Thus, compulsive buyers may engage in buying as a way to manage their mood states.

Jacobs (1989) proposed that there are two important components that make people susceptible to addictive or excessive behaviors. One is their ability to alter negative affective states and the second is their ability to change physiological arousal levels. He suggests that some people have a physiological resting state that they find aversive. To overcome this, they seek behaviors that can heighten or reduce their arousal level and they run the risk of becoming addicted to such activities or substances.

While both of these accounts for compulsive buying suggest what benefits the behavior may provide, they don't fully address the fact that compulsive buying, by definition, leads to extreme negative consequences. For example, compulsive buying has been referred to as causing “excessive and inappropriate impairment in one or more life domains” (Black 2000), and marked distress that “interferes with social or occupational functioning” (Goldsmith and McElroy 2000). However, the literature on self-defeating behaviors has suggested that people are not prone to harming themselves (Baumeister and Scher 1988). Instead, such behaviors result from poor strategy choices that don't work as intended, or from a conscious decision to engage in a negative behavior to avoid even more painful losses. This latter explanation has led to escape theory, which has been used to explain behaviors such as eating disorders and suicide. It is proposed here that escape theory may also provide the best theoretical account for why compulsive buyers engage in this destructive behavior.

Escape theory maintains that for some people, self-awareness can be very painful. Typically, these people have exceptionally high standards or expectations that they are unable to meet, leading to a sense of failure, low self-esteem, anxiety and depression. When these feelings become too extreme, they seek ways to block out this painful self-awareness, at least for a little while. The way people accomplish this is by becoming completely absorbed in an immediate, concrete, low-level task. By focusing on this activity and the sights, sounds and other sensations within this limited environment, they are able to block out the painful sense of self. Two additional consequences of the cognitive narrowing is that during this period: 1) consideration of long range consequences of an action are not considered; and 2) the implausibility of fanciful thoughts is not recognized, giving way to non-critical and irrational beliefs and magical thinking.

This paper shows how each of these characteristics of escape theory is present in accounts of compulsive buying. It shows that: 1) compulsive buyers experience negative and painful self-awareness; 2) compulsive buyers tend to be perfectionist and hold themselves to impossibly high standards; 3) perceived failure and negative self feelings trigger compulsive buying episodes; 4) a high level of absorption and cognitive narrowing characterize these episodes; 5) during these episodes, compulsive buyers engage in fanciful and magical thinking; and 6) compulsive buyers block out long range consequences when engaged in compulsive buying. Thus, it is suggested that compulsive buying can best be explained as a manifestation of escape theory.

“The Development and Validation of a Scale to Measure Excessive Buying”

Nancy M. Ridgway, Monika Kukar-Kinney, Kent B. Monroe

In recent years, hundreds of popular press articles, books, and websites have been devoted to the problems experienced by compulsive buyers (e.g., Adams 2003; Benson 2000; Chaker 2003; Ethridge 2002, etc.). Researchers traditionally have used the term “compulsive buying” to describe the dysfunctional, maladaptive, or abnormal consumptive behaviors exhibited by a small number of pathologically ill consumers who are unable to control the overpowering impulse or urge to buy.

While a relatively small percentage of the general population may qualify as pathological compulsive buyers, in that they cannot resist the urge to buy and that their buying behavior results in unmanageable financial debt, it is our belief that more consumers are affected by what we term “excessive buying”. In comparison with pathological compulsive buyers, excessive buyers may not continuously experience an uncontrollable urge to buy. However, they may occasionally or often exhibit tendencies for buying too much and too frequently. A second key difference between excessive and compulsive buying is that it is not necessary that excessive spending results in harm (particularly financial) to the consumer (Faber and O’Guinn 1992; Hassay and Smith 1996). In many respects, excessive buying is similar to compulsive buying; however, it covers a broader set of consumers. Indeed, the popular press articles alluded to above seem to be more about excessive buying than the pathology of compulsive buying (Chaker 2003; Hoffman 2000; Kelly 1999).

Using the theoretical foundations of compulsive buying, obsessive-compulsive disorder, impulse-control disorder and obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorder, we developed a scale to measure excessive buying. To develop and validate the scale, two studies were conducted. The first study, using 352 undergraduate students as a sample, was used to narrow down the potential set of scale items to the final twelve by conducting first exploratory, followed by confirmatory factor analysis. The final scale consists of

four dimensions/factors (obsessive-compulsive preoccupation with buying; impulse-control buying; positive feelings associated with buying; negative feelings leading to buying). Each dimension is measured with three items.

The second study, in which a sample of 555 university staff members participated, was conducted to validate the scale. This sample was more heterogeneous in terms of age and education, and less heterogeneous in terms of gender (93 percent women); and, hence, more relevant to the study of excessive and compulsive buying behavior, which has previously been found to plague women more than men (e.g., Black 2001; d’Astous 1990).

Confirmatory factor analysis results show that the four factor model with underlying second-order factor fits the data well (the best in comparison with other alternative models). The scale is also reliable ($\alpha = .91$ and $.90$ in studies 1 and 2, respectively). Discriminant and nomological validity were evaluated by correlating the excessive buying scale with other constructs, for example obsessive-compulsive disorder (to evaluate discriminant validity), materialism, self-esteem, stress, frequency of returning items and hiding behavior. The scale correlates with all these constructs in the theoretically-predicted manner, thus displaying nomological validity. Moreover, non-response and response biases were also evaluated. Finally, directions for future research on excessive buying were discussed.

“Biogenetics, Addiction and Novelty Seeking: A Review of Recent Research”

Elizabeth C. Hirschman

Both addictive/compulsive behaviors and novelty/stimulation-seeking behaviors have been subjected to scrutiny by consumer researchers over the past three decades (Faber, Christensen, de Zwaan and Mitchell 1995, Hirschman 1981, 1992, O’Guinn and Faber 1989, Raju 1980, Rook 1987, Rook and Fisher 1995). A review of the biogenetics literature from the 1990’s found significant linkages between neurological features, such as genetic mutations and dopaminergic signaling and these two consumption behaviors. Indeed the empirical findings suggest that addictive/compulsive tendencies and novelty seeking are closely related at the biogenetic level (Hirschman and Stern 2001).

The present paper extends this line of inquiry by reviewing the biogenetics literature pertaining to addiction and novelty seeking over the past five years (i.e., 2000-2005). Previous work showed that two genetic mutations in the dopamine receptor alleles DRD4 and DRD2 were identified. These mutations caused fewer than normal receptor sites to be present in the brain. To compensate, the consumer possessing these mutations may engage in novelty seeking, self-medication, be more likely to suffer from ADHD, have eating disorders and heightened impulsivity. Several new and highly significant findings have emerged which describe in detail the neuronal reward pathways characterizing both addictive and novelty seeking tendencies. Perhaps most profoundly, these have now been traced back to at least one evolutionary genetic mutation which was likely central to several positive expressions of human innovativeness, for example the development of agriculture and migratory/exploratory tendencies leading to the discovery of new continents and the spread of the human species.

As a result of more advanced brain imaging technologies and more detailed genetic coding studies, several significant advances have been made. Comings and Blum (2000) note that the two critical areas for understanding both addictive and stimulation seeking behaviors lie in the dopaminergic and opiodergic pathways of the brain “both of which are critical for {human} survival, since they provide the pleasure drives for eating, love, and reproduction” (“Reward Deficiency Syndrome”). In their view, the genetic muta-

tions which lead to above average levels of reward-seeking (the reward deficiency syndrome), constitute behavioral disorders due to their linkage to self-destructive consumption activities, such as gambling, compulsive purchasing and alcoholism.

By 2002, research had implicated a specific polymorphism within the mu-opioid receptor gene (the G variant of the +118A allele) as a precursor to generalized substance abuse (Schinka et al. 2002). In fact, 95% of the study's participants who were multiple substance abusers carried this genetic mutation. Experientially, persons carrying this version of the gene will have enhanced feelings of pleasure, stimulation and euphoria when consuming substances, such as alcohol, nicotine, heroin and cocaine, which are the result of higher blood levels of beta endorphin and higher stimulation of neural dopamine receptors. This creates a learned response of reinforcement and motivation to seek out additional stimulation.

This stimulation seeking behavior appears linked, as well, to genetic preferences for sweet tastes and novelty seeking, as measured by Cloninger's TPQ Novelty Seeking scale, according to Kompov-Polevoy et al. (2004). Research (Johanssen and Hansen 2001) also demonstrated that Cloninger's TPQ trait of lower-than-average Harm Avoidance, often found to characterize persons engaging in extreme sports, was also linked to Type 2 alcoholism.

Schultz (2001) offers an alternative paradigm for viewing these same characteristics: "{dopamine} systems appear to be crucially involved in the use of reward information for learning and maintaining approach and consummatory behavior (p. 293)...." Rewards are events or objects that make subjects "come back for more" and have three basic functions—they elicit approach and consummatory behavior and serve as goals of voluntary behavior, they have positive reinforcing effects, and they induce subjective feelings of pleasure (hedonia) and positive emotional states (p. 293)".

In other words, persons with higher than average reward-seeking behavior, which may lead to dysfunctional consequences, such as addiction, compulsive purchasing, and inattention in school (ADHD) due to genetic characteristics, represent an 'extreme' or 'enhanced' version of normal, human behavior. They are not radically different than most people, they just want more than most people—more stimulation, more excitement, more novelty, more pleasure, more activity and so forth. Sometimes their quest for more will bring positive results to themselves and others; sometimes the results will be negative.

Ding et al. (2001) brings us back to the DRD4 dopamine receptor 7-repeat allele, one of the first mutations linked to compulsive shopping and other impulse-control disorders. Using advanced SNP DNA haplotype testing, these researchers learned that this receptor is an ancient mutation and speaks to the idea that having humans from those with and without this mutation make for a more balanced society. These theories were tied to the DRD4-7-repeat mutation and both the positive and negative impacts it has on human existence.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Consumption in Soap Operas from Brazil, New Zealand, and the U.S.: Production, Products, and Process

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SESSION OVERVIEW

This session examined the influence on consumers of consumption imagery and cultural reality depicted in soap operas from Brazil, New Zealand, and the United States. The papers presented studies of products placed in television soaps in selected countries where the vehicle and/or the audience have not been sufficiently well studied. The rationale is that knowledge of the entertainment-education value of soaps in context contributes both to better understanding of consumers as well as to ways that placed products impact their lives (Kennedy et al. 2004; Singhal and Rogers 1999). Insofar as soaps produced and consumed in each culture have important but not fully researched differences, the session provided insight into consumption scenarios and consumer interpretations.

The importance of soaps lies in their ubiquity across the globe: soaps are not only produced in or exported to most countries in the world, but also are the media vehicles of choice of a majority of viewing audiences wherever they are aired (Allen 1995). However, despite the omnipresence and popularity of soaps as a vehicle for spreading consumption ideology, the genre is not uniform from country to country. Rather, each country's soap negotiates reality through the lens of the particular culture where it is produced and consumed, for the vehicle is shaped to conform to the local context with messages crafted to appeal to a local audience. That is, soaps are responsive to a wide variety of local institutions and social requirements (Allen 1995).

But notwithstanding the particularized social context, soaps do have one common feature—product placements in consumption scenarios. Placements reflect the economic realities of production, the society in which characters and consumers live, and the nature of the products shown. Depictions of consumption influence audience reception via the characters, who serve as aspirational figures, role models, and agents of socialization, revealing themselves by means of the products they use, the usage context, and the usage outcomes.

General Orientation

The three papers in this session all focused on soap operas and placed products, but relied on different methodologies and studied different cultures. Pervan and Martin's paper documents the consumption messages and ideology in soaps in a U.S.-New Zealand content analysis; La Pastina's paper relies on ethnographic data to discuss issues of reception and interpretation of a telenovela in rural Brazil; and the Russell and Stern paper uses a cross-sectional survey to test a model of the influence of soaps on U.S. viewers.

Simon Pervan and Brett Martin's "Soap Operas in New Zealand and the U.S.: Product Placement Strategy and Consumption Imagery" is a comparison of products found in the New Zealand soap *Shortland Street* (SS) and in the U.S. soap *The Young and the Restless* (YR). Each country's vehicle displays the relationship between the country-of-origin identity and culture, including the production factors that influence differences in the serial dramas. The study provides insight into the consumption habits of viewing audiences in both countries, for despite a high level of product placements, differences in the types of products and emotional outcomes of product use between the two countries were found.

Antonio La Pastina's "Product Placement in Brazilian Telenovelas: Selling Soaps and Social Causes" is a study of audience reception of telenovelas in Brazil, and uses ethnographic participant-observation to analyze soap opera consumption in a rural area. The telenovela production industry is financed in part by revenues from product placements, and even though the interweaving of cultural and economic issues is pervasive, interpretation in rural communities differs from that in a city. The reason is that rural communities such as the one in this study are not only distant from urban production centers, but are also poor agricultural areas with dormant economies. Factors that influence interpretation are multi-generational group viewing, daily discussions in the village square, and low exposure to sources of outside news. The focus is on the "limits and appropriations" of interpretation, and the study presents findings about the reception of placed products that highlight issues of interpretation and appropriation of the consumption ideology as springboards for viewers' discussion of political and gendered life in their communities.

Cristel Russell and Barbara Stern's "Aspirational Consumption in U.S. Soap Operas: The Process of Parasocial Attachment to Soap Characters" is a study of the influence of television soap characters on viewers' aspirational consumption and behavioral modeling. It uses real-time survey data to analyze U.S. viewers' parasocial attachment to soap characters. Unlike soap operas in Brazil or New Zealand, U.S. soaps go on for decades and allow viewers to form extended relationships with characters who become familiar over a long period of time. The characters are depicted in realistic consumption scenarios, surrounded by familiar consumer products such as homes, clothing, food, beverages, and cars. The paper proposes a model in which viewers' parasocial attachment to the characters shape attitudes towards the characters that ultimately influence their own consumption desires. The study presents findings about the direct and mediated effects of parasocial attachment on viewers' consumption behavior in five product categories.

The discussion was orchestrated by Marilyn Lavin, whose research has traced the history of the soap opera genre since its emergence on the radio in the 1930's (Lavin 1995). She tied her own academic and personal experience of soaps to the three presentations and engaged the audience in further consideration of the issue of the relationship of consumption ideology and culture in global soap operas.

Important Substantive Issue in Consumer Research

Perhaps the main contribution of the session was heightened awareness of the world-wide scope and significance of soaps—like advertisements, they both reflect and affect cultural precepts, but unlike advertisements, they do so more subtly via product placements. Attention to between-country differences in what is only ostensibly the same genre opens up consideration of issues of production, viewing modes, materialism, and social responsibility.

In addition, understanding the consumption imagery in general enables a better assessment of both the relevance of product placement and the consumption habits of the viewing audiences, and an important substantive issue is the nature and valence of soaps' influence on consumers. Equally important is the issue of the

industry's responsibility to consumers beyond mere entertainment. In the U.S., the industry is untrammelled by the need for government funding, and thus not obligated to engage with social welfare issues, unlike the industries in Brazil and New Zealand, which depend on such funding. The result is an exclusion of these issues—soaps ignore the outer world—and a celebration of materialism in the characters' world that represents the neglect of an opportunity for positive influence that has.

“Soap Operas in New Zealand and the U.S.: Product Placement Strategy and Consumption Imagery”

Simon J. Pervan and Brett A. S. Martin

The imagery of consumption, as represented on a daily basis in a range of media channels, plays an important role in the way consumers develop and apply meaning to their consumption habits (Hirschman 1988; Englis et al. 1993). In broadcast media, the development of the soap opera has been regarded as a major contributor to the rise of mass consumption (Lavin 1995; Miller 1995) as well as one of the most successful advertising vehicles ever used (Allen 1995).

Given the impact of soap operas on our economy and our society, it is somewhat surprising that there has been relatively little attention paid to them in the marketing literature. Much of the research is in the form of sociological critiques (see for example Harrington and Bielby 1995; Riegel 1996; Barker 1998) or magazine and newspaper articles. In marketing, Hirschman (1988) has conducted an analysis of the ideology of consumption, and Lavin (1995) provided an historical review of the success of the early radio soap operas. However, questions remain about the importance of this television genre to marketers and consumers such as: What types of products are being consumed? How are they being consumed? In what light does the consumption episode portray the product?

This study examines the types of products as well as the context and emotional outcomes of consumption imagery in soap operas in two countries, the U.S. and New Zealand. The importance of the U.S. industry is self evident. Over \$500 million per year is earned from international sales by each of the transnational giants Warner Brother, Paramount, and Universal, making the U.S. soap opera industry alone a billion dollar entity (Ortiz de Urbina and Lopez 1999). Our decision to study soaps in New Zealand follows the remarkable success of a locally produced soap opera (Shortland Street). Based on life around a private medical clinic, the show attracts around 25% of the three million population every day, and has been syndicated around the world, including the UK, South Africa, Ireland, and Australia (Television New Zealand, 2000). Our research interests centered on both the cross cultural differences of consumption imagery and a test of the assumption, noted in the sociology literature that the influence of soaps is limited to the effects of “Americanization” on local culture (Miller 1995).

Content analysis was used to provide evidence of product categories and brands, product use, and the emotional outcome of product use. The highest rated soap operas were chosen from each country: The Young and the Restless (Y&R) in the U.S. and Shortland Street (SS) in New Zealand. Y&R has been the top rated daytime television show in the U.S. for over 11 years (Schlosser, 1999), and Shortland Street, now in its eighth year in New Zealand, has consistently outrated all other drama programs, soap opera or otherwise, on television (Television New Zealand 2000). Both shows have daytime schedules, with Shortland Street aired twice due to its popularity, plus an additional early evening schedule. Furthermore, both shows are typical of the soap genre, with serial narratives (Allen 1995) and a primary focus on issues relating to sex

and social life within a family (Cantor and Pingree 1983). Finally, each attracts a similar target group, key amongst which are 18-49 year old females.

Findings indicated that American soap operas tended to display more consumption imagery in relation to leisure and appearance-related items, whereas New Zealand soap operas included products for transport or food. There were also differences in the emotional outcomes of product consumption, with the New Zealand soap opera yielding more positive emotional consequences, particularly for products such as alcohol and cars, and the U.S. more negative consequences for products such as phones. The analyses also found support for soaps as a rich context of brand placements, with almost half of all episodes (46%) containing actual brand references, with higher levels in New Zealand (70%) than in the U.S. (26%). These findings provide a basis for discussing the processes of reception and interpretation described in the La Pastina presentation and the process of referential influence driven by the soap characters addressed in the Russell and Stern presentation.

“Product Placement in Brazilian Telenovelas: Selling Soaps and Social Causes”

Antonio C. La Pastina

Telenovelas are melodramatic narratives with roots in the early U.S. soaps, the Cuban radio and TV melodramas, and the French feuilleton. Since the late 1960s they have evolved into a more socially tuned narrative with contemporary themes, becoming on occasion a commentary on political debates in the nation. Unlike the U.S. counterpart, they are aired on prime time, traditionally attracting the highest audiences in the country among men and women. Globo network, the largest in the nation and the fourth worldwide, has dominated the market in the last twenty years.

Production in Brazil is partially subsidized by government funding, but product placement is the main source of funding, providing an extra source of income as well as a means of circumventing the government-imposed limit of 15 minutes of commercials per hour (La Pastina 2001). However, government funding has encouraged telenovela producers to go beyond commercial product placements and develop social merchandising strategies that include social and educational messages. In the mid-1990s, the strategy began to receive attention by Globo, writers, producers, non-governmental groups, and the news media as a viable means of promoting social change (Apolinario 1996; Guerini 1996; Firme 1994). Unlike commercial product placements, early social issue insertions were generally based on the writers' personal agenda.

Both commercial and social messages in Latin American telenovelas reach a more diverse audience than soaps do in the U.S., for in Brazil they are broadcast on prime-time television and are designed to attract a wide viewing audience of men, women, and children (Lopez 1991 p. 600). Further, plots are finite in that the programs “have very definitive endings that permit narrative closure” after 180 to 200 episodes, unlike U.S. soaps, which can go on for generations. Plots center on class conflict and the promotion of social mobility (Mazziotti 1992), with a few central characters engaged not only in relationships with each other but also in activities relevant to political, cultural, and economic issues.

This presentation reported findings from a year-long ethnographic study of soap viewers in a small rural community in the backlands of northeast Brazil. The community of roughly 2,000 inhabitants is in one of Brazil's smallest and poorest states, an area where the unpredictability of rainfall and soil exhaustion have created a culture of migration and religious devotion. Leisure options are few, and television and its main entertainment programs, the telenovelas, maintain a hold on community members'

attention. The presentation discussed the way that rural viewers appropriate telenovelas in their daily lives and assign meanings to the texts according to their own values and beliefs about gender roles, relationships, and sexuality. The geographical isolation and the local patriarchal culture mediate the process of reception, interpretation, and appropriation of telenovelas. The isolation of the community in relation to the urban characters and settings in the telenovela narratives intensify the perceived gap between the local patriarchal culture and the urban reality constructed in the telenovela text.

Findings suggest that product placements within telenovelas are not necessarily read as direct product promotion or advertising, but instead are perceived as an inherent element of the genre: the glamour of upper-class urbanites. Evidence also exists that the relationship between viewers and product placement is dynamic in that different viewers not only address the same text with different subjectivities, but also within contextual structures that enable or constrain that text-reader relationship. The role of telenovelas in promoting a vicarious participation in the modern world (Leal, 1986) cannot be overlooked: the desire to learn about fashion, lifestyle trends, and behavior is intrinsically associated with telenovelas, fueling knowledge of consumer goods and lifestyles. Nevertheless, local isolation and limited de facto access to consumer goods and purchasing power remain a hindrance to more complete participation in a global consumer culture. Technological changes may bring greater access and awareness of global consumer culture, but, as this study demonstrates, the cultural capital available to viewers remains a central element in the process of media interpretation.

“Aspirational Consumption in U.S. Soap Operas: The Process of Parasocial Attachment to Television Soap Characters”

Cristel Antonia Russell and Barbara Stern

This paper focuses on U.S. soap operas and consumers to test a model of the influence of soap characters on viewers' consumption attitudes and behaviors. As the first presentations indicated, soap operas convey information about product symbolism, the way that people live, and the representation of consumption practices and ideologies (Larson 1996; Hirschman 1988; Hirschman and Thompson 1997). This presentation proposed that soap opera characters to whom consumers feel parasocially attached trigger a behavioral modeling process channeled through viewers' consumption attitudes and behaviors. The model draws from literary theory to explain the romance attributes of soaps that foster emotional attachment and from social learning and persuasion theory to shed light on parasocial-referential responses. In this way, the model reflects the link between characteristic U.S. stimulus attributes (soap genre) and psychological and behavioral influence through parasocial interaction.

Unlike its Latin American counterpart, U.S. soap structure is completely open: first, the series can go on indefinitely, for it has neither a beginning nor an end, consisting only of an evolving middle; and second, each episode replicates the series structure, also having neither a beginning nor an end, but characterized by a suspenseful stopping point. The lack of closure sustains serial longevity, which ensures viewers' long-term daily participation in the soap characters' lives. The regularity and suspenseful nature of soaps contribute to viewers' perception that characters exceed their textual existence and live in real-time, just as viewers do (Fiske 1987), thereby promoting the development and maintenance of viewers' relationships with characters. Both structural longevity and long-term viewing require sustained viewer interest in the

intense and complex lives typical of the large cast of characters.

The focus of U.S. soaps is on complicated sexual relationships. The relationship orientation is considered the locus of soaps' appeal to women, long the target audience, for whom the fictions serve as fantasies about rich emotional and sexual lives in which men (as well as women) are always eager to talk about their feelings (Herzog 1941, Lavin 1995). As viewers become actively vested in the characters whose lives they closely follow and care about, they become parasocial attached to them as if they were real people (Levy 1962). Parasocial attachment affects the degree to which soap characters serve as meaningful referent others, socialization agents, and sources of influence (Russell, Norman and Heckler 2004). They become behavioral models who can influence viewers' attitudes and behaviors (Churchill and Moschis 1979).

Even though soap characters' emotional lives may seem the stuff of fantasy to most viewers, their consumption surroundings include familiar items that are likely to stimulate a more attainable mechanism of modeling. As Pervan and Martin pointed out, content analyses of U.S. soap operas have shown that they are ridden with cues about the characters' consumption. We propose that parasocial relationships that viewers develop with soap characters over years of viewing help shape their attitudes toward consumption and, in turn, their own consumption behavior. This model of influence keeps with a long tradition of social learning and behavioral modeling theories that explain the processes of real-life influence received from highly-valued reinforcing agents (Bandura 1971, 1976; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975).

Our model was tested in a cross-sectional survey of female viewers of four of the longest lasting U.S. soap operas (Young and Restless, General Hospital, All My Children and Days of Our Lives). On average, respondents had watched the soaps for over 20 years, and had watched over 5,000 episodes. The research instrument addressed the respondent's history with and attitude towards the program in general; it then measured attitude toward and levels of parasocial attachment to two characters of the respondent's choice, one male and one female; finally, respondents were asked to comment and rate different aspects of each character's consumption, with measures of attitude toward and the consumer's own behavior across five product categories. Survey data were analyzed using structural equations modeling to test the hypothesized relationships about the direct and mediated effects of parasocial attachment on viewers' attitudes and behavior.

We find that the level of parasocial attachment to both male and female soap characters affects viewers' own consumption behaviors. Consistent with theories of social learning and behavioral modeling, the process of influence through parasocial attachment on viewers' behaviors is both direct and indirect, via its effects on viewers' attitudes such that fictional characters have the power to influence real-life attitudes and subsequent behavioral modeling.

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Discount Rates for Time Versus Dates: The Sensitivity of Discounting to Time-Interval Description

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumers must often consider tradeoffs between future and present dollars, as when they decide to forego immediate consumption to save for a long-term goal, such as college tuition or retirement. A long research tradition has examined such intertemporal choices, with much attention focusing on the phenomenon of positive *temporal discounting*: people perceive money available in the future as worth somewhat less than an equivalent amount in the present. Over the years, research on consumer discounting has played a vital role in attempts to model and predict intertemporal decisions (see Loewenstein, Read, and Baumeister 2003, for review).

This paper identifies a new consideration that substantially affects temporal discounting. The current experiments examine how discounting is impacted by whether time intervals are described in terms of temporal extent (e.g., number of months) or in terms of boundaries (e.g., dates). Specifically, future *dates* may seem like relatively abstract points in time; interval length may not loom large when dates are considered. In contrast, when extents are considered, the amount of time in an interval is, by definition, highlighted, and attention is called explicitly to interval length. Such attention to the sheer length of intervals may in turn make those intervals seem longer. Thus, consumers may find future dollars to appear exceptionally distant (and thus to deserve more discounting) when extent-based descriptors are used, compared to when date-based descriptors are used.

In experiment 1, participants ($N=356$) were asked to imagine choosing between a prize of specified value now and a prize of unspecified greater value after a given time interval had passed. Participants were asked to state the future prize value that would render waiting the time interval (and foregoing the immediate prize) worthwhile. The time intervals were either described by extent (e.g., "in eight months") or date (e.g., "on October 15th," a date exactly eight months in the future). Across four such scenarios, reliably greater future prizes were requested with extent than with date descriptions. In other words, participants demanded more compensation to endure a delay (i.e., they discounted future dollars to a greater degree) when the delay was described by the amount of time to be waited than when it was described by the wait's endpoint.

Experiment 2's task had a similar structure, but in experiment 2, the dollar amounts of the immediate and future prizes were fixed, and participants ($N=253$) were required to specify (either with extent or date) the time interval that would make them indifferent between receiving the smaller prize immediately and the larger prize after the interval passed. Across three such scenarios, those specifying extents were not willing to wait as long as those specifying dates. This supports the idea that discount rates are higher (i.e., impatience increases) when future intervals are thought of in terms of lengths instead of boundaries.

Experiment 3 investigated whether these effects are strong enough to even affect choices between pre-defined alternatives. Participants ($N=133$) considered six investments that each had two options: a smaller, shorter-term payoff, and a larger, longer-term payoff. The times until the payoffs were either described by dates or by extents of time, and for each investment, participants were asked to select the payoff they preferred. For each investment, participants were reliably less likely to select the long-term payoff when time was described by extent than when it was described by

date. Participants thus again behaved reliably more impatiently when extent, instead of date, descriptors were used, indicating that increased discounting under extent descriptors manifests even when participants are asked to choose between discrete options.

Experiment 4 examined whether similar effects arise when consumers consider future losses. Participants ($N=81$) each read three scenarios that gave them an opportunity to defer a debt (e.g., a tax bill) for a fixed interval. The interval was either described by an extent of time or by the date on which the deferral would end. Participants indicated the total amount they would be willing to pay post-deferral to avoid paying anything immediately. Across the three scenarios, those in the extent condition were willing to pay reliably more to defer their debts than were their date-condition counterparts. As in the previous studies, participants seem to have discounted future dollars (here, future *debts*) to a greater degree when time was described by extent.

Experiment 5 investigated a potential reason for this finding: although objective interval length does not change when interval description is manipulated, *perceptions* of interval length may be affected by such manipulations. By explicitly mentioning an amount of time, an extent description might render more vivid the upcoming delay, making the interval itself seem rather long. Thus, in experiment 5, participants ($N=132$) each considered three time intervals, described either by extent or date. Participants were asked to rate the perceived length of each interval on a seven-point scale ranging from "seems very short" to "seems very long." Indeed, participants facing extent-based intervals reported that the intervals seemed reliably longer than did those facing equivalent date-based intervals.

Discount rates are apparently sensitive enough to fluctuate with slight changes in time-interval description. Across multiple domains and despite disparate elicitation procedures, consumers consistently exhibited more discounting when time intervals were described with extents instead of dates, perhaps because under the former description, the distance to future transactions actually seems longer. The current results have obvious implications for consumer decisions involving intertemporal tradeoffs (such as investment decisions), and these results join years of research showing consumer discount rates to be more unstable, and intertemporal choice to be relatively less orderly, than early normative models posited (e.g., Samuelson 1937). Notably, the current work highlights the fact that even when all conceivable objective factors in the decision situation are fixed, discount rates remain quite malleable and sensitive to ostensibly irrelevant nuances generated by descriptions.

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Balancing Giving-Up Vs. Taking-In: Does the Pattern of Payments and Benefits Matter to Customers in a Financing Decision Context?

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ABSTRACT

Despite the relevance of mental accounting as a framework in addressing consumer behavior decision making, very little has been documented about the applicability of mental accounting to financial marketing and behavioral financing. This paper attempts to build and extend the literature on financial decision making by drawing on mental accounting and prospect theory. Specifically, we take the current literature one step further by testing the alignment hypothesis which states that consumers prefer financing schemes that not only match the length of benefits with payments but also the corresponding patterns as well. Through three studies, our paper finds general support for the alignment hypothesis. Implications for financial decision making along with retailing strategies are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

As consumers increasingly use debt and installment payments to finance durable goods, understanding of how financing decisions are made can allow marketers to better design financing schemes that will stimulate purchases. Prior researches have examined consumer financing decisions using mental accounting principles which enable a better understanding of how gains and losses from transactions are processed (Henderson and Peterson 1992; Okada 2001; Thaler 1985). Gains and losses can occur not only at a specific point in time as when purchases are made and consumptions takes place but can also extend over a longer period of time. Such is the case when consumers finance a durable good.

In a typical financing scenario, the consumer makes payments for an agreed upon time period and in exchange uses the product and reaps the benefits that are derived from consumption. The financing period can be either longer or shorter than the useful life of the product depending on the financing term. Research has shown that consumers prefer to match the cost stream associated with the financing payments with the benefit streams that accrue from using the product (Hirst, Joyce, and Schaedewald 1994; Prelec and Loewenstein 1998). When unbalance between the two types of stream occur, people are less likely to choose financing as a method of payment. This has been one of the primary reasons for people's hesitance for financing services such as vacations since the benefits terminate once the trip is over but the payments used for financing the trip continue (Hirst, Joyce, and Schaedewald 1994).

Our paper tries to add theoretical and practical knowledge into this important area by addressing inconsistencies in the literature and is distinct in several ways. First, we attempt to capture how consumers prefer to match the length of benefit streams with the length of cost streams (experiment 1). We specifically address this in the context of a widely used and accepted promotion, payment deferrals. Put differently, our research explores how flexibility to make repayments (e.g., when I can start to make repayments) can affect the misalignment between benefit and cost streams created by a special financing promotion, payment deferral programs.

Second, whereas prior research has found a linear pattern for mental depreciation of durable goods, we contest this and suggest a non-linear mental depreciation pattern for high-tech products (experiment 2).

Third, past research has been solely focused on the temporal contiguity of costs and benefits thereby suggesting that as long as the benefit stream coincides and overlaps with the cost stream, consumers will be favorable towards financing (Hirst, Joyce, and Schaedewald 1994). We build and extend this argument by asserting that it is not only the *length* of cost and benefit streams that are relevant but also the *pattern* of costs and benefits that is of utmost importance in determining consumer's preference for financing (experiment 3). That is, when benefits display a constant pattern throughout the useful life of the product, consumers should prefer payments that correspond to a constant pattern. However, when the benefit stream is not constant but decreases over time, consumers should prefer decreasing payments. We refer to this, the similarity in pattern of benefit and cost streams, as the *alignment hypothesis* throughout the paper. We test our above three contributions in three different experiments.

Our paper is organized in the following order. We first discuss the relevant literature in this under developed area of financial marketing by building and extending on mental accounting as our primary analytical framework in developing our argument for the alignment hypothesis. We then report the results of three experiments that test the robustness and validity of our alignment hypothesis.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

Compatibility between Length of Gains and Losses over Time

Our previous arguments have underscored the central thesis that consumers prefer to engage in financing when the benefits from using the product are in temporal alignment with the payments. In recent years, payment deferral programs (PDP) have been popular promotional tools among retailers to boost sales. This type of promotion can be conceived as a decoupling strategy as consumptions occur before payments are made (Prelec and Loewenstein 1998). Strictly speaking, a PDP is a special type of financing whereby the retailer gives the consumer a "make up" time to make the payments. This no payment and interest free period typically ranges from 12 to 36 months depending on the details of the promotion. During this interval, the consumer is literally using the product for free. The consumer is not responsible for any payments or interests during this period. This is an attractive promotional tool for consumers who want the product today but don't have the money to make the payments now.

However, payment deferral programs create considerable misalignment or non-overlap between the benefit stream and the payment stream. In other words, if the PDP is for 24 months and assuming that the consumer is planning to take full advantage of this PDP by not making any payments till the very end, for the first 24 months, only the benefits are accumulated without any payment streams to be matched. A crucial pitfall of PDP can occur when the product's useful life is often shorter than the no payment and interest free interval such as is the case for high technology products. This implies that the consumer will have to make payments when the benefits are starting to decline or have already

declined. This would be an extremely painful experience on the part of consumers as it would be perceived of as paying for something that returns very little in exchange.

Thus, in contrast to the intended objective of PDP, such a promotion can actually hamper sales especially for products that have a shorter useful life than the payment deferral period itself. Therefore, given our argument for people's preferences to desire temporal alignment between benefits and costs, when PDPs have a longer payment deferral period than the product's useful life, people will act purposefully to achieve alignment between benefits and costs as much as possible, given the opportunity. On the other hand, when the product's useful life is longer than the payment deferral interval, people should be relatively insensitive to act upon the opportunity to make temporal alignments between benefits and payments.

The objective of hypothesis 1 is to test our basic contention of consumer's preferences for temporal alignment between benefits and costs by giving the subjects the opportunity to do so and examine if they will readily accept such opportunities. If we consider the worst scenario in which the consumer decides to take full advantage of the payment deferral period and make no payments, we believe this situation will have a different effect than would be the case if a consumer were in a position to make payments before the expiration of the deferral period. In the first case where no payments are expected to be made before expiration of the deferral period (i.e., deferred payment option), a PDP whose no payment period's length is longer than the useful life of a product would not be very attractive. This is because when the time comes to make your first payment, the financed product will have been essentially obsolete and useless.

In contrast, when the option is given to consumers to make payments anytime before the expiration of the deferral period (i.e., flexible payment option), this sense of being in control should nullify the relationship between the length of the deferral period and the useful life of the financed product. Only when the length of the financing term is greater than the useful life of the financed product will there be an effect of payment option (flexible vs. deferred) on the likelihood of using and attitude towards a PDP. Taken collectively, the above arguments lead us to the following hypotheses:

H_{1a} : When the length of the payment deferral period is greater than the useful life of the financed product, the likelihood of using and attitude towards a PDP will be greater under a flexible payment option than a deferred payment option.

H_{1b} : When the length of the payment deferral period is equal to or less than the useful life of the financed product, there will be no difference in the likelihood of using and attitude towards a PDP between a flexible payment option and a deferred payment option.

Mental Depreciation

The notion of mental depreciation (Heath and Fennema 1996) and mental cost allocation (Gourville and Soman 1998) commonly refer to the activity of consumers spreading out the costs involved with a purchase over an extended period of time in order to align the expected benefits with the upfront incurred payment. The tendency to engage in such behaviors stem from the fact that quite often the benefits that accrue with a purchase are obtained over a certain time period, usually over the useful life of the product, while the payments occur at the time of purchase. As an example, when a consumer purchases a notebook computer for \$2000, rather than opening up a notebook account and posting the entire \$2000 to the

account at the time of purchase, consumers may allocate certain sub-amounts to this account as they use the notebook or have gotten their money's worth from using the notebook over time.

Prior researches have examined the pattern of mental depreciation. Heath and Fennema (1996) report a linear relationship between mental depreciation and different time periods in a product's useful life. In their study, they used indirect measures to measure mental depreciation. They specifically used a) how much people would sell their products at different time points in the product's useful life, b) how disappointed they would be if they lost their products at different points in time, and c) the extent to which they were willing to make a replacement decision for a new product. Their results generally supported a linear trend with the exception of disappointment, which followed a quadratic pattern.

We took a more direct approach and asked the subjects how much they got their money's worth (GMW hereafter) at different time points in the product's useful life. Greater GMW would be indicative of more mental depreciation because in order to realize a significant amount of GMW, a considerable amount of depreciation has to have occurred. Using the above measure, we posit that consumer's mental depreciation can take on one of three possible patterns as illustrated in Figure 1.

In Figure 1, line A indicates a constant mental depreciation of products over time. In other words, consumers are getting roughly an equal amount of money every time they use the product. For example, a consumer purchases a brand new sofa that lasts about 10 years. Every year, the consumer uses roughly 1/10 of the value of the sofa. Since the utility consumers get from sitting on the sofa does not change from year to year, he/she mentally depreciates equal amounts of value from the initial purchase price until the sofa is worthless at the end of the 10th year.

On the contrary, line B indicates a mental depreciation pattern in which there is little loss in value initially in the life cycle of the product. After a period of time, there is an increase in loss in value and the line races towards the horizontal axis. This indicates that consumers are more likely to get most of their money's worth towards the later half of the product's useful life than the first half. Products, which require a prolonged period of consumer adjustment before full benefits can be enjoyed, may be indicative of this pattern.

Finally, line C illustrates a mental depreciation pattern in which the majority of the value is consumed in the early part of the product's life than the later part. That is, consumers get most of their money's worth early on in the product's useful life. Products with a high "newness" premium typically fall into this category. Having the latest and the newest product often is a source of pride for consumers, and thus having something that's new in it of itself is often enough to justify a premium price. Much of today's computing hardware also falls under this pattern of mental depreciation. Initially, new computers are able to process information and perform tasks at a relatively high speed. However, as more and larger softwares are installed, the computer's hardware resources are taxed and its processing speed starts to decline after some point. Thus, from the perspective of computer users, most of the value of the computer is in the early part of its useful life where hardware technology is ahead of the software as opposed to the later half where hardware struggles to keep up with software updates.

Based on our argument about mental depreciation, we posit that for a high-tech product such as a notebook computer, the mental depreciation curve will follow a pattern consistent with graph C. This implies that consumers will obtain more GMW in the early stages of the product's useful life compared to later stages. This leads us to the following hypothesis:

FIGURE 1
Mental Depreciation over Time

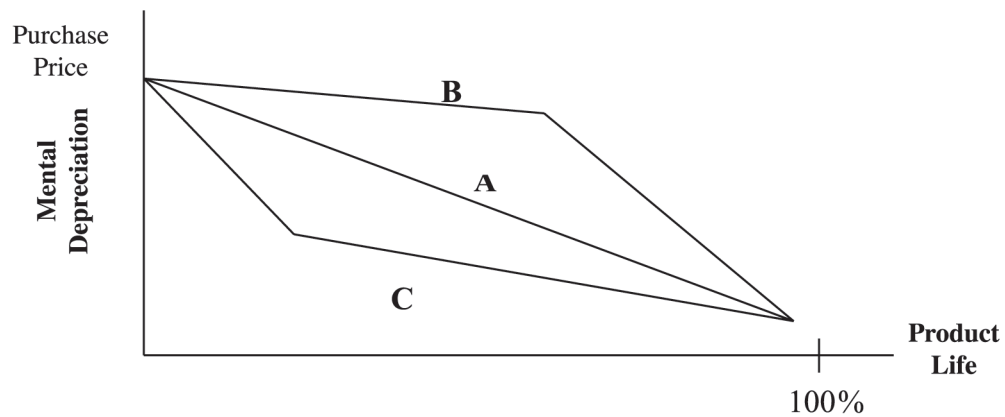


FIGURE 2
Alignment of Benefits and Payments

Benefit	+	+	+	+	0
Payment 1	-	-	-	-	-
Payment 2	-	-	-	-	0
Net Gain 1	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
Net Gain 2	0	0	0	0	0

Time →

H2a: GMW and cost used up will be greater during the first half of the product’s useful life than in the second half for high-tech products

H2b: GMW and cost used up will be equal between the first half and the second half of the product’s useful life for durable non-high-tech products.

Compatibility between Patterns of Gains and Losses over Time

If we conceptualize utility from product usage as gains (i.e., GMW) and payments as losses, the problem can be framed using prospect theory (Kahneman and Tversky 1979). Two principles in prospect theory warrant further attention, mixed gains and mixed losses. Mixed gains (losses) are defined as outcomes that entail gains (losses) that are larger in absolute size than losses (gains). The notion of financing includes both multiple gains and losses over time. Financing a product corresponds to a mixed gain in that in order for a customer to use such a promotional tool, the multiple gains (i.e., benefits from using the product over its useful life) should equal or outweigh the multiple losses (i.e., costs from paying over the financial term). Over the useful life of a product, the stream of gains and losses can be graphically depicted as in Figure 2.

In Figure 2, benefits from product use is depicted by “+” while payments are represented by “-“. For illustrative purposes, we show the declining benefit stream for a hypothetical technological innovation and two possible payment streams, constant and declining. When the patterns of the benefit stream and the payment stream are matched, each period has a net gain/loss of 0. That is, the financing payments consumers make are just enough to be offset by the benefits consumers reap each time they use the product.

When constant payments are made, however, consumers perceive positive net gain early on in the life of the product because they derive more utility than they are actually paying for while in later periods they are making more payments than what they actually derive from product usage. Thus, consumers experience net gain early on but net loss later on. Despite the different configuration of net gains and losses, when aggregated over the life of the product, both the decreasing and constant financing payments will result in a zero balance.

We argue that such future streams of gains and losses derived from usage benefits and financing payments, respectively are evaluated by consumers at the time of purchase. This implies that consumers are forward looking in their evaluations of benefits and

payments downstream. When a mismatch occurs between the patterns of benefits and payments such that the benefits are received non-linearly but payments occur in a linear pattern over the life of the product, this creates a pattern of misalignment. Under such a case, consumers are expected to perceive an advantage during the early part of a product's useful life but a disadvantage during the later stages. Prospect theory suggests that in a mixed gain/loss context, losses loom larger than gains and therefore losses towards the end of the financing period should have a greater impact than the gains realized early in the financing period, thus adversely affecting the evaluation of financing decisions and purchase intent.¹

Prelec and Loewenstein (1998) provide additional support for making greater payments early on than later in the product's useful life. They argued that all else equal, people prefer to pay in advance so that when they actually consume the product downstream, it is perceived as if it is free. This is consistent with the idea of eliminating a loss or dread as soon as possible (Loewenstein and Prelec 1993). As a result, consumers are able to savor the good for later and appreciate delayed gratification. Furthermore, preference for improvement over time may be a natural instinct and desire for humans in that we like to make incremental improvements rather than deteriorations over time. Also, the notion of preference for a happy ending is in line with a decreasing payment financing structure (Ross and Simonson 1991).

Hirst, Joyce, and Schaedwald (1994) have used the mixed gains argument to show that temporal contiguity matters in a financing context. They posit that since $V(\text{gains}) > -V(\text{loss})$ is satisfied in a mixed gains context, due to our third feature of prospect theory (value function is steeper for losses than for gains), it is better to combine and integrate the gains with the losses before evaluation than it is to evaluate them separately followed by combination ($V(\text{gains} + \text{losses}) > V(\text{gains}) + V(\text{losses})$). This suggests that temporal contiguity is important in that value is greater when the multiple benefits from using the product overlap with the costs associated with the payments as opposed to if they occur in a sequential manner whereby one occurs after the other.

Alternatively, rational economic theory would argue in favor of payment deferral as much as possible as \$1 worth today is more than \$1 worth tomorrow. In other words, rational economic behavior would suggest postponing payments now by better utilizing the current balance to obtain a higher rate of return elsewhere. Therefore, a rival explanation can be advanced whereby a decreasing payment stream should not be preferred regardless of the pattern of the benefit stream. Taken collectively based on the arguments set forth above, we offer the following alignment hypothesis:

H₃: The evaluation of a financing program will be more positive when a decreasing (constant) benefit stream is matched with a similar decreasing (constant) payment stream than a constant (decreasing) payment stream.

¹Support for preference for congruity between the patterns of benefits and costs can be found in the effect of perceived pain or consumption experience patterns over time of an evaluation (Ariely 1998; Loewenstein and Prelec 1993; Ross and Simonson 1991; Varey and Kahneman 1992). The common theme that ties the above research together is the fact that the sequencing, intensity, and pattern of experience or episodes matter in determining one's overall evaluation of an experience.

STUDY 1

Method

Design and Procedure

H_{1a} and H_{1b} were tested in a 3 (financing term: payment deferral length > product life vs. payment deferral length < product life vs. payment deferral length = product life) x 2 (repayment option: deferred vs. flexible) between subjects ANCOVA with knowledge in financing as a covariate. Participants were recruited in a local shopping mall. A compensation of \$10 was given for their participation. After having agreed to participate, the subjects were led to individual tables and chairs where they completed the instruments at their own pace. A booklet that contained the instruments was given to the subjects and the average time for completion was about 7 minutes.

Subjects

A total of one hundred and seventy four subjects ($n=174$) with diverse job backgrounds participated in the study (e.g., consumer goods, retail, financial services, high-tech, etc.). We used the mall intercept as a vehicle for data collection.

Materials

The booklet contained scenarios about financing a notebook computer. Subjects were told that they were on the market to purchase a notebook computer but since they were short on cash they had to use a payment deferral promotion to make the purchase. The definition of a payment deferral promotion was provided in the scenario to accommodate those who were unfamiliar with the concept. They were also informed that after the typical life span of a notebook it significantly loses performance because its processor and memory can no longer keep up with the latest softwares and have minimal resale value.

The financing term variable was manipulated by varying the length of the promotion vs. the typical life span of a notebook. The typical life span of a notebook was held constant at 2 years and the length of the promotion was varied at 3, 1, and 2 years, respectively, to capture the three levels under the financing term variable. The repayment option was manipulated by providing future financial situational information. In the deferred payment condition, it was explained to the subjects that because you are short on cash and you do not foresee your situation to change in the near future, you intend to take full advantage of the deferred payment program and not make any payments prior to the end of the promotional period. Conversely, in the flexible payment condition, the subjects were told that although you are short on cash right now, your situation may change in the future and you may choose to prepay parts of or the entire loan without penalty.

Dependent Variable

Three dependent variables (agreement with the fact that this is a very good payment deferral program; agreement with the fact that this is a payment deferral program that makes sense; agreement with the fact that if such a promotion were available, I would be likely to use such a promotion) were used in this study. The very good and makes sense variables were averaged to create an attitude index ($\alpha=.75$). In conclusion, we used an index that measured subject's attitudes towards the financing promotion and the likelihood of using such a promotion if available.

Results

Initial Analysis

Beyond further proceeding, we examined to see if any differences existed in our attitude index and likelihood of use across the three conditions of the financing term variable. Upon close examination, the mean values for both dependent variables were very

similar when product life span=length of the payment deferral program and when product life span>length of the payment deferral program (for attitude index, $M's=4.18$ vs. 4.34 , $t(117)=-.702$, $p>.40$ and for likelihood of use, $M's=4.80$ vs. 4.48 , $t(117)=1.16$, $p>.20$). Therefore these two conditions were collapsed for all subsequent analyses.

Hypothesis Testing

As a result of collapsing the financing term variable, the attitude index and likelihood of use were subjected to a 2 (financing term: product life span<length of payment deferral vs. product life span \geq length of payment deferral) \times 2 (repayment option: deferred vs. flexible) between subjects ANCOVA with knowledge in financing as a covariate. We report the results of likelihood of use followed by the attitude index.

When likelihood of use was the dependent variable, significant main effects were supported for both the financing term ($M's=4.64$ vs. 3.88 , $F(1,169)=9.71$, $p<.005$) and repayment options ($M's=4.81$ vs. 3.71 , $F(1,169)=19.74$, $p<.001$). But more importantly, a significant interaction between the financing term and repayment option was supported ($F(1,169)=10.41$, $p<.005$).

Further analyses revealed that under the deferred repayment option, likelihood of using such a promotion was significantly greater when the product lifespan was \geq length of deferred payment vs. when the product lifespan was <length of deferred payment ($M's=4.49$ vs. 2.93 , simple $F=19.54$, $p<.001$). However when the repayment option was flexible, no significant difference was observed in the likelihood of using such a promotion between the two financing terms ($M's=4.79$ vs. 4.82 , simple $F=.008$, $p>.30$).

However, when attitude index was the dependent variable, the interaction between financing term and repayment option did not approach significance ($F(1,169)=2.12$, $p<.15$). Albeit not significant, the difference in the attitude index between the two levels of financing term was greater in the deferred repayment option than in the flexible repayment option, which is consistent with our hypothesis. Thus, this provides strong support for H_{1a} and H_{1b} when likelihood of use is the dependent variable.

STUDY 2

Method

Design and Procedure

This study used a 2 (GMW vs. cost used up) \times 2 (notebook vs. dining table) mixed factorial design. The first factor was between subjects while the second was within subjects. Respondents were randomly assigned to either a GMW cell or a cost used-up (CUP) cell. Within each of these cells respondents rated two product categories, notebooks and dining tables.

Ninety-six MBA students from a private business school in the Southeast were used as respondents. Participation was voluntary and the average time for completion was about 10 minutes. The average age of the respondents was 26.53 years old with females comprising 41% and males 59%.

Two key questions were used to measure mental depreciation. The first focused on obtaining one's money's worth out of a product. We described a situation where the respondents purchased a notebook (dining table). Then it was explained to the respondents that they would get their money's worth out of the notebook (dining table) as they used it. Subjects chose from three options that they felt best described the pattern of depreciation in their minds. The first option was getting more GMW from the first half than from the second half of the product's useful life. The second option was receiving more GMW from the second half than from the first half. The third option was obtaining equal GMW between the first and second halves.

The second measure of mental depreciation concerned their feelings as they used up the cost of a notebook (dining table) over the useful life of the product. To this end, we asked whether they used up more of the cost of a notebook (dining table) during (a) the first half of the notebook's (dining table's) useful life, (b) the second half of the notebook's (dining table's) useful life or (c) equal amounts between the first and second halves.

Results

We first tested to see whether GMW and CUP were valid indicators of mental depreciation. We accomplished this by testing to see if any difference existed between GMW and CUP for both notebooks and dining tables. Our results strongly suggested that respondents interpreted GMW and CUP similarly. For notebooks, more respondents agreed with obtaining greater GMW in the first half over the second half than receiving equal GMW between the two halves. The same pattern was observed for CUP in that respondents felt they used up more value during the first half than the second half compared to using up equal amounts between the two halves. The pattern of distribution between GMW and CUP were not statistically different, lending support for the validity of the measures of mental depreciation ($\chi^2=.08$, $p>.78$). This similarity in distribution pattern was also supported for dining tables ($\chi^2=.009$, $p>.92$). Therefore, based on the above tests, we obtained greater confidence of GMW and CUP as valid measures of mental depreciation.

Next, we report the results of our hypothesis testing. For notebooks, as hypothesized, respondents felt that they got more of their money's worth during the first half of the notebook's useful life than in the second half ($n=36$), and this was significantly greater than those who thought that they received equal amounts of money's worth between the two halves ($n=8$, $\chi^2=17.82$, $p<.001$). Also, respondents felt that they used up more of the cost of the notebook during the first half than the second half ($n=37$), and this number was significantly greater than those who agreed with using up equal amounts between the two halves ($n=7$, $\chi^2=20.46$, $p<.001$). Therefore, H_{2a} was strongly supported.

On the other hand, for dining tables, we expected a linear mental depreciation curve in that the GMW and CUP would be equal between the first and second halves of the dining table's useful life. Our results were consistent with our predictions. As hypothesized, significantly more respondents felt that they received equal GMW between the two halves ($n=37$) than receiving more in the first half compared to the second half ($n=7$, $\chi^2=20.46$, $p<.001$). Moreover, the results for CUP were also consistent with GMW. A significantly greater number of respondents agreed that they had used up equal amounts between the first and second halves ($n=35$) compared to using up more in the first half than in the second half ($n=7$, $\chi^2=18.67$, $p<.001$). Therefore, we find strong support for H_{2b} .

STUDY 3

Design and Procedure

H_3 was tested using a 2 (performance pattern: constant vs. decreasing) \times 2 (repayment pattern: constant vs. decreasing) between subjects ANCOVA with knowledge in financing as a covariate. The nature of the subjects, procedure of the study, and data collection method for study 3 were identical to that of study 1. A total of one hundred and fourteen ($n=114$) subjects participated in this study.

Materials

A booklet contained scenarios about financing either a notebook computer or furniture. Subjects were told that they were on the market to purchase either a notebook or furniture and that since they

were short on cash, they had to partially finance their purchase. For subjects in the notebook condition, they were told that notebook computers, in general, lose performance and provide decreasing benefits as they get older and become obsolete. On the other hand, subjects in the furniture condition were told that furniture, in general, provides the same level of performance through their useful life. Thus, for notebooks, the performance was manipulated to be a decreasing pattern over time while for furniture it was manipulated to follow a constant pattern over time.

Furthermore, they were made aware of the fact that currently two types of financing options were available on the market. The first type of financing followed a fixed payment plan in which they were responsible for paying the same amount every month over the duration of the loan (3 years / 36 months). The second plan was a decreasing payment plan in which they would start out by paying a higher amount each month but gradually decrease over the 3 year duration of the loan. In either case, they were informed that the total amount paid in principal and interest was the same between the two plans. The repayment pattern manipulation was followed by stating that the only bank from which they were qualified to borrow \$3,000 was only offering the decreasing (constant) payment plan, in which they would be making decreasing (constant) payments every month. In all four conditions, the length of the loan was held constant at 3 years.

Dependent Variables

Three questions (agreement about their bank's plan as a very good repayment plan; agreement with the bank's plan as making sense; agreement about their bank's plan as preferable to the other plan that was not available) that tapped into the attitude of the financing plan offered by the subject's bank were used as the dependent variables. All three were rated on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) scale. Since all three items were highly correlated ($\alpha=.78$), an index as the mean of all three items was used as the dependent variable in subsequent analysis.

Results

Attitude towards the financing plan was subjected to a 2 (performance pattern: constant vs. decreasing) x 2 (repayment pattern: constant vs. decreasing) between subjects ANCOVA with knowledge in financing as a covariate. Results revealed a main effect for performance pattern with subjects in the decreasing performance pattern condition rating attitude towards the financing plan higher than those in the constant performance pattern condition ($M's=4.25$ vs. 3.85 , $F(1,113)=4.42$, $p<.05$) but not for repayment pattern ($M's=4.14$ vs. 3.96 , $F(1,113)=.90$, $p>.30$). More importantly though, this was qualified by a significant interaction between performance and repayment pattern ($F(1,113)=27.21$, $p<.001$). Further analyses revealed that the constant repayment plan was rated higher than the decreasing repayment plan under constant performance ($M's=4.26$ vs. 3.43 , simple $F=10.45$, $p<.05$). Also, the attitude towards decreasing repayment plan was greater than the constant repayment plan under decreasing performance ($M's=4.85$ vs. 3.65 , simple $F=17.06$, $p<.001$).

We conducted further analyses to confirm our strong interaction effect between repayment pattern and performance pattern on the evaluation of financing plans. We compared the compatible condition (constant performance and constant repayment or decreasing performance and decreasing repayment) to the incompatible condition (constant performance and decreasing repayment or decreasing performance and constant repayment) on the evaluation of financing plans. The results strongly confirmed our previous interaction effect. The financing plan in the compatible condition was rated as better ($M's=4.30$ vs. 3.46 , $F(1,112)=13.31$, $p<.001$), as making more sense ($M's=4.67$ vs. 3.63 , $F(1,112)=21.12$, $p<.001$),

and as being preferred over the other unselected plan ($M's=4.77$ vs. 3.54 , $F(1,112)=19.09$, $p<.001$) than the financing plan in the incompatible condition.

IMPLICATIONS

Our first implication is that firms should consider utilizing more payment deferral program as a mean to stimulate purchase, particularly for consumer durables. Recently, firms have increasingly adopted discounting strategies such as manufacturer's discount of low financing rates to stimulate durable purchases. However, a low interest rate financing scheme may end up costing the firm much more because such incentives may hurt margins while at the same time frequent manufacturer discounts may permanently lower price expectations for products.

For example, when sales for the automaker GM fell in the US, GM announced zero percent financing up to 60 months or up to \$4,000 rebate on all its models. However, analyst warned that while such tactics may help GM gain short term market share, such pricing deals may end up costing GM \$3,100 per vehicle (Welch 2002). Our findings suggest that instead of low interests or rebate offers, a possible alternative is payment deferral programs. Study 1 showed that when given the option in a payment deferral program, consumers often choose to make payments earlier than called for because they prefer to match their benefit stream with their payment stream. This way, they avoid having to make payments later when the payments outweigh the benefits and end up feeling they are not getting their money's worth. Consequently, firms are not committed to price discounts, and early payments that consumers make become windfalls for the firm.

A second implication is the possibility of designing an alternative financing scheme for consumers where payments decrease over time. Unlike most financing terms where payments typically remain the same over the duration of the loan, decreasing payments are better aligned with durables that exhibit a decreasing benefit pattern. Since the majority of the payments are made up front decreasing payments may provide creditors a lower default risk toward the end of the financing term.

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Adding Exchange to Charity: a Reference Price Explanation

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Charities often request donations while offering a near-worthless token, like a key chain or a pencil, in exchange. Little research has examined whether such 'exchange' requests are met with higher compliance rates than simply asking people to donate.

According to Holmes, Miller, and Lerner (2002), construing the donation as a commercial exchange will allow people to show their genuine compassion, while avoiding the negative feelings associated with violating the norm of self-interest. They argue that the assumption of self-interest has become a collectively shared cultural ideology: people think that other people are mainly driven by self-interest. As a consequence, people prefer self-interested behavior to avoid being exploited by self-interested others, or to avoid social disapproval for being 'irrational' (Miller & Ratner, 1998; Miller, 1999). Framing the donation as a commercial exchange may therefore provide potential donors a 'psychological cover' that enables them to act altruistically.

In three studies we examine whether and why consumers react positively to donation requests that are framed as the sale of a product. We think that one of the reasons why a priced exchange may increase compliance is that it signals an anchor or a reference price to which potential donors can compare candidate contributions. Just like consumers may have difficulties in estimating the price of a service due to a lack of a salient cost of goods sold (Bolton, Warlop, & Alba, 2003), in a simple donation setting potential donors may also experience difficulties determining what would be an appropriate donation amount. For economic reasons they may want to avoid too large a contribution, while too small a contribution may be perceived as inappropriate. Therefore, the option to 'buy something' instead of just donating may make it easier for potential donors to assess the minimally socially acceptable donation amount (cf. Fraser, Hite, & Sauer, 1988).

Clearly, if the token that is offered signals too high a donation amount, people will not donate, not even in exchange for a token. In particular, donation requests coupled with 'overpriced' exchanges may not help or may even decrease compliance rates compared to simple donation settings. On the other hand, low priced tokens may signal a donation amount that people consider being 'fair'. First, a low priced token may signal a donation price that is lower than the perceived donation price in simple donation settings. Moreover, low priced exchanges may legitimize small contributions and, therefore, render most excuses for noncompliance (e.g. "We can't afford to help.") inappropriate. Finally, if the presence of an anchor or reference price is an important factor in triggering donations, the association of simple donations and fixed prices should cause similar effects as the bundling of donation requests and priced tokens.

In the first (scenario) study, participants were asked to donate to a charity without a product being offered (mere donation) or to donate in exchange of staples (exchange condition). To explore our prediction that an exchange might signal an anchor or reference price that may induce people to donate, we asked participants to estimate the value of the offered product either before or after the donation decision. We found that people in the exchange conditions donated more easily when their attention was drawn to the 'low' estimated product value. In the mere donation setting, however, people lacked a 'fair' reference price; they apparently overestimated the cost of 'giving' and hence decided not to donate.

In study 2 we tested directly whether the 'exchange' effect is moderated by the token's value. This time, participants had to make a real donation decision. They were invited to just donate, to donate in exchange of paperclips without a shop value mentioned, to donate in exchange of paperclips with a mentioned shop value of €3, or to donate in exchange of paperclips with a mentioned shop value of €0.50. In line with study 1, the €0.50-token presented a comfortable reference price, a socially acceptable anchor that urged people to donate. On the other hand, €3 was perceived as a too large amount, a too large anchor that did not induce and even inhibited people to donate. In other words, we found evidence for the moderating role of priced tokens to increase compliance rates.

As the value of an exchange can 'help or hurt' depending on its price, we hypothesized in study 3 that the bundling of mere donations and fixed prices would generate similar results as the bundling of donation requests and priced tokens. In a scenario study we found data to support this prediction: the presence of a small (€0.50) or large (€3) reference price in a mere donation setting fulfilled the same, or an even better, 'anchoring' function as a small (€0.50) or large (€3) priced exchange. We interpret these findings in the context of the 'donation deal transparency': in a mere donation setting the net donation value is explicitly present, whereas the product cost in an exchange context not always is.

In sum, our studies suggest that in simple donation settings people may have difficulties in estimating a socially acceptable donation amount and therefore prefer opportunities that provide them with an anchor price. The value of a material good in a donation setting can play this anchoring role and signal a reference price. To the extent that the suggested reference price is low enough, exchange requests lead to more compliance than simple donation requests. A 'high' socially unacceptable or too large an anchor, on the contrary, may inhibit people from donating. It should be noted that our studies were not designed to rule out the exchange fiction theory of Holmes et al. (2002). In fact, our first two studies are still in line with the theory of the norm of self-interest (Miller, 1999). Still, our anchoring explanation gives an additional account for why people react positively to the sale of tokens in a donation request. Moreover, study 3 shows that, as expected by our anchoring explanation, a donation request that explicitly asks for a low amount generates more compliance than a simple donation request.

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When You Can't Count On the Numbers: Corporate Fraud, Generalized Suspicion and Investment Behavior

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Recent frauds by Enron, Worldcom, and Tyco have had a devastating effect on the stock prices of the firms directly involved. More interesting is that these frauds seemed to have much broader effects on the stocks of companies not directly involved in the scandals. For instance, news of Tyco's fraud met with a broad sell off in the domestic stock markets (McKay 2002), and Worldcom's troubles precipitated a 4% drop in stock in international markets (Economist 2002). We examined generalized suspicion as a possible mechanism for the negative impact of fraud on stock investment. The information processing induced by such suspicions was also investigated.

Dual process theory (Chaiken and Trope 1999) proposes that judgment occurs through two qualitatively different types of information processing: 1) heuristic processing, a relatively automatic form of judgment relying on simple heuristic cues, and 2) systematic processing, which involves careful thought and integration of information when making judgments. Information processing can be motivated by a number of different goals, including accuracy and defense concerns (Chen and Chaiken 1999). Accuracy goals motivate individuals to make valid, correct, or objective judgments, whereas defense goals lead to judgments aimed at maintaining self-esteem or protecting material interests.

Prior research in the trust literature (Rotter 1971) makes a distinction between *specific trust/distrust* based on past experiences with the same information source (e.g., distrust of Enron following revelation of the fraud this firm committed), and *generalized trust/distrust* based on experiences with other, similar sources of information (e.g., distrust of other firms on the basis of Enron's misdeeds). Previous research (Petty et al. 1983) shows that specific trust can act as a simple agreement heuristic (e.g., "I should agree with the financial statements of firms that I already know and trust"), whereas specific distrust tends to increase the amount of systematic information processing that occurs, thereby improving the accuracy of judgment (Priester and Petty 1995). In contrast, generalized trust/suspicion tends to be schema-based or stereotyped, where judgments occur automatically in response to associations between the information source and trusted/distrusted groups or organizations (Kramer 1999). Consistent with this mechanism, prior research examining consumer reactions to false advertising shows that deception by one firm can automatically evoke the negative stereotype that no firms can be trusted, resulting in more negative attitudes towards unrelated second-party firms (Darke and Ritchie 2003).

Two experiments examined the prediction that fraudulent statements made by one firm would produce more negative investment decisions towards a second, unrelated firm due to generalized suspicion. The basic strategy was to expose participants to false financial statements from one firm (deception manipulation), and then examine the implications for information processing, suspicion and investment decisions towards a second, unrelated firm. The findings of both studies supported our predictions by showing that corporate deception lowered investor confidence as well as the amount of money invested in the second firm. Process analyses indicated that these effects occurred because the initial fraud induced greater distrust of the second firm. Moreover, these effects occurred automatically, in that they were not mediated by con-

scious thoughts about the second firm. Other evidence argued against negative affect as an alternative explanation for the effects of fraud on investment.

In addition, both experiments also manipulated the level of the specific trust concerning the prior reputation of the second-party firm, in order to examine whether specific trust would be effective in buffering firms from the negative effects of generalized suspicion. Accuracy-based views of trust/suspicion suggest it is reasonable to generalize suspicion from one source to another only when more diagnostic information about the trustworthiness of the second source is not available (Rotter 1971). However, other evidence suggests that individuals are not always perfectly rational when it comes to distrust (Kramer 1998). Suspicions can be exaggerated, and may be maintained despite specific information suggesting a particular source is trustworthy. Consistent with the bias view, the results of both experiments showed that specific trust did little to buffer the second-party firm from the effects of generalized suspicion. These findings fit the view that suspicion evoked a defensive bias in judgment, where investors who have been fooled once become wary of additional financial claims in order to avoid being fooled again.

Our research is consistent with the idea that corporate fraud undermines investor trust in a general sense. Generalized suspicions also proved capable of undermining reputable second-party firms, not just lesser known firms. These findings underscore the need for publically traded firms to be concerned about investment fraud, and the need to better regulate the accounting and finance industries to reduce the likelihood of similar events in the future. As suggested by Robert Shiller (2003), trust may be "[t]he market's most valuable stock."

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ROUNDTABLE

Anthropomorphism and Consumer Behavior

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Anthropomorphism is the tendency of people to make attributions of humanlike characteristics to animals and nonhuman entities. Research on humans' perceptions of pets (e.g., Hirschman 1994; Holbrook et al. 2001; Sanders 1990, 1993) and possessions (Kiesler and Kiesler 2005; Wallendorf, Belk and Heisley 1988) indicates that humans easily attribute humanlike qualities and attributions to nonhuman entities. Yet, consumer researchers have scant knowledge of the antecedents and consequences of consumers' attributions of humanlike qualities to nonhuman entities such as pets, possessions, advertised brands and brand-related characters.

Anthropomorphic creations abound in the marketplace. Engineers and product designers often mimic the human form in products such as the Koziol Pot Scrubber, the friendly face of the front of a Volkswagen Bug, and the Honda Asimo Robot. Advertisers and brand consultants often mimic the human form in their logos, such as TiVo and the Mac startup icon, as well as their nonhuman endorsers such as the Pillsbury Dough Boy and the Michelin Man. Assumptions about the effects of anthropomorphism influence strategic decision making by organizations. Consider for instance that until 2004, the Pittsburgh Zoo did not publicly name its animals, fearing the public would think of wild animals as pets or people (Fahy, 2004). The Pittsburgh Zoo assumed negative effects of anthropomorphism. However, an alternative positive effect could be an increase in potential visitors' perceived attachment to the animals and thus to the zoo and its educational mission. Clearly, a greater understanding of anthropomorphism and consumer behavior can provide insight for a wide range of applications while also contributing to our general understanding of consumer cognition.

An animated roundtable discussion among consumer researchers resulted in the following research questions ripe for further inquiry.

- *Why do people anthropomorphize?* Whether conscious or subconscious, consumers' motives may influence the likelihood of anthropomorphism, the conditions (antecedents) under which anthropomorphism is more or less likely to occur and the type and degree of the consequences of anthropomorphism.
- *What are the antecedents of anthropomorphism in a consumer context?*

- *What are the consequences of anthropomorphism in a consumer context?* Our discussion noted that consequences may be positive (such as increased attachment to an anthropomorphized entity) or negative (as might occur if one feels negative affect towards an anthropomorphized entity due to a perceived negative humanlike characteristic).

Figure 1 graphically represents the relationships among the research questions posed in the roundtable discussion and it serves as a framework for future research on anthropomorphism in a consumer context.

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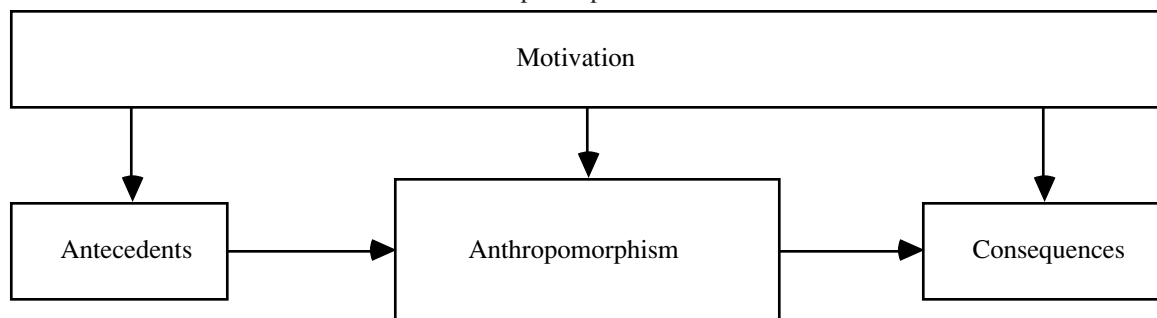
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FIGURE 1
A General Framework for Anthropomorphism Research in a Consumer Context



SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Understanding Our Behavior as We Age: Effects of Memory and Time Horizons on Beliefs, Preferences, and Choices

Ian Skurnik, University of Toronto
Carolyn Yoon, University of Michigan

SESSION OVERVIEW

One of the few inevitabilities in life is that we will all grow older. Because of rising standards of living and the size of the “Baby Boom” generation, by 2040 one in four Americans will be over age sixty-five. People over 65 are already the biggest consumers of medical products and services, and the US Census Bureau estimates that as the Baby Boomers advance through retirement, they will form the wealthiest cohort in US history. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of understanding how older adults think and make judgments as consumers.

Perhaps the single most important fact about mental function and aging is that the performance of older adults varies widely across different situations and tasks. This complex variation in performance is not well understood, but investigating it is crucial to our comprehension of older consumers’ cognition and behavior. The purpose of this special session will be to advance our knowledge of older consumers beyond the simple demonstration of cognitive deficits, and show how the mental processes and perspectives that older adults employ lead them to make judgments and preferences that are systematically different from those of their younger counterparts. This purpose highlights the conference’s general theme, “transformative consumer research,” in its focus on improving outcomes for both consumers and managers. The session includes experimental research grounded in social cognition and cognitive psychology, and also formal empirical modeling of product choice. The session should interest a diverse range of ACR attendees.

The papers in this session focus on extending our knowledge of older and younger consumers’ cognition by examining both memory and time perspective differences, including: (1) some unexpected consequences of a standard memory deficit, (2) a demonstration of the role of age-dependent time horizons on preferences for sequences, and (3) an explanation of product choice and brand loyalty across the lifespan. In the first paper, Ian Skurnik, Carolyn Yoon, and Norbert Schwarz show some unexpected “downstream” consequences of informing consumers about health issues. Older consumers show an increased “illusion of truth effect” (relative to younger adults) because they have trouble remembering the context in which they acquired information, but can still recognize the information itself with high accuracy. In this experiment, older adults read a flyer from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that warns people about some “myths” about the flu vaccine. The flyer is published for public education as a free service of the CDC. Shortly after reading the flyer, older adults tended to misremember flu “myths” as flu “facts.” The undesired consequence of this memory bias is that older adults who read the CDC flyer ultimately reported reduced intentions to get the flu vaccine, and felt that the flu was less dangerous, compared to older adults who read an “all-fact” version of the flyer and a third group who read no information about the flu at all.

The second paper, by Sanjay Sood, Loraine Lau-Gesk, and Aimee Drolet, focuses on the consequences of older adults’ focus on the present moment, as opposed to younger adults’ concern with the future. In their first two experiments, they show that some of the ‘gestalt’ features of sequences identified by psychologists, such as

giving extra weight to the sequence’s peak and end, may have differing influence on the judgments of older and younger people. Younger adults preferred to save the best for last when choosing a sequence of rides at Disneyland (Experiment 1) or ordering the courses of a meal (Experiment 2). In contrast, older adults consistently choose to experience the best elements of a sequence first. This age difference can be explained by socioemotional selectivity theory (Carstensen 1992), according to which older people have a more limited time horizon perspective. In other words, older people feel that their time is limited, and they choose not to postpone pleasurable or positive experiences. A third experiment expands on these results and finds that older adults are less apt to seek variety across sequential choices.

The third paper, by Raphaëlle Lambert-Pandraud and Gilles Laurent, examines perfume purchases across the lifespan. Using a large dataset of perfume purchasers in France, the authors consider the genesis of long-term brand loyalty and other patterns of preference. Perfume is a high-involvement product and is normally sold in circumstances of relatively constraint-free choice. The authors investigate two different explanations for perfume preference: (1) a nostalgia explanation, where consumers would form preferences at some critical period in life and maintain those preferences into the future, and (2) a socioemotional explanation in which a person’s relationship to a brand is built continuously over the lifespan. These explanations are formalized qualitatively through analytical models and compared to conditional logit model results to determine which explanation provides the ‘best’ fit. The results point to specific time periods in consumers’ lives reflecting the greatest sensitivity in terms of preference formation. The authors highlight the marketing implications of their findings.

EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

“Educating Older Adults About the Flu Can Reduce Their Intentions to Get a Vaccination”

Ian Skurnik, University of Toronto
Carolyn Yoon, University of Michigan
Norbert Schwarz, University of Michigan

The flu infects more than 300 million people each year, making it one of the world’s most widespread contagious diseases. In the United States alone between 20,000 and 36,000 annual deaths are attributed to influenza, with over 80% of those deaths occurring in the over-65 age category (MMWR 2003). Vaccination is the most effective measure to prevent infection and transmittal of the flu. Although vaccination programs are effective enough to reduce flu incidence by 70%-90% in healthy adults (Bridges et al., 2000), the CDC reports that at least 60% of US residents do not get vaccinated.

An important cause of these low immunization rates is incorrect beliefs about the vaccine itself. Sources of misinformation range from anti-vaccination web sites to uninformed health care workers. The near-universal response from professional medical sources is a call for educational measures that correct misconceptions about the vaccine (e.g., Nicholson et al., 2003). Following these recommendations, the US Centers for Disease Control and

prevention (CDC) published a flier about flu vaccine. The flier describes “facts and myths” about the vaccine with a short paragraph of additional information about each fact and myth. This approach rests on the reasonable assumption that warning people about false information will keep them from thinking that it is true.

However, research on component processes of memory suggests that attempts to warn people about false information can backfire and unintentionally increase people’s belief. Specifically, sometimes people can remember the basic content of a message without remembering the details of its presentation (e.g., Jacoby, 1999). When faced with this sort of incomplete memory for information, people show a marked tendency to think of the information as true (e.g., Skurnik, Yoon, Park, & Schwarz, 2005). In other words, mentioning misinformation in order to discredit it risks enhancing its perceived truth. Moreover, this effect is stronger in older adults than in younger adults because of a particular pattern of memory decline with age. Relative to younger adults, older adults show a systematic decline in memory for contextual details, but intact feelings of familiarity for information they have seen before. Hence older adults are especially likely to remember false information without remembering that it has been discredited.

We had older and younger adults read the CDC “Flu Facts and Myths” flier, and then, either immediately or after _ an hour, we tested their memory for the flier’s information and asked about their personal beliefs and intentions toward the disease and the vaccine. For comparison, other participants read an altered version of the flier that included the same information but restated the “myths” in factual form, so that no false information was presented. A third group of participants answered the questions about flu knowledge and intentions to get the vaccine without having read any flier. The experiment hence had a 2(age) X 3(flyer version) between-subjects design.

Immediately after reading the CDC Facts & Myths flyer, participants showed no truth bias in their memory of the flyer claims. However, after _ an hour, older adults tended to misremember the flyer’s myths as facts. That is, they misidentified more than 20% of the myths as facts, but misidentified only 5% of the facts as myths. Younger adults showed a similar trend in their memory for the flyer’s claims after _ an hour, but it was much less pronounced than that of the older adults.

Memory for the false claims also had implications for participants’ intentions to get flu vaccines in the upcoming flu season. Since the flu “myths” generally allege some drawback of the vaccine, belief in them should make getting a vaccine less attractive (an example is “The side effects of the vaccine are worse than the flu”). Immediately after reading either version of the flyer, people reported increased intentions to get a flu vaccine for the upcoming flu season, compared to people who didn’t read any flyer. For people who read the Facts-Only flyer, intentions were still increased after _ an hour. However, after _ an hour people who read the Facts and Myths flyer had reduced intentions to get a vaccine, and did not differ from people who had not read a flyer at all. In addition, after half an hour, people who read the Facts and Myths flyer reported the lowest perceived personal risk for catching the flu than any other group in the study, including those who read no flyer at all.

Extensions of this study are under way using information about Alzheimer’s disease and healthy diet. To summarize our findings, damaging misinformation was inadvertently supplied/reinforced by the very attempt to refute it. After a delay, the CDC flyer left older adults less likely to get a vaccine than anyone else—they were worse off than if they had not read anything about the flu. Results for the Facts-Only flier show that emphasizing what’s true,

rather than what’s false, has a much better chance of enhancing people’s correct knowledge about flu vaccine.

“Age Differences in Consumer Decision Making”

Sanjay Sood, UCLA

Loraine Lau-Gesk, UC Irvine

Aimee Drolet, UCLA

Are older consumers wiser consumers? Do consumers make better decisions as they age? Much research shows that the judgments and decisions of older consumers differ from those of younger adults. Some of these differences can be attributed to declining cognitive abilities (e.g., Hasher and Zacks 1992; John and Cole 1986), which can lead to either diminished or enhanced performance relative to younger adults (Drolet & Luce, 2003). Other age differences may be driven by older adults’ more limited time horizon perspective: younger adults tend to be more focused on the future, while older adults tend to be more present focused (Carstensen, 1992).

Taken together, the above research strongly indicates that the underlying decision processes of older adults can differ significantly from those of younger adults. Our research investigates the impact of aging on decision-making. In particular, we focus on the impact of age on consumers’ preferences for sequences of hedonic events.

Research on how people make retrospective hedonic judgments suggests that people tend to neglect the duration of an overall experience (e.g., Redelmeir and Kahneman 1996). Instead, they follow a “peak and end” rule (Fredrickson and Kahneman 1993). In making retrospective judgments, people tend to overweight the most intense hedonic moment (the “peak”) and the last hedonic moment (the “end”). Accordingly, people generally prefer sequences of events with improving trends. Put differently, people like to “save the best for last.”

Accordingly, we could expect differences in older versus younger consumers’ preferences. On one hand, older consumers may lack the mental resources needed to depart from habitual ways of making judgments, and may weight the peak and end of experiences more than, or more consistently than, younger adults do. If so, then older adults would more strongly prefer sequences with improving trends compared to younger consumers. On the other hand, older consumers may evaluate sequences of hedonic events differently because of their limited time horizon perspective. According to socioemotional selectivity theory (Carstensen 1992), older people have a more limited time horizon perspective; put informally, older people recognize that their time in this world is limited. Consequently, they are more present-focused, living more for the moment compared to younger individuals, who are more focused on the future. Older consumers might prefer not to wait and have the most preferred experience first.

We conducted three experiments. In experiment 1 ($n=200$), young (18-25) and older (65 plus) adult participants were asked to imagine they were visiting Disneyland and only had time left for three rides. They were told that the three available rides varied in terms of how much participants could expect to enjoy them: 1) It’s a Small World (“least enjoyable”); 2) Haunted Mansion (“most enjoyable”); and 3) Trolley Ride (“somewhere in the middle”). Participants were asked to order the rides so they maximized their (potential) overall pleasure. Experiment 1 finds preferences for improving sequences among younger but not older consumers. Specifically, 58% of younger consumers prefer to experience the most enjoyable ride last compared to 36% for older consumers.

Experiment 2 uses a different context to test for age-related differences in preferences for sequences. Experiment 1 used an

actual environment (Disneyland). The amount of familiarity with Disneyland may have differed among older versus younger participants. In experiment 2, older and younger participants ($n=193$) were asked to imagine they were eating at a tapas restaurant (a restaurant that serves small appetizer-like dishes). They were told they will have three dishes: an “excellent dish”, “so-so dish”, and a “not very good dish.” As in experiment 1, results shows that younger consumers are more likely to order the best option last. In addition, experiment 2 finds an effect of temporal proximity. Older consumers strongly prefer having the neutral option (“so-so dish”) come between the positive and negative options (92% vs. 75%). The older consumers prefer that the positive and negative affective events happen farther apart in time.

Results of experiments 1 and 2 imply that some of the ‘gestalt’ features of sequences identified by psychologists may have differing influence on the judgments of older people. Experiment 3 tests whether there are age-related differences in adherence to another rule that governs preferences for sequences of events. Past research shows that consumers seek variety in how they make sequential choices (Drolet 2002). Having relied on a particular heuristic to make a choice (e.g., “Buy brand name”), consumers tend to rely on that particular heuristic less in later choice. Experiment 3 tests for differences in inherent rule variability due to age.

In experiment 3, older and younger participants ($n=400$) were randomly assigned to one of four groups. Two groups were asked to make a choice in a background set that favored choice of the lower price option, either fax machine (Hewlett Packard \$249 or Lexmark \$149) or pine cleaner (Pine Sol \$4.59 or private label \$3.69). Two other groups were asked to make a choice in a background set that favored choice of the higher quality option, either TV (Sony \$389 or Sharp \$299) or cereal (Kellogg’s \$5.49 or private label \$3.89). All four groups made their second choice in the same (target) set, Mexican restaurant (4 stars \$27 or 2.5 stars \$16). Results show that younger consumers were more likely to vary rule use across choices. In the lower price sets, there were no differences in choice of the lower price option by age group (young=75%; old=78%). However, in the second set, younger consumers were much more likely to choose the expensive Mexican restaurant (young=65%; old=39%). In the higher quality sets, there was no significant difference in choice of the higher price option by age group (young=42%; old=36%). Again, younger consumers showed a greater tendency to vary rule use across the sequence of choices. They preferred the cheaper restaurant more (57%) compared to the older consumers (46%).

“Modeling Long-Term Determinants of Brand Choice by Older Consumers”

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Previous studies have shown that older consumers tend to prefer long-known items: older movie stars, older car styles, older music forms, and also long-established brands. Several theoretical perspectives have been proposed to explain this phenomenon, such as nostalgia, socioemotional selectivity, and declining innovativeness of older consumers. While these perspectives all predict that older persons should have a higher probability of choosing long-known items, they predict different patterns of preference change across ages. For example, a nostalgia explanation would argue that preferences are acquired during a sensitive period (late adolescence, early adulthood) and remain present in later life. In contrast, socioemotional selectivity theory suggests that the affective relationship of a person to a product or brand is built continuously over all the years of that person’s life, rather than

only on the basis of an early sensitive period. In this research, we test these theoretical perspectives by comparing their predictions to actual patterns of preferences by consumers of different ages for products introduced at different dates.

Our empirical application concerns perfume choice for several reasons. First, perfume is a high involvement product. Second, it is a product for which each store typically carries a very complete selection, thus allowing consumers a constraint-free choice (in contrast to a product like cars, for which each dealer typically carries only a few brands, often a single one). Further, it is one of the very few categories in which products remain in their exact initial form as long as they are sold: same name, same formula, same bottle (in contrast to cars, for which brand names remain, but models change regularly). Some of today’s successful perfumes were introduced, in the same form, more than eighty years ago. Our empirical work is based on a large mail survey, performed in 2002 in France, describing the perfume choices of 148,537 female users of perfume, aged 19 to 103.

Comparative analysis of the theoretical perspectives comprised two steps: qualitative and quantitative. In the qualitative step, we built simple analytical models of consumer preference based on each theoretical perspective. For example, the analytical model based on the nostalgia explanation assumes that the attractiveness of a perfume, for a person of a given age, depends on whether the perfume appeared when the person was in the sensitive period described above. Thus, attractiveness would be at a maximum if the perfume appeared when the consumer was between 15 and 25, and at a minimum if not (with some smooth transition between the two levels). In contrast, the analytical model based on the socioemotional selectivity perspective assumes that the attractiveness of a perfume, for a person of a given age, depends on the number of years during which the person has known the perfume (i.e., number of years during which the perfume was available in the market since the person turned 15). Thus, a perfume introduced 60 years ago has been known for 60 years by a 80-year old consumer, but for only 0 years by a 25-year old consumer, and its attractiveness is assumed to be six times higher for the first person. In contrast, a perfume introduced 10 years ago should have the same attractiveness for both consumers, since both have known it for 10 years. In our analytical models, the predicted share of choices, for a given perfume, or for a group of perfumes, is simply equal to its attractiveness, divided by the summed attractiveness of all the competing perfumes. Following the tradition of analytical models, we perform our tests on a simplified, aggregate data set, in which perfumes are clustered according to their launch date: before 1962, 1962 to 1991, and after 1991. We analyze how the relative shares of these three groups change as a function of consumer age, for each of the analytical models. We then compare the *qualitative* patterns of these changes to those observed in empirical data. For example, are there smooth changes in perfume choices over age, or are the changes occurring mostly on certain age periods? In the latter case, what are the key ages? What are the orders of magnitude of the predicted changes? What are the predicted shares for typical groups of consumers defined by their age—e.g., 80 or 25 years? On the basis of these qualitative pattern comparisons, we assess the different theoretical approaches by testing whether the analytical model based on nostalgia fits better than the one based on a socioemotional selectivity explanation.

The quantitative step of the assessment uses a conditional logit model. In this statistical model, the choice probability of a given perfume (or group of perfumes) is computed in the same manner as in the qualitative approach— its attractiveness divided by the summed attractiveness of the competitors. The differences com-

pared to the previous step are that we use a more detailed data set (perfumes are aggregated in more groups, each group being defined by a narrower set of introduction dates), and that we rely on formal maximum likelihood tests to compare the predictive power of the different theoretical approaches. Also, we analyze the results of combining several theoretical approaches in the same statistical estimation: Is it worthwhile to include both a socioemotional selectivity component and a nostalgia component in the same model?

The implications of our results are important from a theoretical point of view. The large scale of our dataset, and the specific characteristics of the perfume market described above, allow us to make differentiated predictions for the different theoretical approaches, and to assess their relative predictive power. Managerial implications are equally important, as we assess whether the preference for a perfume is mostly acquired during an early sensitive period, or whether this preferences is accumulated over all the years of a consumer's lifetime, and therefore can be acquired or reinforced subsequent to one's sensitive period.

A Bite to Whet the Reward Appetite: Influence of Sampling on Appetitive Behaviors

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Sampling programs are an important element of the promotion mix, particularly in the food and beverages categories. Sampling has many benefits including the ability to change a product's image or introducing a new product in the market. However, a dilemma retailers commonly face is that though sampling is an effective marketing tool, sampling food and beverage items at retail outlets can also make the consumer less hungry or thirsty, which could potentially reduce sale of items in these categories and, thereby, shrink the size of the market basket. This research argues that sampling a food item or a drink, rather than satiating the consumer can actually work as a reward cue and potentiate appetite for more drink or food as effectively as an increase in a physiological need of hunger or thirst. In other words, one bite of food or a quaff of drink can lead to intensification of hunger or thirst in an individual who moments ago was not thinking of dinner or consuming a drink. As the French expression puts it, "l'appétite vient en mangeant" loosely translated as appetite comes with eating. If this is true then consumers ought to buy more food and/or beverage items after sampling a food item or a drink in the store environment.

The above thesis is in line with research conducted on drive states and reward cues. For example Cornell et al (1989) in their study find that human subjects who were fed to satiety, if asked to take a bite of either pizza or ice cream subsequently chose to eat more of the foods they had just eaten. Their study, therefore, proposes that eating a food item can increase the subsequent consumption of the same food item. Further, in Winkielman and Berridge's research presenting individuals with smiling faces led to an increase in consumption of lemon-lime beverage. In other words, smiling faces acted as a reward cue, thereby, activating a general reward system leading to an increase in subsequent consumption of the drink. Moreover, a body of research in alcohol addiction demonstrates presenting an individual with a conditioned reward cue can lead to the activation of a general reward system causing individuals to seek anything rewarding. For example, Kambouropoulos and Staiger (2001) in their study show that presenting individuals with a reward cue such as a Beer can and a beer glass activated a general reward system making them more engaged in appetitive behaviors such as making money in a subsequent task.

Drawing upon research on reward cues and drive states, we propose that sampling a morsel of food or a quaff of a drink high in affective quality is likely to trigger a general reward system that will not only increase consumption of a drink in the subsequent task but will make individuals seek anything rewarding. Moreover, we predict that this effect should be stronger for individuals high on reward seeking behavior. In other words, individuals overactive on the Behavioral Activation Scale (BAS) should be more sensitive to the reward cues than those low on the BAS.

To test the above mentioned hypotheses, we randomly assigned subjects to either a reward cue condition or a control condition. In the reward cue condition participants sampled Hawaiian punch (presented to participants in the guise of a new sports drink), while those in the control condition consumed nothing. Subsequent to sampling the drink, participants moved to an adjoining room where they evaluated several rewarding and non

rewarding items in both food and non food categories. Participants then viewed a documentary purportedly part of a main study conducted for TiVo. They were served Pepsi while they watched the video. To disguise the purpose of the study, subjects were told that TiVo had given free Pepsi to be served to them.

Consistent with our expectations experiment 1 results indicate that a brief taste of Hawaiian Punch not only enhanced subsequent consumption of Pepsi but also prompted the activation of a general reward system. To elaborate, subjects who had tasted Hawaiian Punch consumed significantly more amount of Pepsi than those in the control condition. Further, subjects in the reward cue condition evaluated the rewarding items such as an exquisite spa, vacation in Bora Bora, \$5 off on batteries etc significantly higher in the subsequent task of product evaluations than those in the control condition. These effects were moderated by the personality variable, Behavioral Activation System, such that individuals high on BAS were more sensitive to external incentive stimulus (Hawaiian Punch) than those low on the BAS.

Our proposition thus far is that presenting a reward cue high in affective quality can lead to activation of a general reward system making individuals seek anything rewarding. If this is true, then satiating the reward drive prior to the consumption of Pepsi ought to attenuate the effects found in experiment 1. This proposition was supported in experiment 2. Consistent with our proposition, participants in the high affective quality cue (milk chocolate) condition consumed significantly more amount of Pepsi than those in the low affective quality cue (soy chocolate) condition who were not different from control condition in the pattern of drinking. This effect was moderated by reward satiation. In other words, subjects in the high affective quality-non reward satiation condition consumed significantly more amount of Pepsi than those in the high affective quality-reward satiation condition. Thus, presenting a dollar bill after the sampling task but before the subsequent consumption task, satiated the reward drive thereby reducing the drive to seek anything rewarding in the subsequent task.

In sum, our findings suggest that affective quality of an external cue such as a quaff of Hawaiian Punch or a bite of milk chocolate can trigger a general reward system, the appetitive potentiation effects of which can carry over to the subsequent task leading individuals to seek anything rewarding. Our findings have important implications for the marketers. These results suggest that sampling a food item or drink in a grocery store is not only likely to increase the purchase of food and beverage items but also other rewarding items such as items on sale.

“You’re A Wizard, Harry!”

Consumer Response to the Harry Potter Phenomenon

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ABSTRACT

Harry Potter is one of the most overwhelming consumer tsunamis of recent years. Less than a decade ago, the boy wizard’s creator was an anonymous single mom on welfare. Today, J.K. Rowling presides over a \$4 billion marketing empire and is one of the most famous faces on the planet. This paper examines consumer responses to the fashion for all things Potter. It argues that far from being trivial, as some suppose, fads are typical of today’s Entertainment Economy. If transformative consumer research is our aim, Harry Potteresque phenomena need to be better understood.

FAN OF TEEN FABLES

An indigent author writes a compelling story about an eleven-year-old orphan with wayward hair and distinctive features, who is transported to another place, finds it difficult to fit in and, after getting into all sorts of intriguing scrapes, eventually learns to do the right thing. The indigent author’s manuscript, however, is rejected by numerous publishing houses, which see no market for the quirky tale. She is on the point of giving up and returning to her hardscrabble job as a schoolteacher, but on a whim, decides to try one last publisher. The manuscript is accepted, published in a limited edition and, miraculously, becomes an enormous hit. The indigent author follows up with sequel after sequel after sequel and a storybook franchise is born.

Familiar as it is, this rags-to-riches tale of literary good fortune is not the heart-warming story of J.K. Rowling and the Harry Potter phenomenon. It is the tale of L.M. Montgomery, an impecunious inhabitant of Prince Edward Island whose classic children’s story, *Anne of Green Gables*, was published in 1908 to huge popularity, instant acclaim and not a little criticism (Barrett 1997). It is a story that spawned six successful sequels, all of which have been filmed, televised, merchandised and variously recycled in the century since *Anne of Green Gables* was written (Gammel 2002).

Montgomery’s story, nevertheless, is almost identical to that of Joanne Rowling’s (even down to the six sequels), who published her first Harry Potter novel in 1997 and saw her creation grow, like Topsy, as the episodes rolled off the Rowling production line (Smith 2001). More pertinently perhaps, Montgomery’s story reminds us that Anne/Harry-style fads are—and long have been—an important aspect of consumer culture (Berger 2000). From the bicycle craze of the late-nineteenth century, through the crossword puzzle mania of the 1920s, to the Pet Rock phenomenon of the 1970s, consumer fads are always with us (Thorne 1992). Individually, they may be here today and gone tomorrow, but collectively fads are as dependable as Old Faithful. They are the geysers of western capitalism. Another is certain to erupt before long and evaporate equally quickly.

Despite their ubiquity in domains as diverse as medicine, politics, fashion, sport, music, pastimes and academia (Hoffman and Bailey 1992), fads are unloved by mainstream marketing and consumer researchers. They are regarded as unpredictable, uncontrollable and infuriatingly short-lived (Kotler 2000; Solomon 2002). There is, admittedly, a definitional difficulty with fads: What exactly is a fad? What are its distinguishing features? What, if anything, are the differences between fads and fashions, let alone crazes and manias? How long does a fad have to last before it

becomes a trend or indeed a classic? Be that as it may, there is no doubt that the word “fad” carries pejorative connotations, particularly when it’s combined with the word “management.” Management fads like *kaizen*, re-engineering and TQM are universally disdained, though that doesn’t prevent their proliferation (Furnham 2004).

In fairness, not everyone regards fads as regressive. The ample fan community literature reveals the strength of consumer bonds that congeal around crazes like *Star Trek*, Beanie Babies, Blackberries, iPods et al (Hills 2002). Brand communities, most studies agree, are knowledgeable, proprietorial, opinionated, disputatious, committed and, actively encouraged by far-sighted corporate executives, increasingly involved in the co-creation of brand meaning (e.g. Fournier 1998; Holt 2002; Kozinets 2001; McAlexander et al 2002; Muniz and O’Guinn 2001). Set against this, of course, they are somewhat atypical. By their very nature, brand fans are unusually dedicated to the object of their veneration, be it Elvis or ET. They are the keepers of the fad flame. They continue to tend it long after the craze has died down and the next big thing’s all the rage. It follows that the picture presented by the burgeoning brandfan literature is incomplete. It also follows that, if we are to better understand the nature of fads, the feelings of less committed fans and, moreover, non-fans must be investigated.

The present paper attempts to increase our understanding of “fadology.” It does so by means of a qualitative study of the Harry Potter phenomenon, a staggeringly successful consumer craze that erupted at the turn of the millennium and is still going strong. The paper begins with a brief outline of Harry Potter mania, continues with an overview of our research program, turns to a summary of the findings, and concludes with some thoughts on the nature of fads.

BRANDACADABRA

Harry Potter is one of the most astonishing marketing tsunamis of recent years (Blake 2002). So much so, that surely there can’t be a single person anywhere who hasn’t heard of Harry Potter and the best selling books that bear his name. A scarred and orphaned schoolboy, who is maltreated by his stepparents, bullied by his stepbrother and discovers on his eleventh birthday that he possesses magical powers, Harry Potter is whisked off to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, where he studies the magical curriculum, learns that an enchanted world co-exists alongside the everyday world of non-magical Muggles, makes friends with fellow pupils Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley, spends many a happy hour playing Quidditch, a kind of airborne basketball, and, not least, battles against the evil Lord Voldemort, who killed his parents, tried and failed to kill Harry too, and is determined to take over the wizarding world by hook, crook, curse, hex and analogous nefarious means (Rowling 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2003).

To date, six books in the seven-book series have been published and approximately 300 million copies have been sold worldwide (Brown 2002). This places Potter third in the all-time bestsellers list, after *The Bible* (2.5 billion copies sold) and *The Thoughts of Chairman Mao* (800 million). In addition to the books themselves, the first three HP adventures have been made into live-action movies by Warner Bros, earning some \$1.6 billion at the global box office and a further \$750 million in DVD, video and television

licensing sales. More than 400 items of tie-in merchandise are also available, everything from candy and key rings to computer games and glow-in-the-dark glasses (Beahm 2004). It is estimated that the brand is worth \$1 billion per annum and that J.K. Rowling is a (dollar) billionaire. She is 6th on *Forbes'* roll-call of female business leaders, 5th on *Entertainment Weekly's* inventory of movers and shakers, and was runner-up to George W. Bush as *Time's* "Person of the Year, 2000." Not bad for someone who was a poverty-stricken single mom, living on welfare in an unheated Edinburgh apartment, less than a decade ago (Gupta 2003).

Staggering as the sales figures are, the Harry Potter phenomenon goes way, way beyond the bottom line. The entire children's book sector has been invigorated by the teenage mage, as countless identikit novels attest. Innumerable parings, parodies and pastiches of Harry Potter have also been published, including two pseudonymous books by J.K. Rowling herself. Boarding schools report significant increases in applications, both in Britain and France; EFL teachers claim that the HP texts are ideal workbooks for those wishing to improve their grasp of the mother tongue, as do parents of children with learning difficulties; owls are proving increasingly popular as household pets, much to the dismay of Animal Rights activists who have triggered a to-whit to-do about consumers' inability to care for the often-irascible creatures; the locations used in the movies are proving popular with tourists, though some sites have been chastised by Warner Brothers' legal department for advertising the connection; and signed first editions are fetching \$50,000 plus on the rare books market. As celebrity booksout Rick Gekoski (2004, p. 223) notes with dismay, "For that price, for God's sake, you could buy a pretty good collection of W.B. Yeats, or Conrad, or D.H. Lawrence."

Pottermania, in short, is escaping the economic base and colonizing the cultural superstructure. Consumer culture especially. Cyberspace, for instance, is chock-a-block with tribute websites such as mugglenet.com, hpana.com and hp-lexicon.org. Dedicated chatrooms, newsgroups and weblogs dissect every tidbit of Pottertrivia, including the latest scuttlebutt from the movie sets and interminable speculation about narrative twists and turns to come. No less than 64,000 fan fictions—that is, *entire* HP "novels" written by aficionados using Rowling's characters, settings, etc—are currently posted on the foremost clearing house for this so-called "fanon." At least three fan fayres have been organized thus far (in Orlando, Salem and Reading), academic interest is increasing exponentially (the principal HP database lists more than 500 scholarly publications) and the Potter lexicon of "muggles," "quidditch," "slytherin," et al has not only been inducted into dictionaries but is part and parcel of popular parlance.

HOCUS POCUS GROUPS

Needless to say, the latter-day Potterquake has attracted the attention of numerous marketing and consumer researchers. The book tracking consultants, NDP Group, regularly publish opinion polls on the phenomenon. A 2001 questionnaire survey of 1,511 respondents, for example, revealed that 60% of American teenagers are favorably disposed toward Harry Potter, with 25% of adults feeling the same way (see Gupta 2003). In Britain, there is a much-cited statistic to the effect that 50% of UK households own at least one Harry Potter novel (Blake 2002). The rest of the world is equally besotted, according to the *Guardian* newspaper, which compiled a "Potter Potty Index" of the boy wizard's global impact. Apparently, Australia, Germany, Japan and China are most entranced by Harry's adventures, with Mexico, India and Indonesia not far behind (*Guardian* 2002).

In addition to the quantitative facts and figures, the qualitative side of the Harry Potter fad has also been explored. Rebecca Borah

(2002) has surfed the highways and byways of the world wide web, conversing with Potterphiles, Weasleymanes and Graingerphagites. From her analysis of message board postings, she calculates that two-thirds of Potter posters are under the age of 18, with most falling between 12 and 16. Of the 12-16 subgroup, approximately two-thirds are female, though male participation is much greater in movie-related message boards. Borah followed up with email interviews of twenty teenage consumers and found that most had been introduced to Harry by a friend or relative, many had participated in school activities pertaining to Potter, around half had made objects inspired by the books, such as wands, artwork or costumes, and the majority are keen to acquire official Warner Brothers merchandise. However, her interviewees are by no means Pottermonogamous, since Pokemon cards, favorite TV characters, and pop band fandom also figured prominently in the discussions. Far from being brand loyal, teenage consumers are quite profligate with their preferences. Harry Potter may be the crack cocaine of kiddy culture—to put it crudely—but the boy wizard is only one among many brand-name intoxicants.

Above and beyond her analyses of adolescents, Borah (2002) interviewed ten adult Potterites. Although most are unashamed of their enthusiasm for products targeted primarily at teenagers, their fanaticism is more subdued. They only attend fan activities—theme parties, Potter bees, collector fayres, book launch events, etc.—when accompanied by a child or several. They wouldn't dream of wearing a Harry Potter T-shirt, which is too uncool for words, and worry about Warner's meretricious merchandising of Rowling's well-told tales. That said, they love chatting to fellow adult initiates of the Harry Potter "club."

Fascinating though her findings are, Borah's research predates the deluge of movie tie-in merchandise, as well as the three-year hiatus between books four and five. It fails to give a complete picture, furthermore. The problem with studies of Harry Potter fan communities, or any self-selected enthusiasts, is that they are somewhat atypical. As only the most obsessive Potterites are prepared to write *entire novels* about his ongoing adventures, let alone build and maintain dedicated websites, their views hardly reflect those of the average consumer.

In order, therefore, to deepen our understanding of the HP phenomenon—and consumer fads in general—a three-stage program of qualitative research is being undertaken by the authors. These stages comprise analyses of adults', schoolchildren's and college students' feelings about brand Harry Potter, the first phase of which is considered herein. Twenty-one adults—seven male, fourteen female, some fans, some phobes, ranging in age from 20 to 45—were asked to write individual "introspective essays" on the Harry Potter phenomenon. No restrictions were placed on essay length or what was considered an acceptable or unacceptable response. They were simply required to reflect on and write about their feelings (positive, negative or otherwise) concerning the Harry Potter brand in all its manifold manifestations (books, movies, merchandise, websites, whatever). Although introspective approaches, broadly defined, have been debated at length in the consumer research literature (e.g. Mick 2005), the evidence suggests that, once their initial apprehensions are overcome, informants find the introspective essay writing experience quite enjoyable. Revelatory even. The results, certainly, seem to bear this out, inasmuch as the individual introspective essays ranged from 2,500 to 6,000 words, which compares well with analogous consumer research techniques. While no one would claim that introspection is better than established qualitative procedures, such as focus groups, depth interviews, ethnography and so forth, it is a methodology that is well suited to story-based brands like Harry Potter (Haig 2004).

RIDDLE ME RESULTS

As might be expected, just about every one of our essayists has heard of Harry Potter and has some familiarity with the Harry Potter phenomenon. Let's be honest, the boy wizard's impossible to avoid, though that hasn't stopped people from trying. The idolization of Harry Potter, interestingly enough, is very off-putting for many consumers. His popularity with some makes him unpopular with others. They are determined to resist his bewitching blandishments at all costs. They pride themselves on not being taken in:

The crazy over-the-top media frenzy surrounding the whole phenomenon acts as a barrier preventing me from taking the bold step of reading a Harry Potter book or watching any of the films... Even if I was to sit down and watch one of the movies any enjoyment would be tarnished by the continual feeling that this is a box-office hit, adored by millions and a regular feature in *The Sun* newspaper... I think I have this attitude simply because I'm generally a person who doesn't like to conform with popular opinion. It's more fun to be different.

(David B.)

They also hate Harry Potter devotees, with their knowing smiles, secret language and embarrassing enthusiasm:

It's just gone Halloween and the number of fake Harry Potters and Hermiones I saw on a night out was crazy. Big fat women trying to fool themselves that they look good dressed as Hermione when all they look like is a man in drag, bad drag at that! I don't know who they are trying to kid but the only guys that seemed to be attracted to them were Harry Potter wannabes. Where did all these people come from? All these people who think dressing up as school kids is a turn-on! Surely this is verging on perversion.

(Kim P.)

These perceived barriers to entry, furthermore, are reinforced by incessant peer pressure. Everyone knows someone who suffers from Pottermania—a parent, a cousin, a friend—and the evangelist is determined to spread the good word, which further alienates the agnostics. While one hesitates to call this bullying, it's a lot closer to Dudley Dursley than J.K. Rowling and Co might imagine:

I like to think that I have managed to remain neutral about Harry Potter, but because I am not a devout fan this can be very testing. It's a bit like Christianity. Harry Potter lovers feel that they must spread the message of the 'good book'. They automatically make a dash for non-believers with the aim of saving them from their non-Harry Potter ways.

(Gemma A.)

That said, peer pressure works both ways. Individuals who are intrigued by the Harry Potter phenomenon and would quite like to check it out, if only to satisfy their curiosity, sometimes find themselves stymied by anti-Potter types, such as knuckle-dragging boyfriends or mega-macho companions, who refuse to embarrass themselves by association:

I had reckoned without my beloved partner. Even though we have gone to see shows like *Monsters Inc* and *Toy Story*, and even though he actually owns copies of both *Lion King* movies, he point blank refused to go and see Harry Potter. I personally considered this very unfair, since I had sacrificed many a Friday night watching horror films (which I hate) and war films (which I pretend to hate, but usually quite enjoy).

But no, there was no budging him, and sad as I was, I had no intentions of going to see it on my own. So, it was a long wait for the film to come out on video.

(Eleanor Mc)

Embarrassment, in truth, is an emotion that figures prominently in the stories told by adult consumers. As often as not, it's the embarrassment of buying, or borrowing, or being seen reading a children's book. Or, alternatively, being caught attending a kid's movie that has none of the multi-level appeal of, say, *Shrek* or *Toy Story* or *Shark Tale*, with their jokes-just-for-adults dimension. However, it's also the adolescent antics of adult Harry Potter fans that many non-devotees find bizarre at best and bananas at worst:

One of the most fascinating aspects of Harry Potter mania is that many of the fans appear to be adults. From someone who hasn't read any of the books, watched an entire film or bought any merchandise, maybe I'm not the best person to pass judgment. However, Harry Potter strikes me as something that's written for kids—as evidenced by the various merchandise available aimed at young people. Despite this, I've found that a number of people my own age are big fans of the movies and to a slightly lesser extent the books. Only the other day, I saw a young woman, in her early twenties, wearing a Harry Potter T-shirt. What is wrong with these people?

(David B.)

At the same time, people are occasionally embarrassed into Potter participation, as in the following anecdote:

Let me set the scene: it was the summer of 2003, a long hot summer where I was bored out of my head. [My boyfriend's] sister had just bought the fifth book and we were all talking about it over dinner one Sunday. I tried to keep out of the conversation as much as possible as I didn't know a thing about the books and these people were obviously avid fans, to the point of arguing about it over Christmas. No matter how much I tried to keep quiet I was uncovered as a Harry Potter virgin when I was asked who my favorite character was. The only character I knew was Harry Potter and I think they were looking for some more in-depth answer than that. So I had to confess that I had not read even one page out of the Harry Potter books, never mind have a favorite character!! Oh the look of shame!

(Kim P.)

Mortification notwithstanding, and regardless of how individuals get press-ganged into Potterphilia, the fact remains that when people *do* fall for Harry Potter they fall big. They have the zeal of the newly converted. They refuse to let minor inconveniences, like being on honeymoon, get in the way of their obsession:

In April this year, my girlfriend had just become my wife and we were about to set off on honeymoon. We had an hour or two to kill in Gatwick and I did some last minute panic buying for some holiday reading... I decided to buy the first two Harry Potter books, the *Philosopher's Stone* and the *Chamber of Secrets*. I have got to say I was something of a Harry Potter virgin, that is to say I had never read anything by JK Rowling, hadn't seen the films or knowingly bought any affiliated wands or broomsticks. I was however only too aware of the publicity surrounding the books and who the author was, as well as some of the characters... When I got down to reading, I felt the books were brilliant. I could really see how the books

appealed to adults and children alike. Needless to say that my new page turning obsession did not go down too well with my new life partner. When on our first night in the Maldives and expecting some form of conjugal rites found herself in second place to a fictional 11-year-old trainee wizard and something called the Sorting Hat.

(Keith T.)

Even those who hate Harry Potter with a vengeance find that their temper is tempered when they are required to read the books or watch the movies. They may not like the boy wizard—and like his admirers even less—but at least they understand why the fans feel the way they do:

Watching the film provided me with a glimpse of why so many older people worship Harry Potter. On one hand it may be the idea that takes them back to their childhood days. I can relate to this theory. On the other hand it may be that it takes them away from the mundane reality of their own lives. As you get older it gets increasingly harder to have fun. Worries about the mortgage, worries about the kids, worries about the kids having kids, and so on. So for those few brief moments I realized that perhaps it wasn't just a stupid childish fad, it had a real offering for the older generation too.

(Richard H.)

Now, this doesn't mean that once consumers take a hit of Hogwarts they are hopelessly addicted and thereafter hang on Rowling's every word. On the contrary, most consumers are self-conscious about their fixation—especially those who have been Pottermanes from day one—and are actually quite relieved to discover that there are people much more obsessed than them. I'm sad, as it were, but not *that* sad!

Although I would be loath to admit it in polite company, I am a Harry Potter fan, and probably always will be. I'm not sure what it is about the books, but I have a feeling that I will eventually get round to collecting all the hardbacks, like I had originally planned. By the time the last book came out, maybe I had gotten wise to the marketing ploys of the publishers. Even though the hype was at fever pitch, it didn't really get through to me at all. I did buy it, and I have read and enjoyed it as much as the others, but I certainly didn't queue outside Eason's from 12 midnight.

(Eleanor Mc)

Other enthusiasts adopt a kind of wry detachment from the whole thing. Yes, they love the books. Yes, they rush out and see the movies. Yes, they buy the DVDs and some other bits and pieces. But let's not get carried away. It's only a bit of fun, after all:

I've become a Harry Potter junkie. I need my fixes to keep me spellbound. Aaarrggghhh!!! There are a few things that annoy me though—the names of the characters, a lot of them end in 'ius' or similar, such as Cornelius, Albus, Lucius, Sirius (seriously now, come on), Severus (cut me some slack), Bartimus (Simpsonus) and so on... There's another thing that annoys me, the not naming of people and things, it's like *The Village*, the 'you-know-what' and 'those-we-don't-speak-of' and 'the-place-we-don't-go'. Crap, crap, crap. Name them—Voldemort—it is a bit hard to say and I admit it took ME several times to get it right. But now I'm a wizard at it.

(Daria C.)

Some customers, similarly, appropriate the product and take it to places that Warner Brothers didn't anticipate:

All the Harry Potter novels have provided many a laugh for me but some have spilled over into my social life. After a crowd of my mates and I went to watch the first movie it is not uncommon for the following phrase to be shouted out randomly on a night out. 'You're a wizard, Harry!' may seem a bit strange to onlookers but believe me it is bound to have us in stitches. And of course it is a lot funnier when you are drunk!

(Kim P.)

Many consumers, in short, are quite proprietorial about Harry Potter. They feel a very strong sense of ownership. Personal friendship, near enough. As such, they are contemptuously dismissive about certain parts of the movie adaptations:

The saying goes that the books are much better than the films and in my view this is certainly true. I can't believe [*Chamber of Secrets*] left out the hilarious picture of the Weasleys degnoming their garden. The film does not match the vivid and detailed descriptions that I have conjured up when reading the book. I imagine Gilderoy Lockheart (sic) with long blonde flowing locks that he is constantly flicking back. As orange as Dale Winton and just as camp. The book leads me to think he is much more pompous and exaggerated than in the film. The film was a great let down of the character I had built up.

(Gemma A.)

The books aren't immune, either. Quite a few feel that the fifth volume wasn't up to scratch (a view, incidentally, shared by lots in the fanfiction community, who aren't reluctant to excise *Phoenix* from "the canon") and worry whether Rowling will continue to do justice to her creation now that the series is reaching its climax and the whole world is wild about Harry:

The build up to the fifth book was immense, it was the longest book but in my opinion very disappointing... How could this woman who has written four such wonderful books ruin it all with her latest release? I was looking forward to continuing the Harry Potter 'experience' but for me the fifth book ruined it... I just hope that the sixth book proves me wrong. Could Rowling really start to go downhill? Did she reach her peak? I hope not.

(Susan Mc.)

Ex-enthusiasts, furthermore, feel that the phenomenon is rapidly running out of steam, that it has become too popular for its own good, that it is being milked dry and merchandised to death. Thus, when Rowling announces that another character's about to die—yawn—the news is interpreted not as an intriguing HP come-on but as a sign that the series is on the skids. Sensationalist sales tactics are a cry for help, don't you know:

When I was driving into town the other week the news came on and hey guess what? Yes, that's right, one of the articles of news was about how J.K. Rowling had stated that she was going to kill off a character in her new book. This got me thinking. My initial reaction was not one of excitement or who will it be, but a very negative 'this is just a publicity stunt'. I thought 'Is Harry slowly dying and was this just a clever PR stunt to help revive Harry Potter?' I think so. I suppose if I was a true Harry Potter fan (which I can assure you I never will be) I would be ecstatic. But I think this is because I have watched

as the media and companies drown Harry Potter out and have made me sick to the back teeth of Harry Potter...I simply do not give a gryffindor about Harry Potter in my everyday life. My life is too busy to care about Harry Potter and what J.K. Rowling wants to do next. I simply have no interest.

(Laura O'K.)

Harry isn't history yet. But he's heading that way...

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S NOT POTTER

Obviously, too much shouldn't be inferred from a single case study, even a case study as impactful as Harry Potter. However, if the Harry Potter phenomenon is emblematic of the ever-burgeoning Entertainment Economy (Wolf 1999), then extracting a few concluding lessons may be helpful, if only as an indicator of future research possibilities. The first of these concerns the dialectical character of consumer crazes. That is to say, crazes call forth consumer resistance, they repel as well as attract. For every curious consumer who wonders what all the fuss is about, many more seem determined to stand aloof by refusing to get dragged in. The bigger the fad, we suspect, the more virulent the resistance and the more virulent the resistance the more convinced true believers become. Certainly, the copious attacks on Harry Potter from concerned parents, Christian fundamentalists and condescending literary critics have helped further the phenomenon (Weiner 2003). Fads, as Gladwell (2000) notes, need fans, enthusiasts who are willing to spread the word, but our HP evidence suggests fads need phobes as well.

Another intriguing issue pertains to the fan acquisition process. The idea that consumers follow a preordained HP progression—what economists term path dependency—which starts with the books, continues with the movies and culminates with the merchandise is completely at odds with reality. Some are drawn in by the movies, others by watching the videos, others by catching a trailer, others by encounters with the tie-ins (being asked to buy a present for someone), others by a family connection (reading bedtime stories to a nephew), others by gifts or prizes or sales promotions (free tickets to a premiere courtesy of Coca-Cola), others by the phenomenon itself (what's all the fuss about?) and yet others by default (there's nothing else to read). Harry Potter is a brand smorgasbord. People pick and mix. Some pile their plates high, others are content to nibble. Many suck it and see. Brand fans are not an undifferentiated mass of wide-eyed enthusiasts.

A third, if somewhat mundane, issue is the definitional and research problematics that studying Harry Potter entails. What exactly is a fad? How does it differ from a craze, if at all? Is Potter a fad or a craze or something else entirely? Where do marketers, PR types and the media generally fit into the picture? Do they control or channel fads or simply hang on to their consumer-driven coattails? To what extent is contemporary consumer fandom an artifact of the Internet and how does this form of communication shape the trajectory—indeed longevity—of fads? Will, for example, the Harry Potter books be remembered 100 years from now, thanks to their eternal interment in a cyber sarcophagus, or will Rowling's fame fade like that of her equally successful predecessor, L.M. Montgomery?

The fourth lesson relates to the final phase of the fad life cycle. Conventional wisdom maintains that popularity kills a fad (Gladwell 2000). Once everyone is into it—sporting the hairstyle, singing the song, using the catchphrase, reading the book—the early adopters move on to something newer, cooler, obscurer, whatever. The 64,000 Galleon question, however, is how do we know when the point of departure is reached? Our Harry Potter study suggests that *marketing itself* is the signal. When brand enthusiasts start com-

plaining about too much marketing, excessive exploitation, undue commercialization and so on, the writing is on the wall for the fad concerned. Crazes come wrapped in an authentic, grass-roots, word-of-mouth accrued aura and once this aura is damaged through marketer reproduction—Walter Benjamin (1973) style—commodification can't be far away, collapse is imminent, the end is nigh.

THE END

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What Do They Say About “Friends”?

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The virtual community is a cyberspace supported by computer-based information technology, which centers on the communication and interaction of participants to generate member-driven content, resulting in the establishment of relationships (Hagel and Armstrong 1997; Lee et al. 2003). These days, people surf the Internet on a scale far greater than could have been imagined before, converging on chat rooms, message boards and discussion forums, which have become assembly points for personal communication (Fion et al. 2003). Because the virtual community can enhance participants' sense of belonging and loyalty toward a brand or corporation, more and more marketers are actively participating in the establishment of chat rooms, message boards and discussion forums to promote their brand or corporation (Chiou 2003; Wellman, 1999). However, little research has been done on the summarization of electronic communications (Radev et al. 2001; Zinkhan et al. 2003).

The primary goal of this exploratory research is to analyze the impact of the highly popular US TV program *Friends* on Internet communication in the US, Japan, and Taiwan. It intends to establish whether exposure to foreign TV could lead to similar communication content in the context of the virtual community between exporting and importing societies. If the content of communication is different among societies, what is the process that causes this difference? In this study, we view discussion forums or message boards as online tools that allow for interactive consumer communication. Our research concentrates on the ways consumers express their reactions and feelings toward a foreign (or domestic) TV program on the message boards or discussion forums.

Content analysis was used in this cross-cultural study, with the aim of understanding the ways in which dialogues posted on various discussion forums differed among the United States, Japan, and Taiwan. The TV sitcom *Friends* was chosen as the medium for conducting the research, due to the fact that it is a popular global sitcom that has been broadcast in several countries, particularly the three societies used in this research: the United States, Japan, and Taiwan. A second Japanese sitcom, *Beauty or Beast*, broadcast in Taiwan was included in the study, mainly to examine the effect of cultural proximity. Similar to *Friends*, it is a foreign sitcom aired in Taiwan, but differs from *Friends* in that it comes from a country that shares an Eastern culture similar to that of Taiwan. The third sitcom included in the study is *Love of Rose*, made in Taiwan. The reason for including it was to examine the effect of viewers' profiles, as it targeted younger generations of viewers than those of *Friends* and *Beauty or Beast*. Finally, both *Beauty or Beast* and *Love of Rose* were chosen because of their light-hearted nature, which is similar to that of *Friends*; they were also aired close to the time when *Friends*, Season 9, was aired in Taiwan. There were two types of data for the content analysis. The first one comprised topics that had been initiated by viewers visiting the website. Another set of data was the messages themselves, which included all the replies posted under each topic.

The results show that Japanese viewers of *Friends* exhibited a pattern more similar to the US than Taiwanese viewers did. Taiwanese viewers tended to initiate more *Information-seeking* topics and discuss less *Plot-related* messages and *Emotion-related* messages than Japanese and US viewers did. In addition, the results

of the Japanese *Beauty or Beast* sitcom aired in Taiwan may provide support for the proposition that cultural proximity may affect viewers' abilities in interpreting and retaining the message of a foreign TV program. Taiwanese viewers of *Beauty or Beast* related very well to the program. They discussed significantly more *Emotion-related* and *Plot-related* topics and messages than *Friends*. Finally, the results of *Love of Rose* also provide evidence for this claim among younger generations.

Overall, the results of the study showed that the communication style in discussion forums is very similar among the three cultures studied, if the cultural proximity factor is controlled. Although viewers used discussion forums to search for related information more than any other purposes, they were willing to share their views regarding the plot and even express their personal feelings on the web in all three societies, as long as the TV show touched the audiences. This assertion was also sustained when analyzing the data from the discussion forums for the TV program targeting the younger generation. The results of this exploratory study support the notion that the process of cultural value influence is more complex than Cultural Imperialism advocates propose. Audiences respond actively rather than passively to foreign TV programs. Prior information structure of the audience is affecting the interpretation of subsequent information. Therefore, the assertion that global cultural invasion will happen in a rapid and dominant way may be too optimistic. Globalization is more likely to pluralize the world, by recognizing the value of cultural niches and local ability (Water 1995).

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Pretty Woman or Erin Brockovich? Unconscious and Conscious Reactions to Commercials and Movies Shaped by Fairy Tale Archetypes—Results from Two Experimental Studies

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the principles and assumptions of Jung's archetypal psychology, and analyzes the question of whether the use of archetypes influences the conscious assessment of commercials, brands, movies and unconscious approach reactions. Furthermore, the question is discussed as to whether different personality types vary in the degree to which they are attracted by advertising and movies which use typical archetypes. Two laboratory experiments were conducted to test our hypotheses. In order to gain insight into the unconscious reactions of test persons and to assess the activating function of archetypes, we also measured electrodermal reactions to explore arousal evoked by archetypal commercials and movies.

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL QUESTION

Are books like "Lord of the Rings", "Harry Potter", or "Ancestors of Avalon" and movies presenting Arnold Schwarzenegger as the "Terminator" or internet games like "Everquest" so successful, because all these products use archetypes that activate more or less unconscious, but innate human desires? Are advertising campaigns shaped by archetypal myths also appealing to consumers (Walle 1986)? A content analysis of advertisements in magazines and newspapers reveals that many brands (even credit institutes or sophisticated newspapers) use archetypal images like brave heroes, innocent maidens like the "Sleeping Beauty", or pictures associated with such fairy tales as "Cinderella", "The Frog Prince", or animal archetypes like the "faithful horse" or the "lion".

In the consumer behavior literature, there are several articles inquiring into archetypes from a qualitative research perspective (e.g., Hirschman 2000; Veen 1994; Walle 1986). However, there appear to be no *empirical* studies investigating the effect of archetypes on approach behavior and on affective responses. In this paper, we analyze the topic from a positivistic research perspective: 1) whether archetypes influence, on the one hand, the conscious assessment of commercials, brands, and movies and, on the other hand, unconscious approach reactions and 2) whether all people behave similarly to the same exposure or whether different personality types vary in the degree to which they are attracted by archetypal topics. To acquire insights into the unconscious reactions of test persons and to assess the biological, activating function of archetypes, we also measured arousal evoked by archetypal commercials and movies.

An Introduction to Jung's Archetypes

Because Carl G. Jung (1875-1961) was influenced by his mentor Sigmund Freud, he was called Freud's "crown prince of psychoanalysis". However, "Jung had never been entirely sold on Freud's theory" (Boeree 1997). Briefly, Freud's (1933) therapy objective was to render the personal unconscious conscious. According to Freud, repressed personal experiences are fueled by primitive, pleasure-seeking and destructive emotions that must be controlled (Enns 1994). Furthermore, Freud was convinced that one day, his theory about the relevance of unconscious instincts would be confirmed by modern neurological techniques of brain imaging (Behrens and Neumaier 2004).

Jung's theory (1954/1959a, b) can be divided into three parts. Part one is the conscious mind termed the "ego". Closely related to the ego is the personal unconscious that includes anything not presently conscious. The personal unconscious includes both memories that can easily be brought to mind and those that have been suppressed for some reason. Jung's third part of the psyche is called the "collective unconscious", and this element makes his theory stand out from others (Boeree 1997, 2). The collective unconscious can be characterized as a "psychic inheritance" or the kind of knowledge with which all human beings are born. The individual is never directly aware of this collective reservoir of experience, but it can indirectly influence personal feelings and behavior. Effects that illustrate the functioning of the collective unconscious are experiences of first love, of déjà vu and the immediate recognition and understanding of certain myths. In contrast to Freud (1933), Jung (1961) viewed the unconscious as a meaningful source of renewal.

The content of the collective unconscious is characterized by so-called "archetypes" that represent inborn and universal ways of perceiving and comprehending the world and provide individuals with "wisdom" about the past and predispose people to experience the world as their ancestors did. Thus, archetypes have an instinctive or biological function (Veen 1994, 332) and act as regulators and stimulators. In other words, "archetypes activate behavior" (= "systems of readiness for action" (Stevens 1982, 62)). As inherent experiences of the human species, they are stable across time and societies, but can be culturally coded in typical iconic representations.

The variety of archetypal images is substantial. In general, archetypes are mythological or primordial images and are regarded as useful in the analysis of myths, fairy tales and general literature. Jung (1954/1959a, b) devoted special attention to those archetypes he considered as highly important in shaping behavior. It would go beyond the scope of this article to discuss them all, but three types are of major relevance for this article and are presented in more detail: the anima in men and the animus in woman, the hero, and the maiden (Jung 1982, 165)

Bolen (1984) argued that although archetypes are universal, people reveal a wide diversity of personality styles that influence the decision to allow the psyche to bring the collective unconscious into the conscious. Furthermore, personality factors like self-esteem and clarity of self-concept (Campbell et al. 1996) may also influence individual (unconscious) preferences for romantic archetypes (Boeree 1997; Holbrook and Olney 1995).

Archetypes and Consumer Behavior

Some authors (e.g., Walle 1986) suggest the general use of heroes or archetypes in advertising campaigns. Walle (1986, 22) describes archetypes as "constitute valuable tools for practitioners such as strategic planners of promotional campaigns", because archetypal advertising originates from innate human universals and focuses on innate needs. Veen (1984) argues that archetypes like the hero in particular, are helpful in explaining buying behavior (e.g. of cars) and that myths in general give products a ritualistic image. Ritualistic consumption satisfies the search for spiritual satisfac-

TABLE 1
IMPORTANT ARCHETYPES

(1) Anima and Animus	(2) Hero	(3) Innocent Maiden
<p>The "anima" depicts the unconscious female side of the male psyche, and the "animus" expresses the unconscious masculine side of the female. The anima may be personified as a young girl, a fairy godmother or the earth mother. The animus may be personified as a wise old man, or a rational male character. According to Jung, both anima and animus are present within one character. However, due to societal rules, women are still expected to be less aggressive and more understanding than men, whereas the latter are expected to be stronger and to ignore the emotional side of life more than females.</p>	<p>The "hero" can be characterized as the man of "self-generated-submission" who will eradicate the difficulties of the world. The hero is the defeater of the dragon (Aziz 1990, 29) who "undertakes the battle and ultimately, because of his sincerity, is given the strength to overcome the dragon" (Veen 1994, 332). In other words, the hero can master all challenges in life. Moreover, the typical male hero is able to rescue an unhappy or threatened woman and sweep her into an idyllic existence.</p>	<p>In fairy tales, the female role is often that of the innocent maiden like Cinderella or Sleeping Beauty (Boeree 1997). The young and beautiful woman, who lives in distress or misery or is maltreated by her stepmother or the evil fairy is rescued by a gallant prince who protects her forever and promises her a wonderful life free of worry and care. The story of the 350 year-old fairy tale "Cinderella" has survived, because it has given the "underdogs of society a source of hope", because the tale has "flourished as a paradigm of happily-ever-after, wish-fulfilling romantic fantasy" (Waters 2003). Women are assumed to like this fairy tale, because it offers an optimistic or sentimental escape from a complicated and difficult reality, whereas men are supposed to identify with the heroic prince.</p>

tion and self-actualization (Belk 1988; Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989; Rook and Levy 1983; Solomon 1983). According to Hirschman (2000), movies portraying particularly meaningful archetypal figures create living icons that are used by consumers as important personal anchors. This could be the reason for the popularity of many archetype-oriented movies.

Feminism and the Innocent Maiden Archetype

In converse, the feminist movement opposes the reduction of archetypes to stereotypes like Cinderella or Sleeping Beauty. Feminists complain about a misinterpretation of Jung's theory (e.g., Enns 1994, 73; Lauter and Rupprecht 1985). They point out that his notion that an unconscious man exists within the woman (animus) and that an unconscious woman exists within the man (anima) implies that masculine and feminine characteristics can be united in a balanced relationship and that mentally healthy people have both a well-developed anima and animus. However, Jung (1954/1959b, 82) also wrote that femininity is associated with "feelings of inferiority". Since his work has predominantly been interpreted by men who are mostly against abolishing patriarchal structures, these concepts have helped men enhance patriarchal myths and undervalue the merits of women as well as their experience and power (Enns 1994). Furthermore, archetypes (though principally stable over time) are nevertheless embedded in socialization processes. On the one hand, feminists (e.g., Lauter and Rupprecht 1985) believe that the more fairy tales that prevail about heroic men and needy women, the more difficult it will be for women to change such stereotyped role expectations as "Men are brave and clever, they hunt and solve problems, whereas women stay home, look after children, create a pleasant home life—and obey." On the other hand, currently, more and more students are female; they often achieve better examination results than their male colleagues and more and more women gain high career positions. Thus, a maiden

archetype like Cinderella is called into question or even eroded. The book "The Cinderella Complex" (Dowling 1981) questions the abdication of women's power to males and asks why, in the old fairy tales, we never hear what happens to the young Cinderella after she marries the prince. Will she really be happy and satisfied with a spouse role or will there be a tendency to break out of the repressive castle existence? To summarize, we could question whether a modern young woman still believes that she needs to do no more with her life than find a gallant prince who will look after her. In other words, do typical maiden archetypes like "Cinderella" or "Sleeping Beauty" really reflect women's ideals and can they therefore be used successfully in advertising strategies?

However, we can analyze this topic from a male perspective as well. Women's emancipation might also have changed men's expectations and philosophies of life. Analogously, we could question whether men are still attracted by the hero-scheme. Does a man always feel capable of mastering all obstacles and is he really keen to assume responsibility for his wife and family or does the hero-claim rather lead to a feeling of being burdened?

In our study, we wish to investigate whether archetypal stories like Cinderella or Sleeping Beauty cause positive unconscious and/or conscious responses. This general research question will be specified in the following sections.

Self-Concept, Personality and Archetypes

According to Jung (1954/1959a, b), archetypes refer to deep structures of the human mind and act as "organizing principles". This would suggest that a message which is compatible with innate desires or desired behavior will be more effective (with regard to approach behavior towards this special message) than one that is less focused on these innate drives (Celsi and Olson 1988; MacInnis, Moorman, and Jaworski 1991). Thus, we can assume that advertising messages shaped by desirable archetypes will evoke positive

responses. Furthermore, as mentioned before, a relationship between personality variables and preferred archetypes can be assumed. Holbrook and Olney (1995) found that people vary in the degree to which they are attracted either by romanticism (measured by items like: "I think that life is an awesome mystery" or "it is okay to daydream a lot") or by classicism (measured by items like "I have a scientific outlook on most problems") and that women in general are more attracted by romanticism. These findings could lead to assumptions that on the one hand, females are more attracted by romantic archetypes than male persons and, on the other hand, that individual levels of romanticism or classicism, or in a broader sense personality factors, also influence the perceived appeal of different archetypes.

In this context, self-concept clarity and self-esteem may also play an important role. Self-concept clarity can be defined as the "extent to which self-beliefs are clearly and confidently defined, internally consistent, and stable" (Campbell et al. 1996, 141). Self-concept clarity demonstrates whether or not an individual has a clear "conception of his or her life". Self-esteem characterizes the extent to which individuals have well-articulated positive or negative beliefs about themselves. People with either high or low self-esteem differ in their appreciation of their own individual achievements in life (Campbell et al. 1996). We propose that self-concept clarity and self-esteem also impact on the evaluation of typical archetypes and we assume that individuals who have not yet dealt with questions like "who or what am I?" or "how do I feel about myself?" and thus have unclear self-concepts, will be more attracted by maiden archetypal figures, because these fairy tales give a source of hope, or an anchor as to how life could improve, either as the hero (male perspective) or the rescued maiden (female perspective). In contrast to self-concept clarity, the relevance of self-esteem is not that clear. We hypothesize that, on the one hand, females with high self-esteem will be less attracted by Cinderella or Sleeping Beauty stereotypes and more attracted by powerful female heroes, because self-confident women regard themselves as successful. Thus, there is no need to wait for gallant princes who will rescue them and master all problems (this is a more feminist argument, as mentioned above). On the other hand, females who are fascinated by Cinderella-stories presumably also have at least a minimum level of self-esteem, because they would otherwise never believe they could attract a prince one day. Consequently, without self-esteem, identification with a maiden archetype would go beyond their wildest dreams. Men also need a minimum of self-esteem, because they would otherwise not be able to identify with the hero. To summarize, we hypothesize that, in general, all individuals are attracted by archetypes, but that different degrees of attraction are associated with different personality types.

Research Perspective

In consumer behavior, there are already some qualitative approaches to understanding the meaning of archetypes in advertising (e.g., Hirschman 2000; Veen 1994; Walle 1986). Furthermore, we found many articles analyzing the role of male or female stereotypes in advertising (Artz and Venkatesh 1991; DeYoung and Crane 1992; Fenell 1984; Johar, Moreau, and Schwarz 2003; Orth and Holancova 2004). However, there seem to be no experimental or positivistic studies exploring the effect and efficiency of archetypes used in commercials and movies. One probable reason for this lack of research is that Jung—in contrast to Freud, whose theory was linked to the natural sciences and who tended to believe that things work through cause and effect—believed in a "synchronicity" of events that cannot be explained by a mechanistic perspective or typical experiments. Synchronicity is the (unexpected) occurrence

of two events that are meaningfully related. For instance, people sometimes pick up the phone to call a friend, only to find the friend already on the line. Jung (1953) believed that the collective unconscious is responsible for these two synchronous events. Moreover, as mentioned before, Freud was fascinated by the notion that his theory could one day be validated by neurological research, whereas Jung was not at all interested in a biological foundation for his theory and declared instead: "Anyone who wants to know the human psyche will learn next to nothing from experimental psychology. He would better be advised to abandon exact science" (quoted in Boeree 1997, 1).

Even though Jung clearly does not recommend experimental research (and would perhaps turn in his grave if he could read our study), we wish to investigate the role of archetypes in advertising and movies by an experiment measuring test persons' responses to archetypal presentations. We deliberately asked male and mainly female students in all faculties at our university to participate in our experiment so as to guarantee that test persons with different outlooks on life (e.g., focus on career or on family) are involved. However, since many students probably know about the functioning of Cinderella-stereotypes as well as feminist resistance to these myths, we must be aware of the problem of *social desirability response bias*. In particular, female students might be attracted by maiden fairy tales, but not dare to admit this (because they are afraid to violate an unwritten "feminist student philosophy"). Therefore, test persons' attitudes were measured not only by verbal scales, but also by phasic arousal reactions to detect their unconscious responses towards the media. Furthermore, arousal can be used as an indicator of the biological and activating function of archetypes.

Psychophysiological Perspective and the Relevance of Arousal in Advertising

From a psychophysiological perspective, arousal is a fundamental feature of behavior. It can be defined as the basic neurophysiological process underlying all processes in the human organism. Thus, arousal is the basis of emotions, motivation, information processing, and behavioral reactions (Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer 1999; Öhman et al. 1993). Arousal can vary from deep sleep through moderate increases to panic. Basically, a distinction can be made between tonic and phasic arousal. Tonic arousal refers to a relatively long-term state of consciousness that changes slowly due to long-lasting or extremely intensive stimuli. Phasic arousal arises in response to specific stimuli, resulting in short-term variations in the arousal level. It indicates a ready state of the body for reaction and is closely related to attention, that is, enhanced sensitivity of the organism to relevant stimuli and stimuli processing, while irrelevant stimuli are filtered and not processed. Both internal (thought/metabolic processes) and external stimuli can cause arousal (Boucsein 1997).

Empirical studies emphasize the relevance of phasic arousal in marketing communication. Kroeber-Riel (1979) investigated the impact of weak, medium, and high arousal potential of advertisements on recall and attitudes towards the ad and brand. He found support for the hypothesis that highly arousing stimuli exert a positive impact on advertising efficiency. Empirical studies at the point-of-sale established that perceived arousal leads to more shopping enjoyment, more time spent for browsing and exploring, as well as to a higher probability of returning to the store and/or to the tendency to spend more money (Donovan and Rossiter 1982; Groeppel-Klein 1997; Groeppel-Klein and Baun 2001; Tai and Fung 1997; Van Kenhove and Desrumaux 1997). Thus, *arousal* is an important factor in *predicting approach behavior*. Furthermore, since consumers cannot willingly influence their arousal reactions,

it is either a valid indicator of *unconscious reactions* or a detection mechanism for social desirability articulation biases (Behrens and Neumaier 2004).

Hypotheses. To summarize, we investigate the following hypotheses in our studies:

- H1:* If a TV-commercial uses a typical fairy tale archetype, it will evoke higher phasic arousal reactions than commercials without this archetype.
- H2a:* Movies presenting typical maiden archetypes as characters will, in general, evoke higher phasic arousal and be evaluated more positively than films presenting brave, aggressive (in the sense of not merely accepting one's fate passively) and selfish female characters.
- H2b:* However, females with high ratings on self-clarity and low ratings on romanticism will be less attracted by maiden archetypes than females with the converse personality traits.

Measurement of Arousal

Various verbal methods have been used to measure perceived arousal. However, the results derived from these scales are controversial and the discriminant validity has been criticized (Van Kenhove and Desrumaux 1997; Vitouch 1997). Basically, there are three reasons for these criticisms: (1) selection of inappropriate items to represent perceived arousal, (2) verbal reports require some form of cognitive evaluation of perceived arousal by the individual, who might (in a non-measurement condition) not even be aware of the arousal (thus, verbal scales can only measure conscious reactions), (3) the fact that verbal measures are made some time later than the actual experience of the situation (Groepel-Klein and Baun 2001). In contrast to these methods, psychophysiological measures such as heart rate, electroencephalogram (EEG) and Electrodermal Activity (EDA) are the most valid indicators, since *deliberately influencing* the test results obtained from these methods is almost impossible. In addition, EDA is generally "regarded as a sensitive and valid indicator for the lower arousal range" (Boucsein 1992, 263). Electrodermal Reaction¹ (EDR shows phasic arousal) is recommended as an indicator for measuring arousal that is manifest in the third system of the 3-dimensional arousal model of Boucsein (1997). This so-called "preparatory activation" system basically encompasses motivational aspects of arousal. Expectations are transformed into a ready state for reaction. This part of the system interacts especially with motor and pre-motor activation of behavior, and with positive emotions (Groepel-Klein and Baun 2001). It is assumed to be responsible for (conscious and unconscious) approach behavior (Boucsein 1997).² Contrary to the heart rate, EDR indicates even the very smallest psychological change (Boucsein 1992). It is thus considered the most sensitive indicator of arousal that could be relevant to behavior and can be recorded *simultaneously* with the perception of a stimulus. Due to these advantages, we employed EDR as indicator.³ Two EDR parameters are of particular relevance: 1) The amplitude describes the strength of each phasic arousal reaction (Boucsein 1992; Cacioppo, Marshall-Goodell, and Gormezano 1983).⁴ According to Steiger (1988), the intensity of perceived arousal over a certain *period of time* can be received by summing all single amplitudes so as to obtain the *total amplitude* which is the most important phasic arousal parameter in experiments. 2) The second important parameter is the so-called "frequency" of responses, which sums all individual reactions. Each skin-conductance response demonstrates the particular attention of the individual towards an object in its environment (Steiger 1988).

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

Study 1

The first study was conducted in October and November 2004 in a lecture room at our university. First, students were chosen randomly and asked if they were interested in participating in an advertising experiment. Then, the participants (arranged in groups of two to four) completed a general questionnaire about their personal attitudes towards career, family and typical male/female stereotypes. Furthermore, items of the Romanticism-Classicism Index (Holbrook and Olney 1995) and statements measuring self-concept clarity and self-esteem (Campbell et al. 1996) were valued on 5-point-rating scales. Before presenting six different TV-commercials and the movies, one member of the group was attached to the EDR-electrodes and asked to relax and to watch the film just as in a cinema or at home. In contrast to all other commercials, only the third used an archetypal myth- the story takes place in a typical enchanted "fairy tale castle". The prince wants to rescue and wake up Sleeping Beauty, but all kissing attempts fail. Only the flavor of a cookie (named "Prinzenrolle") works, so that Sleeping Beauty is finally enraptured by her rescuer. During EDR registration, markers were set on the registered data whenever a new commercial started and another when the scene from the movie began. Thus, the arousal reaction of each commercial and of the movie could be registered. After presenting the TV-commercials, half the sample (randomly chosen) was presented with the last scene of "Pretty Woman" whereas the other half watched a sequence from "Gone With The Wind". Students were told that we wanted to arrange a typical advertising situation, in which films are normally interrupted by TV-commercials. Actually, we chose these two films, because the Cinderella-"archetype has shaped movies such as Pretty Woman" (Waters 2003), and Scarlett O'Hara (as we established through an internet search) is characterized as a "woman, who fought with her sweat and blood to keep her family's plantation, a woman who overcame every war and obstacle" (unknown reviewer, www.target.com) and "her incredible tenacity makes her a contender" (Isaacs 2004, 4). Thus, viewing the movie was also

¹Former expression: Galvanic skin response

²Phasic electrodermal amplitude, as measured here, can serve as an indicator of the third dimension. The second dimension, the "affect-arousal"-system, comprises primarily emotional components of arousal. The physiological outcome results in phasic cardiovascular (heart rate) and / or tonic electrodermal variations. When it comes to behavior and perception, processes within this second dimension lead to defense and negative emotions (Boucsein 1997, Groepel-Klein and Baun 2001).

³For registration purposes, we chose an exosomatic approach applying DC (0.4 V) and measuring skin conductance. The technical equipment runs with a 12-bit analog-to-digital (A / D) converter. We used two Ag / AgCl electrodes filled with a 0.5% NaCl electrode cream. Electrodes were attached to the left palm of right-handers and vice versa.

⁴In order to calculate amplitudes, for all studies, we chose a minimum amplitude criterion of 0.01µS, so as to exclude recording artifacts from the signal-to-noise ratio (Boucsein 1992; Venables and Christie 1980). While registering EDR, overlapping amplitudes may occur, that is, a second amplitude follows a first one, although the original baseline has not yet been reached. For our data analysis, overlapping amplitudes were evaluated, each by means of its own baseline, regardless of the recovery time of the preceding amplitude (Boucsein 1992).

part of the experiment, although participants were not aware of it and were already attached to electrodes. Afterwards, EDR-test persons were detached from the electrodes, and together with the rest of the group, completed the second part of the questionnaire, including items measuring attitude towards the ad, the brand, and the movie (reduced version of the statement-list of Edell and Burke 1987) as well as socio-demographic variables. Since attitude measurement relating to all commercials would have taken too much time and we were interested mainly in assessments of the third commercial that used a typical fairy tale archetype, we decided only to measure the ratings for this particular spot. To conceal our special interest, we arranged a kind of lottery and told the participants that by drawing lots, we wanted to randomly select which commercial had to be evaluated. However, we manipulated the lottery in such a way that the lot always drew our archetypal commercial. 59 male and 126 female test persons participated in our experiment.

Study 2

The second study was conducted in February 2005, with an improved experimental design and questionnaire similar to those of Study 1, in order to control additional influences (famous brand name, product category, actress popularity, order effects). This time, however, only *female* students were interviewed.⁵ In contrast to our first study, half the sample (randomly chosen) was exposed to the archetypal TV-commercial “Sleeping Beauty” (“Prinzenrolle”, see Study 1), whereas the other half was exposed to a more informational TV-commercial of “Prinzenrolle”, that shows a group of cooks (called the “cookie-experts”) with white coats and long chef’s hats preparing hot chocolate sauce for their delicious cookies. This experimental design was chosen in order to find out whether the archetypal TV-commercial of “Prinzenrolle” was really more effective than a more informational spot for the same brand. Furthermore, the water softener commercial (see Table 2) was replaced by a spot also advertising cookies (with the brand name “Hanuta”). This clip shows a female fencer fighting with one of the famous Three Musketeers. She wins and gets the “Hanuta”. This commercial was chosen for two reasons, firstly to present a tough and fearless *female* actor and, secondly to show an additional “sweets”-spot to examine whether arousal reactions were evoked only by this special *product category*. As in the first study, during EDR registration, a “marker” was set on the registered data again whenever a new commercial started and when the movie scene began. After presenting the TV-commercials, half the sample

(randomly chosen) was presented with the last scene of “Pretty Woman”, whereas the other half watched a (typical) sequence from “Erin Brockovich”. In our first study, we chose the movie “Gone With the Wind”, because Scarlett O’Hara is probably one of the most prominent examples of a fearless female character. However, “Gone With The Wind” was shot before World War II and is set in the American Civil War, whereas “Pretty Woman” was produced in 1990 and features a modern “zeitgeist”. Furthermore, Julia Roberts is one of the most popular actresses in Hollywood and the arousal reaction to “Pretty Woman” might simply be due to her still-fresh charisma. Therefore, in the second study, we wanted to control a potential “Julia Roberts-artifact”, and compared “Pretty Woman” to another movie starring Julia Roberts, this time not in a “Cinderella”-role, but as “Erin Brockovich” who is characterized as “an inspirational reminder of the power of the human spirit. Her passion, tenacity and steadfast desire to fight for the rights of the underdog defied the odds” (www.erinbrockovich.com). In addition to Study 1, we used statements from the sympathy/empathy scale of Escalas and Stern (2003) to establish whether the movies evoke weaker or stronger reactions due to test persons’ different levels of identification with the characters.

After excluding the artifacts (e.g., pressure on the electrodes—for details, see Boucsein 1992), we obtained 92 valid EDR data sets and 91 additional questionnaires for Study 1 and 62 valid EDR data sets and questionnaires for Study 2. There are no significant differences between the “Pretty Woman” and “Gone With The Wind” or “Erin Brockovich” samples with regard to socio-demographic variables (age, personal disposable income, study programs). However, it should be emphasized that we only presented a nine-minute key-scene from each movie in both studies. Therefore, we also controlled whether arousal reactions differ between participants who had already seen the movies and those who did not know them. There were no significant differences, neither in the experimental nor in the control groups, between the numbers of participants who had already seen the entire film (Study 1: *Gone With The Wind*: $n=16$, *Pretty Woman*: $n=37$, Study 2: *Erin Brockovich*: $n=17$, *Pretty Woman*: $n=28$) and those who only watched the sequence for the first time. The TV-commercials were all familiar to the audience.

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

In both studies, we first applied exploratory factor analyses to the statements measuring attitudes towards career, family, romanticism, self-concept clarity and self-esteem, as well as to the items measuring attitude towards the ad, brand, and movie. The statements load clearly on the postulated dimensions.

Results for Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 analyzes whether a TV-commercial using a typical fairytale archetype evokes higher phasic arousal reactions than commercials without such an archetype. Therefore, in both studies, six commercials were presented to the respondents, with the intention of simulating a typical commercial-break. The first commercial served solely as an “ice-breaking-spot” to ensure that test persons had become used to and familiar with the EDR-electrodes, and was therefore excluded from further analysis. As mentioned before, only the third spot used a typical archetype (“Sleeping Beauty”, see Table 2).

Study 1. To investigate Hypothesis 1, we conducted a non-parametric Friedman-test (due to the small sample sizes) comparing frequency and total amplitude evoked by each of the five TV-commercials. Table 3 shows the highest ranks for the archetypal spot with regard to both frequency and total amplitude. Furthermore, we used a nonparametric Wilcoxon-test for connected samples

⁵In Study 1, we analyzed whether there were gender differences with respect to attitudes towards career, family, romanticism, self-concept clarity and self esteem. Referring to 4 (of 20) statements, our study revealed that there are significant differences ($p<.05$) between male and female students, demonstrating that typical male / female stereotypes can be found even today (Facts are more important than feelings: $M_{\text{male}}=+.287$, $M_{\text{female}}=-.119$ / I think that even today, it is more important for a man to have positive career prospects than for a woman: $M_{\text{male}}=+.330$, $M_{\text{female}}=-.157$ / I believe in love at first sight: $M_{\text{male}}=-.207$, $M_{\text{female}}=+.104$ / My beliefs about myself seem to change very frequently: $M_{\text{male}}=-.225$, $M_{\text{female}}=+.109$). In a second step, we analyzed whether there were also significant differences between male and female viewers with respect to their phasic arousal reactions towards the archetypal commercial and the movie. Here, we found no significant differences, which might indicate that either men are attracted by the hero-image of the male character and women by the Cinderella-image of the female character or they are not. In Study 2, we only investigated female arousal reactions.

TABLE 2
 CONTENT OF THE INVESTIGATED TV-COMMERCIALS IN BOTH STUDIES

Study 1	Study 2
1 "ice-breaking"-spot	
2 Calgon (water softener) Story: A woman has problems with her washing machine because of calcification. The technician explains and recommends a certain water softener.	Jever (beer) Story: A man stands alone at the coastline, enjoys the landscape and sky and thinks about drinking a beer.
3 Prinzenrolle (cookie): Archetypal spot Story: A prince tries to wake up Sleeping Beauty, all kissing attempts fail, only the aroma of a cookie works. Sleeping Beauty is rescued and enraptured by the gallant prince.	Prinzenrolle (cookie) Archetypal spot: Sleeping Beauty (50 %) Story: see Study 1 Informational spot: Cookie experts (50 %) Story: Some cooks (called "cookie experts") with white coats and chef's hats are preparing hot chocolate sauce for delicious cookies.
4 Lycos (internet search engine) Story: Some dogs, dressed up as members of a jury at an ice skating competition, make fun of different web pages.	
5 Jever (beer) Story: A man stands alone at the coastline, enjoys the landscape and sky and thinks about drinking a beer.	Hanuta (cookie): Tough, fighting woman Story: A female fencer fights one of the Three Musketeers. She wins and gets the cookie.
6 D2 (mobile phone) Story: In an office, two women spread a rumour and wait to see how long it takes before this message is published as "official information" via mail and phone.	

to establish whether there is a significant difference between the archetypal and second ranked commercial. Again, we found a significant difference between the two spots with respect to frequency ($p=.011$). The difference between the total amplitudes of the two best ranked spots was not significant ($p=.081$) at a .05 level, only at a .10 level. However, our results point in the postulated direction, and we found support for Hypothesis 1, at least for the frequency.

The results of our first study confirm the high arousal potential of the archetypal spot. To emphasize the relevance of arousal, we first standardized and then recoded our metric variable "total amplitude evoked by the archetypal commercial" in a nominal-scaled variable to ensure highly-aroused (HA=above average) and minimally-aroused (LA=low level of arousal, below average) test persons. Consumers who were highly aroused by the archetypal commercial were significantly ($p<.05$) more attracted by the spot than those who had a low level of arousal with respect to attitude towards the ad: entertaining spot ($M_{HA}=+.527, M_{LA}=-.287$), attitude towards the ad: valuable spot ($M_{HA}=+.475, M_{LA}=-.133$), intention to buy the product ($M_{HA}=+.643, M_{LA}=-.381$), and intention to recommend the product ($M_{HA}=+.413, M_{LA}=-.312$).

Study 2. In our second study, we controlled whether the brand name or the product category might be responsible for the arousal reactions. Table 4 (results of the "robust" Welch-test used because of non-homogeneous variances) shows that the archetypal spot of "Prinzenrolle" evokes a significantly higher total amplitude than the informational spot of the same brand. Furthermore, the archetypal cookie spot leads to higher arousal reaction than the competi-

tive "Hanuta" cookie spot, at least for the comparison of total amplitudes (Table 5).

Results for Hypothesis 2a

Hypothesis 2a assumes different arousal responses and attitudes towards the movies "Pretty Woman", showing typical Cinderella archetypes as characters and "Gone With The Wind" or "Erin Brockovich", which present brave, aggressive and selfish female characters. ANOVA supports our hypothesis, at least for the comparison of total amplitudes (Table 6).

We used ANOVA to compare attitudes towards the movie. The results (Table 7) support Hypothesis 2a with respect to the question of whether the movie has touched personal desires. In Study 2, we used the sympathy/empathy scale of Escalas and Stern (2003) in order to control whether "Pretty Woman" or "Erin Brockovich" evoke high arousal because test persons identify more or less with the character. There were no significant differences between the two movies, neither for *sympathy* nor for *empathy*. Thus, the results indicate that "Pretty Woman" seems to touch on innate (unconscious?) desires.

Results for Hypothesis 2b

Hypothesis 2b investigates the relationship between personality types and responses towards the movie and proposes that female test persons with high ratings on self-clarity and low ratings on romanticism will be less attracted by maiden archetypes than females with the converse personality traits. This hypothesis will be investigated mainly for Study 1. In order to identify different female

TABLE 3
AROUSAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COMMERCIALS–STUDY 1

EDR Parameters	Commercial: Brand name / product category	n	Mean (for illustration) ^c	Friedman-test		Wilcoxon-test (Commercial B and E)	
				Mean Rank	Statistics		
Frequency	A: Calgon / water softener	92	27.93	2.78	Chi-Square Sign. .000	Z-value ^b Sign. .011	
	B: Prinzenrolle / cookies ^a	92	45.72	3.65			
	C: Lycos / search engine	92	34.20	3.13			
	D: Jever / beer	92	21.54	2.17			
	E: D2 / mobile phone	92	36.35	3.27			
Total Amplitude (in η-Siemens)	A: Calgon / water softener	92	1397.97	2.85	Chi-Square Sign. .000	Z-value ^b Sign. .081	
	B: Prinzenrolle / cookies ^a	92	2092.27	3.72			
	C: Lycos / search engine	92	1769.12	2.96			
	D: Jever / beer	92	1126.94	2.22			
	E: D2 / mobile phone	92	2060.91	3.26			

^a Commercial B was the archetypal one;

^b based on positive ranks

^c Since Friedman-Test is based on mean ranks, the means are used only to depict the distribution of answers.

TABLE 4
AROUSAL DIFFERENCES: ARCHTETYPAL VS. INFORMATIONAL SPOT–STUDY 2

EDR Parameters	Pairs of TV-commercials	n	Mean	Homogeneity of Variances		ANOVA		Welch-Test	
				Levene-Statistic	Sign.	F	Sign.	Asympt. F	Sign.
Frequency	Sleeping Beauty: archetypal	32	38.44	11.852	.001	3.651	.061	3.816	.057
	Cookie-experts: informational	30	21.23						
Total Amplitude (in η-Siemens)	Sleeping Beauty: archetypal	32	1921.94	10.247	.002	4.527	.037	4.757	.035
	Cookie-experts: informational	30	987.40						

TABLE 5
AROUSAL DIFFERENCES: RESCUED VS. BRAVE WOMAN–STUDY 2

EDR Parameters	Pairs of TV-commercials	n	Mean (for illustration)	Friedman-test		
				Mean Rank	Chi-Square	Sign.
Frequency	Prinzenrolle: “ Sleeping Beauty”	32	38.44	1.64	2.613	.106
	Hanuta: “ Brave Woman”	32	31.44	1.36		
Total Amplitude (in η-Siemens)	Prinzenrolle: “ Sleeping Beauty”	32	1921.94	1.72	6.125	.013
	Hanuta: “ Brave Woman”	32	1585.31	1.28		

TABLE 6
AROUSAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MOVIES IN BOTH STUDIES

EDR Parameters	Pairs of TV-commercials	n	Mean	Homogeneity of Variances		ANOVA		Welch-Test	
				Levene-Statistic	Sign.	F	Sign.	Asympt. F	Sign.
Study 1									
Frequency	Pretty Woman	39	673.05	.108	.743	3.452	.067	-	-
	Gone With The Wind	39	463.44						
Total Amplitude (in η -Siemens)	Pretty Woman	39	38719.58	.758	.387	3.985	.049	-	-
	Gone With The Wind	39	24852.08						
Study 2									
Frequency	Pretty Woman	31	651.84	6.293	.015	-	-	3.843	.055
	Erin Brockovich	30	397.10						
Total Amplitude (in η -Siemens)	Pretty Woman	31	38058.84	6.309	.015	-	-	4.686	.035
	Erin Brockovich	30	21336.53						

TABLE 7
ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE MOVIE IN BOTH STUDIES

Factor/Item	Movie	n	Mean (z-standardized)	Homogeneity of Variances		ANOVA		Welch-Test	
				Levene-Statistic	Sign.	F	Sign.	Asympt. F	Sign.
Study 1									
General attitude towards the movie	Pretty Woman	97	.288	3.133	.078	-	-	17.909	.000
	Gone With The Wind	91	-.307						
Movie touched personal wishes	Pretty Woman	97	.463	3.110	.079	-	-	55.960	.000
	Gone With The Wind	91	-.493						
Study 2									
General attitude towards the movie	Pretty Woman	31	.010	.373	.544	.006	.939	-	-
	Erin Brockovich	30	-.010						
Movie touched personal wishes	Pretty Woman	31	.256	2.860	.096	4.219	.044	-	-
	Erin Brockovich	30	-.234						

personality types (and derive our independent variable), a two-stage clustering-approach was conducted. The Elbow-Criterion (Timm 2002) of a prior Ward's hierarchical cluster method with squared Euclidean distances indicates a three cluster-solution. The final cluster solution was conducted with Quick Cluster. The final cluster centroids are shown in Table 8.

According to the results of our cluster analysis, female test participants can be segmented into three groups. Women in the first

segment are characterized by romanticism (they enjoy daydreaming and believe in love at first sight). They want to be protected by their future husband and yearn for a life without worries. Although they are quite self-confident, they still have an unclear self-concept. This segment will be referred to as "optimistic daydreamers". The second group considers it important to believe in facts rather than dreams, and always to keep a cool head. They have a clear self-concept and high self-esteem. Thus, they will be described as "cool

TABLE 8
FINAL CLUSTER CENTROIDS—STUDY 1

Factors	Cluster			ANOVA	
	1 (n=40) optimistic daydreamers	2 (n=45) "cool" self-made women	3 (n=36) students with low self- confidence	F-value	Sign.
Clear-cut logical personality	-.25474	.41172	-.46601	10.282	.000
Desire to be protected by “ broad-shoulders”	.69209	-.93240	.24009	69.440	.000
Desire to have a less exciting, but predictable life	-.13521	.17675	.09415	1.456	.237
Romanticism	.52714	-.10732	-.45509	10.879	.000
Career-orientation	.28771	.23526	-.54508	11.107	.000
Desire for luxury	-.02778	.16764	-.00725	.476	.623
Resistance against traditional values	-.18988	-.12148	.05535	.650	.524
Reliance on intuition	.34830	.04303	-.00213	1.359	.261
Unclear self-concept	.76117	-.45529	-.19208	25.279	.000
High self-esteem	.43594	.24945	-1.00675	40.562	.000

TABLE 9
AROUSAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PERSONALITY TYPES: COMMERCIAL

EDR Parameters	Personality types	n	Mean (for illustra- tion)	Kruskal-Wallis-H-tests					
				Mean Rank	Chi- Square	Sign.	Sign. 1-2	Sign. 1-3	Sign. 2-3
Frequency: archetypal commercial	1) optimistic daydreamers	17	54.53	41.85	7.635	.022	.005	.079	.372
	2) cool self-made women	24	29.33	25.92					
	3) students with low self- confidence	22	41.36	31.02					
Total Amplitude (in η-Siemens): archetypal commercial	1) optimistic daydreamer	17	2480.07	42.53	8.176	.017	.003	.058	.582
	2) cool self-made women	24	1368.24	26.29					
	3) students with low self- confidence	22	1930.62	30.09					

self-made women”. The third cluster has an extreme negative score on “high self-esteem”. These women perceive themselves as failures and have no self-confidence at all. They are neither energetic nor career-oriented, nor do they have any optimistic daydreams as to how they could change their lives. However, they too, want to be protected in life. This cluster will be called “students with low self-confidence”. With respect to Hypothesis 2b, we are mainly interested in comparing the first and second clusters, because they can be differentiated by opposing values on self-clarity and romanticism.

Due to the small sample sizes (< 30) within the subgroups, we used a nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis-test. With respect to the archetypal commercial both, total amplitude and frequency differ significantly between the groups (Table 9). However, the results of the arousal responses with respect to “Pretty Woman” yielded *no significant differences* between the three clusters. Unfortunately, there were too few test persons to compare the arousal effects of “Gone With The Wind” between the three clusters.

Thus, we found only partial support for Hypothesis 2b that female characters with high ratings on self-clarity and low ratings

TABLE 10
DIFFERENCES IN A_{AD} AND A_{BR} BETWEEN PERSONALITY TYPES

Factors	Personality types	n	Mean (z-standardized)	ANOVA					
				F-value	Sign. (all groups)	Sign. 1-2	Sign. 1-3	Sign. 2-3	
Attitude towards the archetypal ad: Relevance	1) optimistic daydreamers	38	.483	3.394	.037	.028	.025	.895	
	2) cool self-made-women	41	-.052						
	3) students with low self-confidence	35	-.084						
Attitude towards the brand: Relevance	1) optimistic daydreamer	37	.333	3.139	.047	.027	.037	.992	
	2) cool self-made-women	43	-.122						
	3) students with low self-confidence	35	-.120						

TABLE 11
DIFFERENCES IN A_{MOVIE} BETWEEN PERSONALITY GROUPS

Factors	Personality types	n	Mean (for illustration)	Kruskal-Wallis-H-tests					
				Mean Rank	Chi-Square	Sign. (all groups)	Sign. 1-2	Sign. 1-3	Sign. 2-3
Attitude towards the movie (archetypal, <i>Pretty Woman</i>)	1) optimistic daydreamer	21	.757	39.43	9.241	.010	.072	.003	.159
	2) cool self-made women	24	.209	29.83					
	3) students with low self-confidence	16	-.109	21.69					
Attitude towards the movie (non-archetypal, <i>GWTW</i>)	1) optimistic daydreamer	19	-.188	30.45	3.086	.214	.448	.286	.090
	2) cool self-made women	21	.103	34.31					
	3) students with low self-confidence	19	-.622	24.79					

on romanticism (self-made women) are less activated by maiden archetypes than females with opposite personality traits (daydreamers). Does this mean that even “cool-headed women” cannot avoid being unconsciously affected by the “*Pretty Woman*” story? Or do these students have both a well-developed anima and animus?

We also measured “conscious” responses to test Hypothesis 2b. ANOVA revealed significant differences between the groups with respect to assessing the commercial’s perceived relevance and the relevance of the brand. Post-hoc-tests revealed that these results are caused mainly by differences between the optimistic daydreamers and the cool self-made women. No significant differences could be found for other attitude dimensions. Thus, we again found partial support for Hypothesis 2b with respect to the *archetypal commercial* (Table 10).

To test the influence of cluster membership on the *attitude towards the movie*, we used a nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis-test.

The results (see Table 11) show that optimistic daydreamers have a significantly more positive attitude towards the movie than members of the other two groups ($p=.010$). Here, we also found support for Hypothesis 2b. Among those subjects who watched the “*Gone With The Wind*” sequence (which, in contrast to the Cinderella archetype, shows an independent woman), the cool self-made women sympathized more with the movie than members of the other two groups. However, this difference is not significant ($p=.214$).

Due to the small sample size for Study 2, we did not conduct a segmentation analysis. However, we found a moderate, but still significant positive correlation (Pearson coefficient) between high ratings on romanticism and a positive evaluation of the archetypal commercial of “*Prinzenrolle*” ($p=.038$, $r=.362$, $n=32$). Furthermore, we found a positive correlation between self-esteem and liking “*Pretty Woman*” ($p=.008$, $r=.461$, $n=32$).

Consistency of the Results

To investigate the consistency of our results, we analyzed the correlation (Pearson coefficient) between frequency and total amplitude of the archetypal commercial and the arousal parameters of the archetypal movie "Pretty Woman". Due to the small sample size of Study 2, this is only relevant for Study 1. The correlations are high and significant ($p < .000$, $n = 35$, $r_{\text{frequency}} = .761$, $r_{\text{total amplitude}} = .735$). Furthermore, the average figures for total amplitude and frequency evoked by the movie "Pretty Woman" are nearly identical in both studies, which further indicates the validity of the used measurement procedure. Reliability was tested by controlling a possible influence of the date and the different interviewers. There was no significant influence on the dependent variables (arousal, attitudes).

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Summarizing the essence of our empirical studies, it is evident that fairy tale archetypes, as investigated here, have a positive impact on consumer arousal reactions and conscious evaluations of commercials and movies. EDR-measurement cannot be influenced deliberately. Study 2 shows that the archetypal commercial ("Sleeping Beauty") produced a higher total amplitude than the informational spot of the same brand. Furthermore, the commercial that presents a story about a tough and successful female fighter evoked lower arousal reactions than the "Sleeping Beauty" commercial. Thus, arousal is not only evoked simply by a strong brand name or an appealing product category. The results also show that even cool-headed, emancipated women (Study 1) or female test persons with high-self esteem (Study 2) could be attracted by romance and cannot avoid the appeal of Cinderella-stories like "Pretty Woman". However, mainly women with high scores on romanticism and low scores on self-clarity are fascinated by archetypes in TV-commercials.

In Study 1, we found no gender differences with respect to the effects of the commercials and the movies. This might indicate that men can identify with the hero, and women with the rescued maiden. However, since our sample was quite small, more research is needed on this topic.

Some limitations should be mentioned here with reference to our empirical results. Firstly, our findings are based on relatively small sample sizes. This is due mainly to the intricate EDA measurement process. Each recorded curve needs to be screened manually for measurement artifacts. Furthermore, our study was conducted only with students. Thus, it should be replicated with men and women from all age and income groups. Furthermore, we did not measure familiarity with the brand. Instead, we can assume that brand familiarity is stronger for German students than for participants from other countries who also participated in the study. Since there are no significant differences between German and foreign students with regard to the arousal parameters and attitude towards the ad, we can assume that brand familiarity does not influence arousal and attitude towards the ad. Unfortunately, in these studies we were not able to control for a "Richard Gere" artifact in our "Pretty Woman" sample. It might be that some of our female students were attracted to the movie because of the male actor.

A further interesting and significant question for further studies could be to compare an archetypal commercial with an emotional, but not archetypal one for the same brand to measure differences in arousal. Last but not least, it would also be useful to investigate our archetypes from a qualitative research perspective and to combine and compare the qualitative and quantitative results.

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Support *Your* Local Team: Resistance, Subculture, and the Desire for Distinction

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Consumer resistance is frequently conceptualised as consumption ‘on the edge’ (Ritson and Dobscha 1999), or resistance of the subordinate consumer to the dominant market (Holt 2002, Penalzoza and Price 1993). An alternative conceptualisation of resistance is the desire of some minority groups to have their identities properly *represented* in the marketplace, rather than a desire for emancipation *from* the market (Penalzoza and Price 1993). Yet another conceptualisation of resistance defines it as aversion to the tastes of others. Hogg and Savolainen (1998) cite Bourdieu (1984) to argue that a particular ‘taste’ is primarily a distaste, or aversion, to the identity associated with another set of tastes.

These perspectives help to construct a “resistance continuum”, moving from “avoidance behaviour” at one end, to acts of active rebellion against the market at the other (Fournier 1998). At the weaker end of the continuum, consumer resistance can result from the desire for distinction, rather than an ideological opposition to the market *per se*. The purpose of aversion for alternative tastes is to demonstrate to oneself what one is not (Bourdieu 1984, Hogg and Savolainen 1998).

RESEARCH QUESTION

This paper seeks to address several related questions. Firstly, it asks whether the definition of resistance as aversion is helpful in understanding the consumption of soccer fans. Secondly it explores how resistance as aversion is structured. Whose tastes are denigrated, why are they denigrated, and how are they denigrated? Is the ingroup’s system of subcultural capital (Bourdieu 1984, Jancovich 2002) important in determining these issues? Finally, it also considers the question of how such aversion might impact upon the consumption behaviors of the ingroup.

RESISTANCE AND SUBCULTURAL CAPITAL

The conceptualisation of resistance as distaste for the consumption preferences of others is supported by the work of a number of researchers. Thornton (1995:93) argues that the punk rock movement had more to do with an aversion to disco music—*within the cultural sphere of popular musical tastes among youth*—than resistance to normal, bourgeois society as a whole, as originally suggested by Hebdige (1979). The ‘mainstream’ is often nothing more than something invoked by members of a subculture when they wish to make distinctions between their group and some easily derogated ‘other’ (Jancovich 2002, Thornton 1997, 1995). Members of the rave scene in the U.K., for example, make distinctions between themselves and the mainstream Tracys and Sharons, the ordinary working class girls dancing round their handbags at the local disco (Thornton 1997). The subcultural capital of the rave scene is expressed through knowing which CDs to have in your collection, what to wear to a rave, knowing which DJ’s are considered the ‘hippest’, knowing which forms of dance style are considered appropriate and which are not, which venues are ‘in’ and which are not, and so on (Thornton, *ibid*). Canadian rave participants articulate a resistance to the ‘mainstream’ of drunkenness and disco bars, not bourgeois society in general (Wilson 2002), and while cult movie fans mock the shortcomings of ‘mainstream’ cinema, the construction of ‘mainstream’ proffered by the various strands of thought within the cult movie subculture is incoherent, contradictory, and inconsistent (Jancovich 2002). What matters to subcultural participants, however, is that these distinctions “provide a

sense of subcultural authenticity (Jancovich, *ibid*)”. Goods or services associated with the outgroup are seen as indicators of a lack of cultural capital, and so are stigmatised by a collective distaste. Consumer resistance, in this light, can be a manifestation of the desire for distinction, rather than a desire to resist the market itself.

BOURDIEU AND CULTURAL CAPITAL

How consistent is the above with Bourdieu’s original conceptualisation of cultural capital? Cultural capital was originally understood as knowledge of how to consume, how to appreciate, to understand what should be considered tasteful and what should not, with particular reference to high (or “legitimate”) culture (Bourdieu 1984, Holt 1998). Central to this thesis was the argument that this specialist knowledge, these ways of consuming, allowed members of the upper classes to maintain social and economic distinctions between themselves and members of other social classes. Cultural capital was therefore conceptualised as nothing less than a weapon that was being deployed to great effect in the perpetuation of class inequalities. In rejecting this thesis, Bourdieu’s critics have tended to take the view that members of the dominant social class in North America, for example, tend not to limit their expressed tastes to “legitimate” culture, and that an ability to aesthetically appreciate the arts is not a key to social or economic advancement (Erickson 1996, Gartman 1991, Halle 1993). It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine the question of whether cultural capital, as depicted by Bourdieu, is in fact deployed as a means of perpetuating class inequalities. There is some evidence, as noted above, to suggest that whether it is used in that way or not seems at the very least to depend on which country is being considered, France or North America, for example. What must be considered, however, is whether cultural capital has something important to say about consumer behaviour, beyond any putative use as a weapon in inter-class strife. This paper is concerned with the manner in which group-specific systems of cultural capital structure consumption *outside* the dichotomous framework of class conflict. Members of brand communities, for example, have their own systems of cultural capital, which they deploy to assert the superiority of the tastes—and ultimately the identity—of their particular group:

Appreciation of the history of the brand often differentiates the true believers from the more opportunistic. Knowing these things is a form of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984, Holt 1998) within the brand community (Muniz and O’Guinn 2001)

Systems of cultural capital within brand communities therefore have fundamentally important functions with regard to the behaviours, attitudes, and experiences of members of these communities. “Insider” status can be attained through the acquisition of higher *community-specific* levels of cultural capital. This motivates members to immerse themselves more deeply in the culture of the brand. Thus we have cultural capital operating not to prevent members of one social class from gaining access to membership of the class above them, but rather to allow contemporary consumers experience a strong sense of community with each other. This takes place partly through the mutual development of robust ties to particular brands, but also through a mutual aversion towards other tastes and other brands. This resistance to the tastes of others is

grounded in the collective, community-specific system of cultural capital, and helps to give these consumers their sense of distinction (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001).

DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC SYSTEM OF CULTURAL CAPITAL: THE CASE OF SPORTS FANS

Cultural capital has always been primarily dependent upon how, rather than what, one consumes (Bourdieu 1984, Holt 1998, 1995, Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). Some basis for asserting distinction will be found, even where all concerned are consuming the same consumption object. Just as the bourgeois consumer might assert distinction through an ability to critically analyse a play or movie in a way that a lower class consumer can not (Holt 1998), baseball fans achieve distinction through the practice of classifying (Holt 1995). This occurs at the level of both objects and actions (practices). At the level of object, for example, distinction from baseball fans who support other teams is readily attained through the consumption of clothing that bears one's own team's insignia. At the level of actions, practices such as the "throw back" are used by Cubs fans to maintain distinction between themselves and other less knowledgeable fans. Normally when a baseball fan manages to catch a baseball that has been hit for a home run, it is kept as a treasured souvenir. If it is an opposing batter who has hit the home run, however, Cubs fans pride themselves on throwing the ball back as a gesture of defiance. Failure to throw it back identifies the spectator as a neophyte fan poorly versed in the fan culture. A different group of fans, the "lads" of Manchester United assert *their* distinctiveness through the practice of terrace-style fandom, drinking copious amounts of beer prior to the game, and singing and chanting during the game itself (King 1997). Aversion is expressed through an antipathy towards the more sedate style of fandom practiced by the 'new consumer' fan. The official merchandise, including team shirts, the *de rigueur* outfit of the 'new consumer' fan on matchday, is boycotted by the "lads". This paper will now examine the practices of another group of football fans who practice resistance through aversion *without* resorting to a boycott of their own team's merchandise.

THE CURRENT STUDY: THE FANS OF CORK CITY F.C.

In seeking a site for this study, we were influenced not only by the relative neglect of soccer fandom in the literature on consumer behavior, but also by Lofland and Lofland's (1995) principle of "starting where you are". One of the researchers being based in the city of Cork in southern Ireland meant that regular, in-depth access to the fans of Cork City Football (soccer) Club was possible. A period of prolonged immersion (Stewart 1998) in the local fan culture was carried out, involving participant observation during football matches in the club's home stadium over an eighteen month time period, and participant observation on several web-based fan discussion forums, including 'Foot.ie' and 'CityNet', over a somewhat longer timeframe. These discussion forums were chosen for participation partly on the basis of criteria for 'netnography' proffered by Kozinets (2002). While Kozinets recommends observation of online forums with high research-question relevance, the highest levels of traffic, high numbers of discrete posters, and so on, the low number of forums available to Cork City fans made the task of forum selection very straightforward. Citynet and Foot.ie met Kozinets' criteria more so than the small number of alternative options available to Cork City fans at the time. It should also be noted that while no record was kept of the total number of posts downloaded from these web forums, 'Citynet' was visited several

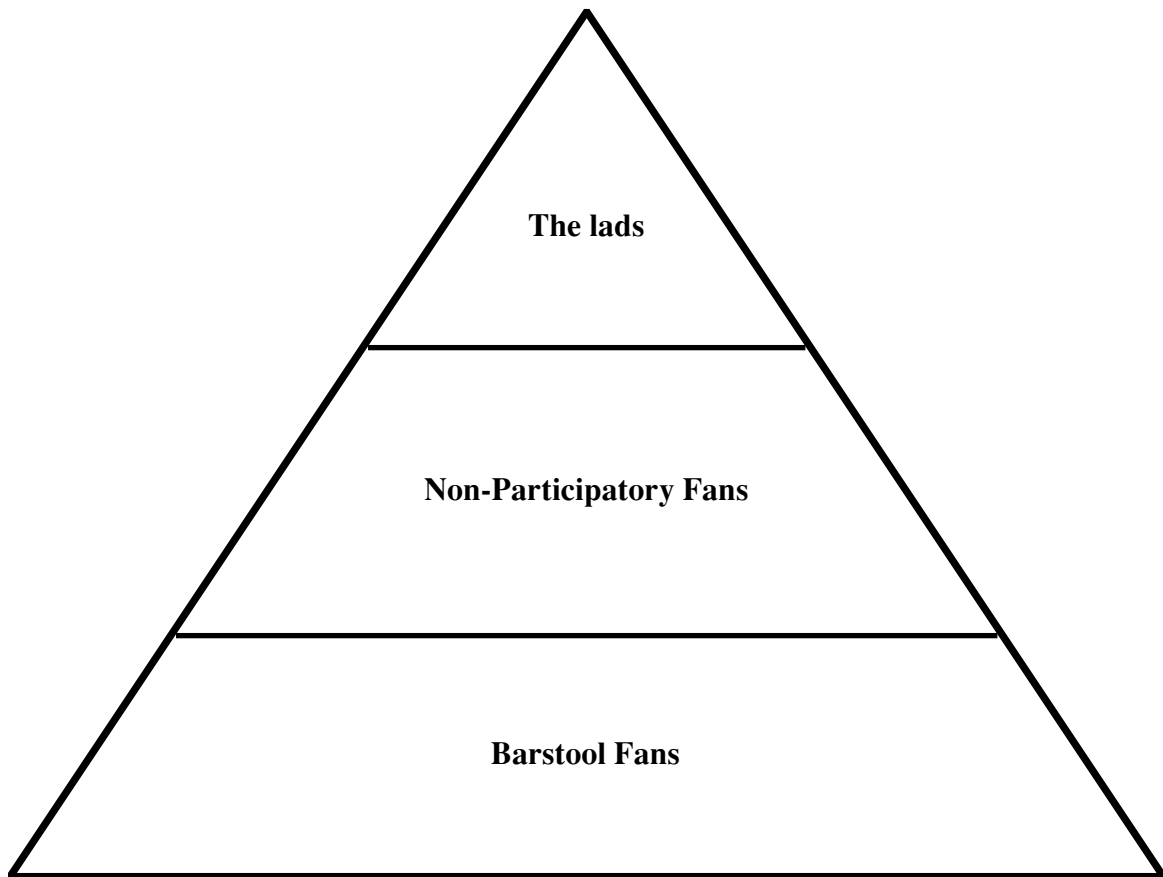
times a day, most weekdays, over a timeframe of several years so that any fresh posts could be read. When it closed down, the focus of attention switched to Foot.ie, a website for fans of Irish soccer clubs where each club has its own individual discussion forum. Themes identified from these web forums were subsequently introduced as discussion topics during interviews with fans. Respondents for these in-depth naturalistic interviews were initially selected using Lofland and Lofland's (1995) 'casting about' approach but purposive sampling (Stewart 1998) was subsequently used to select respondents who matched criteria identified through participant observation fieldwork. It became highly apparent during the participant observation process that the most active and vocal supporters at Cork City's home stadium were to be found in or near The Shed, the terrace (standing area) at the Turner's Cross end of the ground. This was observed, for example, throughout most of Cork City's home games for the duration of the 2004 football season. Usually, the most vocal of any soccer team's supporters tend to congregate at one end in this way, effectively making it the "home end" of the ground (Marsh *et al* 1997). This suggested that interviewing fans who frequented the Shed could generate rich, meaningful data. Having noted the predominance of males under thirty in the crowd of colourful noisy fans in the middle of the Shed, a number of these fans were interviewed, to explore their fandom through naturalistic dialogue. 'Richard', an accountant in his twenties, was interviewed over coffee in the student centre of the local university. 'Pablo' was interviewed in a pub prior to the match between Cork City and a French football team, Nantes AFC, in the Inter Toto Cup, in 2004. 'David', again of similar age, was interviewed one evening in a quiet pub, before going to play in his regular Tuesday night soccer match. 'Gerry', an older fan who prefers the seated Main Stand to the Shed, was also interviewed at around this time. By contrast, 'Greg' was interviewed later on in the study, after the pattern of antipathy towards fans of English football had been identified in data from the earlier interviews and web based discussion threads. His profile provided a match to the criteria used in the first round of purposive sampling, but with the additional characteristic of a distaste for televised English football. Finally, 'Eddie', a slightly older fan in his late thirties, was also selected for interview on this basis. The interview with Eddie was conducted in the living room of his home one evening after work. This facilitated the desired naturalistic approach to the interview. For example, Eddie could easily locate photographs and other memorabilia to show to the interviewer, as related topics arose in the course of the dialogue.

FAN PRACTICES, PERCEIVED AUTHENTICITY, AND FELT AVERSION

The literature on subculture and resistance consistently asserts that readily *accessible* cultural materials and practices are used to affirm distinction (Fiske 1989, Thornton 1995). In order to better understand the basis for distinction (as an aversion to the tastes of others) it is useful to consider what the data tell us about the practices and tastes the fans have. It is these practices and these tastes that provide a basis for comparison with the practices and tastes of others, to allow for the assertion of distinction (Holt 1995, Thornton 1995).

What can easily be observed on the Shed Terrace at any Cork City home fixture are the carnivalesque practices of ritualised group singing and chanting. Generally speaking, the intensity of the atmosphere tends to depend on the identity of the opposing team. If, for example, City are playing a European cup tie, this adds glamour and excitement to the occasion, while at the other end of the spectrum, a domestic league fixture against weaker opposition will

FIGURE 1
Hierarchy of Perceived Fan Authenticity



not be characterised by the same level of intensity. In addition to the practices of vocal support for their team, Cork City supporters usually create a ‘Sea of Green’ effect on the Shed by wearing replica team shirts and displaying giant flags and banners in team colours. The flags are usually unfurled and waved prior to kick-off and again at half-time, and this visual display, along with the pre-match singing and chanting, helps to establish a dramatic atmosphere inside the ground.

The fans’ participation in these rituals gives them a deeply felt sense of self as *participatory* Cork City supporters (Belk 1988, McCracken 1988:87). For these fans, being a Cork City supporter is something that you proactively *do*. They therefore make strong distinctions between themselves and other categories of soccer fan, who fail to practice fandom in the culturally appropriate way. In fact there are high levels of aversion for the practices of some of the other fans. The degree of aversion varies with the location of these other fans in the perceived hierarchy of fan authenticity (Figure 1):

The ‘lads’, in other words fans like ‘Pablo’ and ‘David’, see it as their duty to contribute to the atmosphere in the stadium. The ‘call to order’ (Bourdieu 1984:380) extends not only to attending matches but to being as vocal as possible, in order to play one’s part in supporting the team:

I think everything we do is basically to try and create an atmosphere in there, to support the team... It’s from the first whistle now to the end ...whether we win or lose, basically—that’s the way it should be, you know? (‘Pablo’)

As shown in Figure One, aversion is expressed for two other categories of fan, namely fans who attend games in the stadium, but who fail to join in the participatory style of support, and ‘barstool’ fans, who watch English soccer teams on television, instead of supporting their local team. The basis for aversion in the case of the former group is failure to practice participatory fandom:

I know it’s a big bone of contention for some people ... that people in the other parts of the ground don’t make an effort but what do you do, like? There’s no point in getting upset about it either ...you know? They’re not gonna change just cos you’re urging them on...at least they’re there anyway, they’re better than the people sitting at home watching ... Sky (i.e. English football) on the telly like so—I think any criticism should be qualified you know, for what it is (‘Richard’)

Commenting on a recent trip to Estonia to see an international match between the local team and the Republic of Ireland, ‘Eddie’ says:

What’s happened in the last couple of years is there’s so many just, trippers going to the match, and they kinda turn up like they’re going to the theatre or the cinema, and they just want to be entertained...you could see people around you—you can’t resent them, because they’re entitled to be there—but they just weren’t up for it, they just wanted to be entertained.

'Real' support is not always about being entertained, it is about duty, obligation, blood, sweat and tears. Even if the football on show is horrendous or the weather conditions are miserable, the 'real' fan gets on with the job of supporting the team:

I mean we've all been to horrible games like we'll say the (Bohemians) game just after the Malmo game ...we lost 1-0 and it was like-poor crowd, terrible weather, average game, you know?... (I)t's like those kind of games where people will go 'Ah...I'd much prefer being at home now, warm, watching the Simpsons or something' (laughter) (David)

Aversion for the 'barstool' fans is grounded in a number of factors, including their practice of mediated fandom, as well as their support for non-local clubs:

Well, I like to watch Man United and Arsenal ...but eh...that's for entertainment purposes-I wouldn't be one of those fellas standing there or sitting there on a barstool screaming at the TV screen! ('Gerry')

The seemingly throwaway remark "that's (only) for entertainment purposes" confirms that it is acceptable to watch football on television, as long as it is understood that such viewing is only for "entertainment purposes". Thus the mediated fandom of the 'barstool' fan is deemed far less authentic than the participatory fandom culturally understood to make a difference to the outcome of a game. The "barstool" fans are also denigrated for their practice of supporting English teams (rather than the more authentic practice of supporting one's local team):

I've an affinity to the team...being from Cork, you know? ...I never understood sitting in a pub watching football, just it doesn't appeal to me and it's kind of amusing to me, people saying 'we' talking about English teams...I can genuinely say 'we' going to Turner's Cross, it's not the biggest, but they're our own at the end of the day you know? ('Pablo')

'Pablo' being from Cork means that he is supporting his local team. For the 'lads', his is a more authentic form of support than that of the Irish soccer fan who supports an English team such as Manchester United. 'Pablo' places himself in the same category as native Mancunians who support their local club:

Your average football fan from Moss Side's going to be a Manchester City supporter (rather than a Man United fan)...he's following that football team because that's where he's from, not because they're winning trophies every year ... they (Manchester City)... were still getting 30,000 people in the Second Division ... you'd respect them as supporters for that.

Therefore, Irish fans of Manchester United are derogated not just because of failure to support their local team, not only because of their failure to practice participatory fandom, but also because of their perceived fickle preference for the winning of trophies, over the long-term unconditional loyalty expected of 'real' fans. Being a 'real' fan, for members of the Cork City subculture, prohibits anything other than single-minded monogamous devotion to one team:

A meanderer is a fella ...who goes to a live game and says 'I miss the replays' or 'I'd love a pint now' ...he meanders from (watching) Celtic V Rangers and Celtic are this great team...

then just after that Liverpool are playing Man United and then he's all into Liverpool...and then just after that they'll watch something else and they've always got this, they're a life long Liverpool and Celtic fan-they're not! They meander between 'em ('David')

The 'meanderer' is regarded as lacking in that crucial characteristic of the 'authentic' fan – a single-minded devotion to one team only. The meanderer *affects* fandom but seldom, if ever, actually *practices* fandom in the subculturally appropriate way. The demonstrated fickleness, the lack of committed passion for one team only, forms part of the basis for distinction between real fans and 'barstoolers'. Being a fan has to *matter* (Grossberg 1992). Full membership of the community of 'real' fans is reserved for the faithful who adhere to the code of unconditional loyalty, irrespective of the team's level of success, and who passionately practice participatory fandom. These practices will always be privileged over the lukewarm alternative demonstrated by any other group.

THE WINNING OF 'SPACE' AND THE EMBRACING OF THE MARKET

A key component in the Birmingham School's conceptualisation of subculture is resistance through the winning, or appropriation, of space. The working class "*have won space for their own forms of life. The values of this ...culture are registered everywhere, in material and social forms, in the shapes and uses of things, in patterns of recreation and leisure... (t)hese spaces are both physical ...and social (Clarke et al 1975:43)*".

In critiquing this view, Thornton (1995:25) asserts that space is 'won' by the actions of the *market*, in catering for a particular demographic. Yet in the context of Cork City FC's home ground of Turner's Cross, the tradition of the 'Shed' as the space that in a sense belongs to the 'real' fans, is a product of football fan culture and tradition, rather than a deliberate creation of the market. The market has informally facilitated this in the past through differential pricing between the (seated) Stand and the (standing) terrace patronised by younger low-income fans, but it is the *practices* of the fans on the Shed that have given it its meaning as hallowed ground reserved for those partisans who give their all to defend the honour of the team. It is highly illuminative to see how official Cork City merchandise is used in an unproblematic way to help create this space, through the group norm of buying and wearing official replica shirts to the match, creating the 'sea of green' effect discussed earlier. While this acts as a symbol to rally both fans and players, it is also a form of semiotic resistance to the 'barstool' fan practice of wearing the shirts of non-local clubs:

City are pretty good in that way, in that they usually (have the same shirt)...for two years-...other clubs (such as)...Manchester United-they'll probably have three shirts and they'll change them twice a year, you know? So it's not that expensive in that respect...the merchandise is pretty good quality as well ('Pablo')

'Pablo' clearly enjoys buying and using merchandise that facilitates the expression of self-as-local-fan. He regards the merchandise as being of "pretty good quality", hardly the thoughts of someone with an oppositional stance to the market. He also enjoys the expression of opposition to 'barstool' fandom that it allows him to practice. Pablo's resistance to the market is therefore bound up in his aversion for oppositional tastes. His aversion for excessive consumption of merchandise must be placed in the context of his cultural understanding of 'real' fandom. 'Real' fandom is something that cannot be bought, but rather is produced through a

combination of participatory behaviour and *appropriate*, rather than excessive, levels of merchandise consumption.

DISCUSSION

A key theme in the research of the Birmingham School was the expression of working class solidarity (Clarke 1975, Clarke *et al* 1975, Jefferson 1975). An 'us' versus 'them' attitude was expressed in every arena of working class life, particularly in the field of leisure. With the local football team being a particularly potent symbol of 'us' versus 'them', nothing less than absolute solidarity was acceptable. Contemporary football fan culture has inherited this sense of solidarity, this spirit of 'us' versus 'them' (Giulianotti 1999). In the case of fans of Cork City Football Club, the internal system of subcultural capital is systematically used to make distinctions between members of the subculture and other fans, particularly the 'barstool' fans. 'Other' is carefully constructed in ways that privilege 'ingroup' practice (Jancovich 2002, Thornton 1997, 1995, Wilson 2002). Cork City fans draw on the cultural belief that supporting one's *local* team is a *hallmark* of authentic football fandom (Giulianotti 1999:34-35). Thus while there is a degree of aversion for the practice of attending matches but not participating actively in supporter rituals, there is an acknowledgement that such non-participatory fans have at least made some effort to support their local team. 'Barstool' fans, however, being relatively restricted in their opportunities to practice participatory fandom, due for example to the cost of travelling from Cork to attend matches in England, are far more easily denigrated. They are usually confined to watching their heroes on television, unlike the Cork City fans who can easily travel the short distance to Turner's Cross. This allows the 'lads' to assert that theirs is the more authentic fandom. Furthermore, 'barstool' fans are described as glory hunters or meanderers, who transfer their affections with ease from one team to the next. This is a particularly barbed and highly subjective distinction, given the cultural significance of loyalty for football fans. The norm for Irish fans of English clubs is to practice lifelong loyalty to their teams (Richardson and O'Dwyer 2003), in keeping with the 'call to order' (Bourdieu 1984) of diehard loyalty that prevails across the wider culture of football fandom (Giulianotti 1999).

What all of this confirms is that the construction of 'other' does not have to be accurate, but must have sufficient perceived credibility for the affirmation of distinction. Resistance in this case can therefore be understood as the assertion of an oppositional stance to alternative tastes, or as Hogg and Savolainen (1998) describe it, aversion. Its purpose is the affirmation of the distinctiveness of the fans' own identity, and not the expression of ideological opposition to the market. It is therefore at the 'weak' end of the resistance continuum outlined by Fournier (1998). Market offerings that facilitate the group's identity are readily embraced, while alternative market offerings are rejected -not because they are market offerings, but because they are indicative of the oppositional taste of 'other'. There is resistance to the oppositional tastes represented by the behaviours and practices of the barstoolers, trippers, and meanderers, because these practices imply that fandom is something that can simply be 'bought' and that purchases alone can make the purchaser a real fan. For the 'lads' of Cork City, being a supporter is something that you *do*. Anything less than this, any suggestion that fandom can be achieved through simply buying a shirt, a scarf, or even a match ticket, is fiercely resisted because it represents a threat to the distinctive identity of the group. The lads' resistance, therefore, is not directly to the market, but rather to oppositional tastes, chosen for derogation on the basis of proximity in socio-cultural space, and the relative ease with which the distinctiveness of ingroup practices can be asserted.

Finally, the identity of this group is not primarily asserted through their aversion to the tastes of 'other', but through the felt sense of *communitas* (Belk *et al* 1989, Maffesoli 1996) derived from their communal style of fandom, including of course their mass displays of tribal colours (Derbaix *et al* 2002). This contrasts somewhat with the suggestion that "we are (first and foremost) what we reject (Fournier 1998)" but the concept of taste as distaste nevertheless plays a fundamentally important role in clarifying the lads' sense of self. It can certainly be speculated that these consumers would have found it very difficult to develop a clear, sustainable sense of group identity, were it not for the fundamentally important role played by aversion.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Consumer Response to Price Presentation Formats: Implications for Partitioned Pricing and Transaction Bundling

Rebecca Hamilton, University of Maryland

SESSION OVERVIEW

Consider the following scenarios:

An online auto parts retailer is choosing its pricing strategy. Is it better to charge \$89.95 for a specific part plus \$32.50 for shipping or \$69.95 plus \$52.50 for shipping?

A catalog company is setting prices. Is it better to charge \$39 for a jacket and \$12 for shipping or charge \$51 including shipping? Will preferences change if the price of the jacket is \$149?

An auto dealer is making an offer to a consumer purchasing a new car and trading in an old car. Is it better to provide a good deal on the new car and a bad deal on the trade-in, a bad deal on the new car and a good deal on the trade-in, or a moderately good deal on both?

These three scenarios highlight transactions in which prices are partitioned among multiple, separable components that are naturally related (e.g., price of product and price of shipping) or occur together in time (e.g., buying a new car and trading in an old one). Although the idea that differences in price presentation affect consumer evaluations and purchase intentions is well entrenched in the marketing literature, it is only recently that research has begun to examine how consumers process partitioned prices (Morwitz et al. 1998; Xia and Monroe 2004).

Earlier work suggests that consumers may process partitioned and non-partitioned prices differently. Consumers may use simplifying strategies to process partitioned prices, such as ignoring relatively small surcharges or anchoring on one component of the partitioned price, making partitioned prices seem lower than non-partitioned prices (Morwitz et al. 1998). There is also evidence that prices partitioning can make certain components more salient than when the same components are presented under a single price tag (Chakravarti et al. 2002).

Building on this earlier work, the three papers in this session provide evidence that heuristic processing and salience cannot fully explain differences in consumers' reactions to partitioned prices when the same total price is partitioned in different ways. In the first paper, Hamilton and Srivastava show that consumers systematically prefer that more of the total price be allocated to components that are high in perceived value rather than low in perceived value, suggesting that consumer price sensitivity can vary across components of a partitioned offer. In the second paper, Roggeveen, Xia, and Monroe show that consumer skepticism moderates the beneficial effect of partitioned relative to non-partitioned prices. Using attribution theory as the underlying framework, they show that preferences for partitioned prices are influenced by both beliefs that a company makes a profit from shipping charges and the price of the product. Finally, Srivastava and Chakravarti demonstrate that variations in price presentation format affect consumers' valuations for both the overall transaction and each component transaction. Overall transaction evaluations are influenced by quite malleable component transaction prices.

Together, these papers show that consumer perceptions are influenced in a systematic and predictable way by price partition-

ing. Eric Greenleaf, the session discussant, highlighted both the theoretical and practical contributions of this work.

EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

“Consumer Reactions to Partitioned Prices: Variations in Price Sensitivity Across Components”

Rebecca Hamilton, University of Maryland
Joydeep Srivastava, University of Maryland

Prices are often partitioned into two or more components that the consumer must purchase together, such as an auto part and the labor to install it, or a book purchased online plus shipping and handling. When both components are mandatory, sellers can choose to allocate more or less of the total price to each component. Controlling for the total price, we show that consumers have systematic preferences for offers based on the relative sizes of price components.

This research links consumers' preferences for certain price partitions to their price sensitivity for various components of the total price. We propose that differences in price sensitivity across the components of a partitioned price are linked to consumers' perceptions of value. The perceived value of a product is positively influenced by product benefits and negatively influenced by price (Dodds, Monroe and Grewal 1991; Zeithaml 1988). If partitioning promotes component-level evaluation, we propose that consumers should be less sensitive to prices of components that are perceived to provide greater consumption benefit.

To test this proposition, participants in our first study were asked to choose between two suppliers of a new front bumper for their car, supplier A and supplier B. The auto part, a good, was combined with two different service components. For half of the participants, the offer was described as being from an auto parts supplier, and was partitioned into separate charges for the front bumper and shipping. For the other half of the participants, the offer was described as being from an auto service shop, and was partitioned into separate charges for the front bumper and installation. Holding the total price constant, supplier A charged 27% of the total price for the service (shipping or labor), while supplier B charged 43% of the total price for the service. To minimize the effect of differential processing across components, we also provided the total price. Participants ($N=74$) systematically preferred to pay a lower percentage of the total price for the service component (which provides less consumption benefit), regardless of whether the service was shipping or installation.

In study 2, to further rule out a processing explanation, we varied whether the good or the service was the larger of the two components. For half of the participants, the service component, installation, was 76% of the total price, and the good, new headlamps, was 24% of the total price. For the other half of the participants, installation was 27% of the total price, and the good, a new front bumper, was 73% of the total price. Again, participants ($N=85$) preferred to pay less for the service component, and there was no difference across conditions.

In study 3, we used a conjoint task to measure price sensitivity more directly. In contrast to the within-subjects designs of studies 1 and 2, we used a between-subjects design, and we partitioned the price of two goods. Participants were tasked with selecting a new

refrigerator (as in Chakravarti et al. 2002) that had both an icemaker and a sound silencing system. We chose these two features because we expected them to vary in their perceived consumption benefits. A pretest ($N=76$) indicated that our college student participants perceived more consumption benefit in the icemaker than in the sound silencing system. After study participants read the scenario, they ranked their preferences for nine different refrigerators. For half of the participants, the price of the icemaker and the base price of the refrigerator were varied across alternatives, and the sound silencing system was simply indicated to be present. For the other half of the participants, the price of the sound silencing system and the base price of the refrigerator were varied, and the icemaker was simply indicated to be present.

We regressed participants' preference rankings on the component price levels to measure participants' sensitivity to changes in the base price of the refrigerator and to changes in the price of the icemaker or sound silencing system components. We performed separate regressions for each of the 81 participants, and then we compared the beta weights across conditions. As expected, we found that sensitivity to component prices (as measured by the unstandardized beta weights) was significantly higher for those in the sound silencing system condition than for those in the icemaker condition. These results indicate that participants were more sensitive to changes in the price of the low-benefit component, the sound silencing system, than to changes in the price of the high-benefit component, the icemaker. In contrast, participants were equally sensitive to changes in the base price of the refrigerator across conditions. Thus, even when price information is presented in exactly the same way, the nature of the components makes a difference.

In summary, controlling for processing differences and salience of price components, consumers are more sensitive to changes in the prices of some components than other components, whether these components are goods and services (studies 1 and 2) or pure goods (study 3). Specifically, in study 3, price sensitivity was demonstrated to be higher for a component perceived to have low consumption benefit than for a component perceived to have high consumption benefit. Because price partitioning encourages component-level processing, sellers should consider the perceived consumption benefits of components when allocating the total price among components.

“How Attributions and the Product's Price Impact the Effectiveness of Price Partitioning”

Anne L. Roggeveen, Babson University

Lan Xia, Bentley College

Kent B. Monroe, Richmond University

As on-line shopping becomes more popular, marketers face the decision of how to present shipping and handling charges to their customers. Some companies charge one price for the product and advertise free shipping and handling (i.e., bundled price). Other companies charge one price for the product and a separate price for the shipping and handling (i.e., partitioned price). Information from the Direct Marketing Association indicates charging a bundled price and advertising “free shipping and handling” is the most effective purchase incentive (DMA 2000, p. 63). Yet, there is evidence that partitioned pricing may be advantageous to direct marketers. Partitioning shipping charges may lead to lower total recalled costs, which is expected to lead to increased demand (Morwitz, Greenleaf, and Johnson 1998). Research shows however that these results are qualified by how appropriate the consumer views the shipping charge to be, which is influenced by the amount, type, and presentation of surcharge (Xia and Monroe 2004).

This research extends the price partitioning research in two ways. First, we examine a potential boundary of the positive effect of price partitioning by looking at the interaction of attributions about the profit companies make from the shipping charge and product price. Previous research has shown that consumer skepticism about shipping charges moderates how the price format influences consumer reactions. Specifically, Schindler, Morrin, and Bechwati (2004) found that when customers are skeptical, bundling is more effective than partitioning. We expect that knowing a company makes a profit from the shipping charges will cause consumers to be skeptical such that bundling will be more effective than partitioning when the company makes a profit but we expect this to hold only when the total cost is fairly inexpensive. The rationale is that when the product is inexpensive and shipping is bundled, the overall cost seems reasonable and shipping is not salient. However, when shipping is partitioned from an inexpensive product's price, the shipping charge appears high in relation to the product cost and hence becomes salient. In contrast, for expensive products, when shipping is bundled and the total price seems high, consumers prefer to know how much the shipping charge is with expensive products. Therefore, when the product is inexpensive, bundled price is more effective than partitioned price but when the product is expensive, partitioned price is more effective.

In a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ between-subjects design ($n=243$), the base product's price (\$39 or \$149 jacket), whether the shipping charge is partitioned (partitioned vs. bundled), and the attribution for the shipping charge (company does not make a profit from the shipping vs. company does make a profit from the shipping) were manipulated. A shipping and handling charge of \$12 was applied to all conditions. We find the hypothesized three-way interaction.

Second, while previous research on price partitioning research has focused on the influence of price format on pre-purchase processes, we examine whether partitioned pricing influences consumers' product return after purchase. After measuring purchase intentions, a follow-up scenario was provided suggesting that after the jacket was purchased, the color of the jacket did not look as you thought it would. Then, participants are told the shipping price is non-refundable and asked whether they would return the jacket. We find that partitioned price leads to lower return intentions compared with the bundled price, but only for the inexpensive product. When the product is expensive, return intention is high regardless of the price format. Analysis revealed that when shipping costs are bundled and the jacket is inexpensive, participants believe they will be refunded more money hence the higher likelihood to return. In addition, we find that knowing a company does not make a profit from the shipping charges makes consumers think they will get more money back when the shipping is bundled (versus partitioned) with the product's price.

Study 2, replicating the results in a different context, examines how a product's weight influences consumer reactions to partitioning of prices. It is expected that when the weight is light (heavy), consumers will react similarly to the condition in which they knew the company was making a profit (not making a profit) from the shipping charge. Using a 2 (partitioned versus bundled) $\times 2$ (light product versus heavy product) $\times 2$ (inexpensive vs. expensive product) between-subjects design, we examined both pre- and post-purchase reactions.

Overall, this research suggests that managing consumers' price perceptions using different price structures is crucial. For a relatively low priced product, a high shipping and handling charge would scare consumers away even if the charge is honestly just to cover the cost. Therefore, shifting all or part of this cost to the base price of the product may be a good tactic. On the other hand,

charging the same amount of shipping for a higher priced product could be well accepted by consumers and create perceptions that benefit the retailers.

“Transaction Bundling: Effect of Price Presentation on Consumer Perceptions”

Joydeep Srivastava, *University of Maryland*
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Consumers are often confronted with transactions that are naturally related or occur together in time. For example, new car purchases are often made in conjunction with the trade-in of an older car and a vacation involves the purchase of air-ticket and lodging. In such situations, marketers have various options in how to price and present the overall transaction. For example, a car dealer has the option to treat the purchase of a new car and the trading-in of the old car as separate transactions with different price tags or as a bundled (consolidated) transaction where the overall transaction is presented under a single price tag. The manner in which the overall transaction is priced can significantly alter consumer perceptions (Chakravarti et al. 2002).

Even when the transaction is presented under separate price tags, a car dealer may create different gain (loss) scenarios from the same net transaction. To the extent that reference prices are available for both transactions, the manner in which the component transactions are priced could lead to different representations of the separate transactions and hence the overall exchange episode (Purohit 1995). For example, a car dealer can choose to provide a good deal on the new car but a poor deal on the trade-in. Alternatively, the dealer can provide a good deal on the trade-in and a poor deal on the new car, or the dealer could provide moderately good deals on both the new car and the trade-in, while maintaining the same net dollar amount for the overall transaction. Although marketers can implement these different price presentations relatively easily, there is little systematic research on the effects of such price presentation on consumers.

This research examines how variations in the price presentation of transaction bundles affect consumer perceptions. While economic theory would predict no differences in consumer preferences across the different price presentations, the mental accounting principle of segregate the gains (Thaler 1985) would suggest that consumers are likely to prefer the overall transaction where the dealer provides moderately good deals on both the new car and the trade-in. Alternatively, consumers may be more sensitive to the price of the new car as that is the focal transaction or consumers may be more sensitive to the price of the trade-in because of the general inclination to demand more for giving up something they own (endowment).

This paper reports the results of two studies that examine consumer preferences for transaction bundles as a function of price presentation. Using a scenario involving the purchase of a new car along with the trade-in of an old car, study 1 had six conditions, all with a separate price for the new car and a separate price for the trade-in. In all conditions, reference prices were provided for the new car and the trade-in such that the overall transaction would always result in a gain. The six conditions varied how the net total price was split across the new car and the trade-in. For example, in the conditions where there was a gain on one component and loss on the other, the price of the new car was \$15,000 and the trade-in value was \$4,000 whereas in the related condition, the new car price was \$18,000 and the trade-in value was \$7,000. The results of study 1 (n=158) show the different price presentations systematically affected consumer perceptions. Specifically, in contrast to the principle of segregating the gains, consumers were more sensitive

to the price of the new car. The overall transactions in which the price of the new car was relatively low were preferred to the transactions in which the price of the trade-in value was relatively high. These results suggest that consumer preferences for overall transactions are affected by how the component transactions are priced.

Study 2 then adds a consolidated condition where the overall transaction is presented under a single price tag to the six conditions used in study 1 and also examines how consumer attachment (involvement) with the trade-in affects preferences for the different transactions. The results (n=296) replicate the findings of study 1 in the low attachment condition. However, when consumers are trading-in a car that they were attached to, they prefer the overall transactions where the price of the trade-in is relatively high. In addition, the consolidated price presentation is uniformly preferred to the segregated price presentation in the high attachment condition but not in the low attachment condition. Together the findings of studies 1 and 2 show that consumers are differentially price sensitive to the component transactions and that this price sensitivity is malleable. The findings have both theoretical and managerial implications.

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Scale Development for Consumer Confusion

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INTRODUCTION

Consumers experienced an unrivalled expansion of options with reference to entertainment, lifestyle, and working life within the last decades. Just consider of the countless TV stations, the ever increasing choice of sodas or the numerous working models. This rising freedom is often associated with a higher standard of living. Consumers are gaining power—this popular development is called consumer democracy (cf., Bosshart 2004). Not retailers determine what consumers buy, but consumers themselves. But as Caldwell recently pointed out (2004), most people are terrible choosers. As freedom of choice is accompanied with abandoning traditions and habits, one is required to get involved with the single offers in an increasing assortment pool. Years ago, for example, buying a Coke was not a challenge. Today, one has to choose between 15 or more varieties (among brands: e. g., Coca Cola, Pepsi, Virgin Cola but also within product lines: e. g., Coca Cola Vanilla, Crystal or Diet). Thereby, most consumers are driven to make the right choices. This “tyranny of choice”—as Barry Schwartz (2004) named the phenomenon of increasing choices and consumer suffering—can cause Consumer Confusion. Consumers are not able to choose efficiently anymore. Which of the 200 TV-channels complies with my needs tonight? What is the difference between the two most common types of coffee (Robustica and Arabica)? Which components are essential for a home computer? These mainly rudimentary examples indicate, that the explosion of choice plays an important role in confusing consumers. Malhotra (1984) demonstrated that product variety in retail environments leads to a higher decision density for consumers which can “result in a variety of dysfunctional consequences such as *confusion*, panic, perplexity, frustration and withdrawal” (Malhotra 1984, 14).

Not only the increasing options but all stimuli generated by marketing instruments are potential causes for Consumer Confusion. Missing quality references, frequent price changes or complex indications of product compositions are store environment stimuli that may cause confusion. Of course, consumers are able to adapt to any environment but retailers are thereby confronted with negative consequences. Due to reduction strategies (simplification of purchase decisions), consumers often abandon their purchase intention or make their decision by means of just a few criterions (e. g., price).

There is clearly need for research on this issue: “While the design of pleasant retail environments is certainly a pertinent marketing goal, it might be also useful to study the darker side of the shopping experience and try to identify the environmental elements that create negative consumer feelings during shopping” (D’Astous 2000, 149). Our study intends to follow this direction for future research. Based on qualitative and quantitative studies, a scale measuring Consumer Confusion is developed. On one side, the measurement instrument provides a basis for future research, investigating interrelationships between different groups of consumers or different industries, and on the other, it offers retailers a tool that can be employed to observe current triggers of confusion. By identifying these key elements, retailers are given a guidance for their strategy development and consequently, for profiling their stores.

The paper is divided into three major sections. First, we discuss previous research that has been conducted concerning

consumer confusion. In this first section, we identify factors which conceptionally lead to Consumer Confusion. Secondly, we present our qualitative findings on confusion triggers and subsequently, we depict the quantitative study that allowed us to develop the scale for Consumer Confusion. Finally, we discuss the general implications of our findings and point out directions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Confusion as a phenomenon of its own is not yet considered in well-established consumer behavior scholar books (e. g., Assael 1997; Blackwell, Miniard, and Engel 2001). Nevertheless, confusion triggers have been mentioned in the marketing literature for quite a long time, but either in other respect or in a very isolated manner.

Trade-mark infringements enforced research efforts concerning the physical similarity of original brand and me-too products (c.f., Miaoulis and D’Amato 1978; Loken, Ross and Hinkle 1986; Foxman, Muehling and Berger 1990; Kapferer 1995). Because consumers transfer attributes (e. g., quality, functionality) from the original brand to imitational products if similarity is given, manufacturers of original products had-and still have-a strong interest to restrain copycats. The research process enabled the judges to settle objectively disputes of manufacturers in courtrooms. Still prominent is the action “Tic Tac vs. Mighty Mints” which was taken place in the seventies. This biased perception is called *Brand Confusion* (Mitchell and Papavassiliou 1999, 320). While research on Brand Confusion exclusively focuses on the physical similarity of products, research on Consumer Confusion extends this research interest by capturing the store environments multi-dimensionality. While Brand Confusion predominantly concerns (legal) issues between manufacturers, Consumer Confusion originates at the store and involves retailers’ as well as consumers’ behavior.

Having recognized, that a store *environment* does have a substantial influence on shopping (and in particular choice) behavior, environment psychologists urged to focus on confusion triggers other than just product appearance (c.f., Berlyne 1960). Subsequently in retail management, researchers dealt amongst other variables with the effect of music (c.f., Yalch and Spangenberg 1990), colors (c.f., Bellizzi, Crowley, and Hasty 1983), light (c.f., Areni and Kim 1994) and scent (c.f., Mitchell, Kahn, and Knasko 1995). Although this research stream has isolated the effects of particular environmental stimuli to date, there is not much understanding of which elements in the retail atmosphere are most salient to consumers when forming an approach-avoidance evaluation (Turley and Milliman 2000). However, to create successful marketing measures, it is crucial to understand what (combination of) variables contribute to an orienting/confusing environment which subsequently leads to approach/avoidance behavior. Furthermore, consumers don’t perceive an environment element (e. g. scent) in an isolated manner when entering a store. The perception is affected by versatile interacting components. In order to evaluate a store’s potential to confuse consumers, the focus has to be on the environment (including perceivable signals of all marketing instruments).

Mitchell and Papavassiliou (1997 and 1999) first initiated a holistic consideration of Consumer Confusion. They widened the research interest from the rather tight perspective of trade-mark infringement to a more holistic discussion including additional

triggers of confusion in a store environment. They speak of product, price and promotional confusion. Even though, their research broadened the perspective on a relevant phenomenon that has not received sufficient attention in the past, proximate research mostly neglected the conceptual work of Mitchell and Papavassiliou—with the exception of Walsh (2002). However, the latter still focuses on product performance. The factors stimuli similarity, stimuli overload and stimuli ambiguity emphasize merely the emergence of confusion due to characteristics of the perceived assortment in a store (e. g. similarity or variety of products).

So from our point of a *conceptual and empirical analysis of all potential confusion triggers* in a store environment has not yet been conducted. This step seems in particular crucial because the rising degree of competition has led many retailers to intensify their marketing efforts without understanding its (*potentially negative*) impact on consumers (e.g. due to inconsistency or untrustworthiness of the efforts, c.f. Bitner 1992). For instance, many European retailers tried to meet the emerging customer need for environment friendly products. To give consumers orientation, retailers introduced new product labels. Indeed, labelling products enhances mental convenience but since each retailer initiated many equivalent labels for different product ranges using even different assessment standards, the marketing effort lost credibility and entailed confusion. By introducing the Consumer Confusion phenomenon, we want to sensitize retail industry to select marketing measures wisely and in line with their strategy. To do so, retailers need a scale to measure Consumer Confusion in order to assess the impact of (newly introduced) marketing activities.

In order to develop a relevant scale for Consumer Confusion we define the phenomenon as *a result of a temporary exceedance of an individual capacity threshold for absorbing and processing environment stimuli. Consumer Confusion is an emotional state that makes it difficult for consumers to select and interpret stimuli.* The failure of proper information selection leads to lower decision quality or efficiency respectively. Referring to the optimal stimulation level theory (cf., Raju 1981), consumers lose steadily orientation as soon as an individual critical threshold (by means of stimuli intensity) is exceeded. As this threshold is individual and relatively stable, consumers get confused at different levels of stimuli intensity. Up to this optimal stimulation level, consumers are indeed in search of surprising or dynamic stimuli (e.g., promotions or new products). But exceeding the critical threshold, consumers get confused gradually. By specifying stimuli that trigger this exceedance, we provide an instrument to regulate the stimuli intensity in a retail environment. This measure is crucial considering that consumers perceive confusion as a negative emotional state. Nonetheless, through specific behavior patterns (e.g., selective perception), consumers are able to regain an optimal stimulation level. However, this entails a creeping consumer reticence (due to an increasing loss of motivation to approach unknown stimuli), which reflects in stagnating/declining sales. In other words, stimulation is positive up to a certain threshold. Beyond that point, the perceived stimulation intensity turns successively into Consumer Confusion and symptoms of consumption fatigue.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

For conceptualization, we have to identify factors accounting for stimuli intensity within an environment, and thus mapping the assumed structure of the hypothetical construct of Consumer Confusion. The assumption is, the higher the stimuli intensity of an environment, the higher the potential for Consumer Confusion. The intention is that the items, generated by the qualitative study, may be assigned to exactly one of these subsequent conceptually identified factors.

Mitchell and Papavassiliou (1997, 1999) and Walsh (2002) first dealt with marketing related triggers of Consumer Confusion. The authors tie in with the research findings of cognitive psychologists, referring to the information-overload studies of Jacoby (1977) and Malhotra, Jain and Lagakos (1982). Confusion is seen to originate from product overchoice and the information carried on products, hence triggers of confusion turned out to be “stimulus overload”, “stimulus similarity” and “ambivalent, misleading or inadequate information”. Since the determination of these factors took place with a strong focus on products and furthermore originates primarily in the discipline of cognitive psychology, we recognized the need to expand this perspective. Thereby, we came across environmental psychology, which comprises cognitive and emotional consumer responses and entails all elements perceived by consumers in a retail store. We targeted all factors that are capable of increasing the *information rate*.

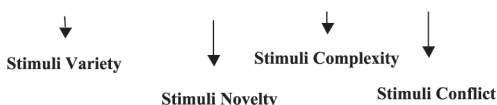
As essential factors for the information rate, Wohlwill identified mainly “variation”, “novelty”, “complexity”, “incongruence”, “intensity” and “surprise” in his first article (1966). In his second contribution (1974), he condensed the factors to three variables: “intensity”, “variation” and “patterning”. Even before, Berlyne (1960) has documented-exploring stimulus patterns which affect stimulus selection-very similar variables: “novelty”, “uncertainty”, “conflict” and “complexity”. “Uncertainty” can be seen as equivalent to Wohlwill’s “variety” (see FIGURE 1), because Berlyne defines “uncertainty” by the “range of alternative options” (Berlyne 1960). Mehrabian and Russell (1974) continued with the variables identified by the psychologists Wohlwill and Berlyne respectively and developed a unidimensional explanation of the complex stimuli constellation in a retail environment. The concept of information rate integrates all single stimuli within a specified environment and allows a classification by means of the stimuli’s effect on consumers. Mehrabian and Russell (1974) characterized the information rate by the factors “novelty” (unusual and surprising stimuli) and “complexity” (number and changes of stimuli). The information rate is, generally speaking, defined as the sum of information per time unit contained in the environment (see also Raju 1981; Steenkamp, Baumgartner, and Van der Wulp 1996). In other words, the more unfamiliar and the more complex an environment is perceived by consumers, the higher their individual perceived information rate.

Figure 1 summarizes all relevant factors identified by the most important researchers in the discipline of environmental psychology and Consumer Confusion. Interestingly, the Consumer Confusion research approach regards “overload” and “similarity” as isolated dimensions. However, empirical evidence shows that the more items in a product line (even though they objectively differ from each other), the more alike consumers perceive them (Bijmolt et al. 1998). This finding indicates not to address “stimuli overload” and “stimuli similarity” in an isolated way. Furthermore, the factor “surprising” can be expressed by “novelty”, and “intensity” describes the intenseness of the information rate as a whole. We finally identified four constitutive factors for characterizing the information rate, which are widely recognized in environment psychology literature: “stimuli variety”, “stimuli novelty”, “stimuli complexity” and “stimuli conflict”.

Stimuli variety refers to the number of alternative options within an environment. Thereby the options can also be non-decisional like ceiling danglers or technological applications. Stimuli variety arouses uncertainty about matching the options with the own needs. Consumers do not have any cognitive patterns for unknown stimuli yet. These situational effects are subsumed in the factor *stimuli novelty*. Diffuse and unclear perceptions of objects cause for *stimuli complexity*. Thereby not the amount but the quality

FIGURE 1
Conceptualising the Information Rate

EP	Berlyne 1960	Uncertainty	Novelty	Complexity	Conflict		
EP	Wohlwill 1966 and 1974	Variety	Novelty	Complexity	Incongruence	Intensity	Surprising
EEP	Mehrabian and Russell 1974		Novelty	Complexity			
EEP	Donovan and Rossiter 1982	Variety	Novelty		Irregularity		
CEP	Bost 1987	Variety	Diversity				Surprising
CEP	Gröppel 1991		Full of life				Surprising
CC	Mitchell and Papavassiliou, 1997 u. 1999	Overchoice Product Similarity		Ambiguous, misleading or inadequate information			
CC	Walsh 2002	Stimulus Overload Stimulus Similarity		Stimulus Ambiguity			



EP = Environmental psychology
 EEP = Emotional environmental psychology
 CEP = Cognitive environmental psychology
 CC = Consumer Confusion

of the subjectively perceived stimuli raise complexity. There is a need for more cognitive effort to comprehend the immediate environment or parts of it. *Stimuli conflict* at last is characterized by two or more similar distincted stimuli. There is more than one appropriate stimulus to solve decision problems.

RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Although research has been done in operationalizing Consumer Confusion, it has never comprised all environment stimuli. Dominantly, the focus was set on products (e. g., similarity and overchoice) or information on products (e. g., similarity and overload). Confusion triggers emerging from other marketing instruments (e. g., store personnel, price strategy) are often not considered. We strive to identify precise triggers of Consumer Confusion within a retail environment. Thereby we specify factors based on the above mentioned research, but determine their indicators by means of qualitative research and with a specific focus on shopping behavior.

The scale development process (see FIGURE 2) thereby relies on widely accepted paradigms provided by Churchill (1979) and applied or reviewed by Peter (1981), Anderson and Gerbing (1982), Gerbing and Anderson (1988), as well as Baumgartner and Homberg (1996).

To describe the complexity of the Consumer Confusion phenomenon, we accomplished a conceptual analysis. On the basis of the conceptual conclusions, we conducted four focus groups to operationalize the identified theoretical factors. This procedure ensures the generation of an initial pool of items. Subsequently, we purified the Consumer Confusion scale by exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. The qualitative and quantitative analyses are discussed in detail in the following sections.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

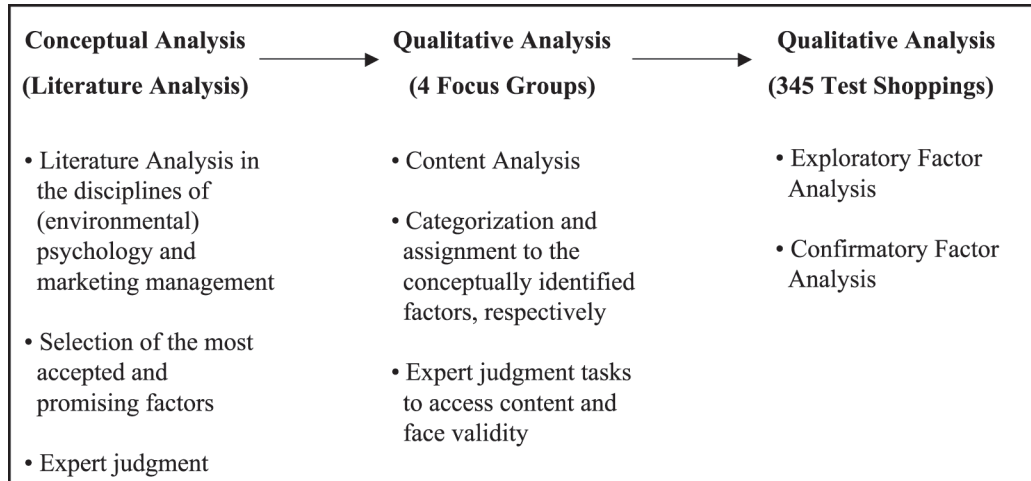
Vaughn, Schumm, and Sinagub (1996) have characterized focus groups as a valid method for learning about participants'

conceptualisations of particular phenomena. Through participant interaction, it's possible to gain insights into individual experiences (Steward and Shaqmdasani 1990). These anecdotes-related to confusion triggers during grocery shopping-account for the generation of relevant items. Content analysis of the focus group discussions form a systemized procedure to identify these items which subsequently can be used to develop a questionnaire for the quantitative study (cf., Greenbaum 1988; Wolff, Knodel and Sittitrai 1993; Nassar-McMillan and Borders 2002). This procedure assures that conscious and unconscious facets of the research interest are gathered in the questionnaire: "The presence of others leads individuals to focus attention on themselves and increases self-awareness and thought about one's own attitudes and feelings" (Bristol and Fern 1993, 445).

To allow for a high content validity, we conducted a pilot test conducting a focus group with four consumers. Consequently we had to slightly interchange some questions in order to guarantee an efficient discussion. Ensuring a representative sample of shoppers, respondents were recruited with regard to customer demographics (obtained by analysing the loyalty card data base of a dominant Swiss grocery store- over 80% of the sales volume is generated by loyalty cards) of the grocery store concerning gender, age and, size of household. The final sample included 14 women and seven men, ranging from 20 to 63 years of age. 11 consumers stemmed from family households, six from single households and the rest from apartment-sharing communities.

The moderator of the focus groups was given a semi-structured discussion guideline. First, the respondents were provided with a brief introduction to the research content and goals. To open the discussion, participants spontaneously had to think of sources of confusion in a retail environment (cf., Fern 2001). Respondents were subsequently asked to recall appendant shopping situations. The interviewers were instructed to ask follow-up questions to ensure that the potential confusion triggers are identified non-ambiguously. All four focus groups were recorded and transcribed.

FIGURE 2
Scale Development Process



Following the process of Mayring's (2003) qualitative content analysis, the transcribed focus group discussions were reduced to relevant indicators, which consequently were assigned to the four factors gained by the conceptual analysis earlier on. Four faculty members familiar with the research project conducted this process independently. A closing discussion led to a minimization of the disagreements. The initial item-generation process produced 26 items: three items for stimuli variety, eight items for stimuli novelty, three items for stimuli complexity and three items for stimuli conflict. A pool of nine items was not assignable to the four initial and conceptually identified factors representing the information rate. Because three, respectively six, non-classified items could easily be subsumed as component elements to a subordinate factor, two new factors called "stimuli comfort" and "stimuli reliability" were created. The initial pool of 26 potential scale items was submitted to a multi-sample scale purification process, which is described next.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Scale purification is accomplished with detailed item analyses, exploratory factor analyses, confirmatory factor analyses, and an initial assessment of scale reliability and unidimensionality. We thereby follow the suggestions of Churchill (1979) and Gerbing and Anderson (1988) to item reduction and to assess factor structure. The quantitative study is based on the findings of the qualitative analysis. Thereby, environmental psychologists usually accomplish their empirical considerations by observing individuals in their *behavioural context* (e. g., Donovan et al. 1994; Ittelson et al. 1977; Turley and Milliman 2000).

In order to confront consumers with real shopping situations, we conducted a "buying test" (c.f., Titus and Everett 1996). We provided consumers with a predetermined shopping list, asking them to look for specific groceries within the store. In that way, test persons were immediately confronted with the store environment (e.g., product offering, advertising message) and subsequently with potential confusion triggers. The shopping list is thereby considered relevant, because "if shoppers are familiar with the store, they may experience preconditioned emotional approach or avoidance responses that would override or even hinder the emotions induced by the store atmosphere. Therefore, the validity of the study may be affected" (Tai and Fung 1997, 335). Shopping routines are often expressions of (unconscious) avoidance behavior. Consumers learn

to act in a certain way in order to shelter themselves from too many stimuli and subsequently keep this behavior routine for a (long) period of time—thus there is hardly any cognitive effort in deciding for a product. However, these "reduction strategies" do not constantly prevent consumers from confusion: through marketing measures like product relaunches or changes in product packaging, just to name two, consumers' reduction strategies can become obsolete. This is why we used a shopping list. The list breaches the consumers' routines and confronts them with all environmental stimuli—they now have to newly evaluate the product offer. However, we only considered everyday products for the list (mustard, jam, sweets, grapes, tea filter, salmon). For content validity, three experts judged the questionnaire and the buying test and we conducted a pilot test on 105 consumers in a grocery store. Subsequently five questions had to be rewritten, due to misunderstanding.

The shopping test was carried out in 15 grocery stores of the same retail chain. Again, we recruited consumers regarding age, gender and size of household. To avoid a high rejection rate (because the shopping test takes 25 to 35 minutes), consumers were recruited face-to-face one week earlier at the check out of the respective stores. First, respondents were given the shopping list. After the shopping tour, they were provided with a paper copy of the self-administered questionnaire. This questionnaire contained the 26 confusion trigger items (seven-point Likert-type agree-disagree response format) we identified conducting the focus groups, as well as questions on age, income, gender and size of household. A total of 350 questionnaires were returned. Five of them were judged unusable. Therefore, we ultimately had 345 valid questionnaires in hand.

For *item analysis* we examined the corrected item-total subscale correlation for each set of items representing an assumed factor of Consumer Confusion in advance. Items that do not meet a corrected item-total correlation above .50 are candidates for deletion (Zaichowsky 1985). Non of the Items were below this threshold. Furthermore, the correlations for items with their hypothesized dimensions were compared with their correlations with the remaining dimensions (cf., Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel 1989). Items, that did not show statistically higher correlations with the dimensions to which they were hypothesized to belong to, are subject to deletion. The procedure resulted in no deletion of items.

The remaining pool of 26 items was subject to *exploratory factor analysis* with principal component factoring and oblique

TABLE 1
Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis results							
Item No.	Items	Stimuli Variety	Stimuli Novelty	Stimuli Complexity	Stimuli Conflict	Stimuli Comfort	Stimuli Reliability
1	To me, there are too many products to choose from	.76	.30	.15	.28	.05	.09
2	It is not easy, to choose between similar products	.81	.10	.23	.22	.07	-.04
3	Products often seem similar but are not	.67	.22	.08	.08	.15	.31
4	Products in favour are often replaced too frequently	.25	.69	.20	.04	.06	.13
6	Products I'm looking for are often missing in store shelves	.16	.65	.18	.05	.06	.35
7	I frequently have to get used on new labels/promotion programs	.16	.68	.37	.25	.03	.17
8	Shelves and/or products are replaced very often	.12	.67	.00	.01	.11	.30
9	Product packaging of products are often replaced	.20	.77	.20	.19	.13	.19
10	Prices for products are subject of frequent changes	.10	.62	.17	.27	.05	.46
11	Services are often subject of chance	.20	.63	.07	.31	.13	.21
12	I have a hard time to understand product descriptions	.18	.15	.73	.19	.21	.03
13	I'm not sure, what the numerous Labels are standing for	.22	.18	.77	.13	.03	.19
14	Often I'm uneasy if a more expensive product is really better than a cheaper one	.05	.20	.62	.07	.07	.34
15	Some times I'm not sure, if the store wants me to manipulate with the loyalty card program	.13	.15	.20	.79	.23	.34
16	It's critical, that my personal data is available for the store by means of the loyalty card	.21	.15	.16	.75	.27	.18
17	I believe, that the store urges me sometimes to buy something	.25	.19	.08	.74	.19	.14
18	I'm already irritated, if I'm confronted with a long waiting line at the check out, entering the store	-.04	-.01	.02	.04	.70	.30
19	Customers shopping in this store, are sometimes annoying	.17	.18	.21	.28	.78	-.02
20	Crowding in this store often disables an agreeable shopping	.18	.18	.10	.37	.81	.18
21	Some times it's difficult to judge the quality of a product	.31	.31	.32	.14	.24	.64
22	I often get only vague information	.11	.26	.23	.26	.22	.68
23	Some times I'm not sure, if I can rely on the ads messages	.20	.35	.47	.35	.12	.54
24	The product's picture on the package some times doesn't correspond with the real product	.17	.30	.06	.40	.21	.64
25	Sales often are only slightly cheaper than the regular price	.18	.42	.33	.33	.15	.58
26	I believe, that the store frequently increases prices without informing consumers	.08	.48	.31	.25	.13	.61

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

rotation using SPSS 12.01 software. Items exhibiting low factor loadings ($< .50$) and high cross-loadings ($> .50$) were candidates for elimination (cf., Hair et al. 1998). After inspection, one item was deleted. The remaining 25 items were subject to further exploratory factor analysis. A final six-factor model was estimated. Applying the same empirical considerations, no further items had to be eliminated. The deletion of any item would have weakened the scale's reliability. The key data of the item pool purification process is shown in table 1. Furthermore, the factor solution accounted for 55% of the total variance and exhibited a KMO measure of sampling adequacy of .853. All communalities ranged from .45 to .70.

Next step for scale purification is a *confirmatory factor analysis* (cf. Gerbing and Anderson 1988). A 25-item, six-dimension confirmatory factor model was estimated using LISREL 12.1 (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1996) and maximum likelihood method. Inspection of model fit revealed indices that were all above acceptable thresholds (Hair et al. 1998; Bentler and Bonett 1980): Chi-Square (260, $N=345$)=413.70, $p=.000$; Chi-Square/df=1.59; GFI=.92; AGFI=.90; CFI=.97; NNFI=.97; standardized RMR=.051; RMSEA=.039. We are aware, that using confirmatory factor analysis on an already purified item battery for the same sample will result in a certain tendency to obtain inflated fit indices. Nevertheless, these results show evidence of a six-factor scale (which has to be validated through replicating the confirmatory factor structure on an independent sample).

The results indicate that measures are unidimensional, with each item reflecting one and only one underlying construct (Gerbing and Anderson 1988). The proposed model fits the data adequately. Factor correlations for the confirmatory factor analysis are ranging from a low of .24 (stimuli complexity and comfort) to a high of .69 (stimuli novelty and reliability)-all on a significant level. Further-

more all constructs demonstrated discriminant validity using the Fornell and Larcker's (1981) procedure ($AVE > r^2$). For example, the shared variance between stimuli variety and novelty was .314, whereas the average variance extracted for the two constructs was .61 each. Convergent validity is obtained from the measurement model by determining whether each indicator's estimated maximum likelihood loading on the underlying construct is significant (Bagozzi and Phillips 1982). All confirmatory factor loadings exceed .50 (indicator reliability exceeding .40) and all are significant with t values ranging from a low of 7.32 to a high of 14.06. Therefore, we have evidence of convergent validity.

DISCUSSION

The main contribution of our study was the inquiry of confusion triggers and the following scale development for consumer confusion in shopping environments. We therefore pursued a "two-step approach" by forming four focus groups in order to identify potential confusion triggers. Applying content analysis, this qualitative analysis generated 26 items. For the proximate scale purification, we employed exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and an initial assessment of scale reliability and unidimensionality. Our results indicate a 25-item and six-factor model exhibiting respectable fit.

Further research is needed for the final scale validation. This activity intends to demonstrate the replication and the stability of the model across independent samples. Having successfully done the scale validation, the next step is to implement the scale into retail management. We expect four steps to effectively use the measurement. First, stores need to analyse the current confusion potential. Having done this situation analysis, manager have to create orientation measures to challenge the confusion triggers. After implementation, there is another need for analysing the confusion poten-

TABLE 2
Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Factor	Items	Construct Reliability	t-value	AVE	Indicator Reliability
Stimuli variety		.82		.61	
	1		9.05		.69
	2		9.08		.69
Stimuli novelty	3		6.81		.44
	4	.92	10.90	.61	.59
	6		10.84		.59
	7		10.67		.62
	8		10.05		.55
Stimuli complexity	9		10.86		.59
	10		14.31		.73
	11		11.42		.62
Stimuli conflict	12	.80	8.87	.57	.56
	13		10.54		.69
	14		7.33		.47
Stimuli comfort	15	.86	13.68	.67	.75
	16		12.04		.67
	17		10.48		.59
Stimuli reliability	18	.84	7.32	.64	.43
	19		10.94		.65
	20		13.50		.83
Stimuli reliability	21	.90	10.52	.61	.57
	22		10.58		.57
	23		12.03		.63
	24		10.43		.56
	25		12.66		.66
	26		12.41		.65

tial of the store. Moreover, it might be aspiring to identify emotional reactions of consumers in situations of confusion and the subsequent behavior.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Coming Home: The Role of Consumption in the (Re)Construction of Heritage among African Americans

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SESSION OVERVIEW

African-Americans currently enjoy the fastest socio-economic growth of any ethnic group in the United States (MarketResearch.com, 1999), recasting “the problem of the color line” dividing black and white America (Dubois, 1996) within a problematic of the culture lines drawn within African American culture itself. The growth of the African American middle class has reshaped the meaning of “mainstream America” in the more fluid and dynamic terms associated with wealth, education, and social status (Wilson, 1980) in addition to race and ethnicity. It has also contributed new urgency to the question of African-American identity in relation to American as well as African culture, since the growth in personal wealth has enabled African Americans to expand the possibilities for cultural definition through consumption rituals such as collecting, travel, and even relocation to Africa (Ball, 1998, Bonsu & Belk, 2003).

Such “heritage rituals” contribute to the construction/reconstruction of personal and cultural identity in the absence of a clear lineage to ancestors in Africa or the Americas. The slash joining/separating cultural construction and reconstruction symbolizes the problematic relation of African Americans to their native culture, since historical links to their African ancestors were disrupted if not destroyed by slavery (Herskovits, 1956), which generated a massive diaspora of Africans throughout the Americas beginning in the 17th century (Bennett, 2003).

The objective of this session is to stimulate dialogue, discussion, and more comprehensive theorizing about transformative consumption theory and practice in relation to cross-cultural consumption rituals among middle class African Americans in search of cultural “roots.” To this end, the session is targeted to the consumer researcher interested in cross-cultural consumer behavior, ethnicity, Africana, or post-modern critical inquiry. The heritage quest is a form of symbolic consumption derived from the internalization of meanings associated with cultural rituals, folklore, artifacts and artisan crafts rather than genealogy per se. It is (trans)formative inasmuch as the heritage ritual anchors the individual in a shared cultural past and social solidarity. The African American heritage quest can be theorized in the framework of the post-modern cultural critique, inasmuch as it posits meaning, being, and identity as provisional, rather than transcendent essences. Following writers such as Bourdieu (1979/1984), Baudrillard (1970/1998), and Derrida (1972/1983), meaning, being, and identity are functions of sign production and consumption, always and already divided between memory and anticipation, between meaning and its other (eg. Baudrillard 1970/1998, Derrida 1972/1983, Lacan 1966/2004).

Session participants examine pilgrimage consumption rituals in a variety of ethnographic research settings. The first study entitled “Constructing Pasts, Serving Today: Appropriating Collective Memory for Identity (Re)Presentation,” journeys through sacred pilgrimages and self-identity formations in the context of American expatriate experiences in South Africa. The second study, “Wearing Identity: The Symbolic Uses of Native African Clothing by African Americans,” examines theories of consumer comfort via the comforting practices of African Americans donned in African dress. The final study entitled, “How African Americans Use Relationships with Kenyan Immigrants in the Heritage Quest,”

explores how interactions between Africans and African Americans facilitate cultural reconnection and maintenance. Data collection and analysis is complete for each of these studies and all have journal papers in preparation.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

“Constructing Pasts, Serving Today: Appropriating Collective Memory for Identity (Re)Presentation”

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Globalization, as a form of movement, may be described as a set of changes in structure, environment, and norms shaping the remembrance of the past while providing a direction for the future. These changes provide the wherewithal for individual and collective identity negotiation and representation (Zukin & Maguire, 2004). Globalization is not new yet the range of people participating is (Appadurai., 1996; Harvey, 2000). The globe once provided a stage for the privileged few and is now a pavilion for many, each seeking to ameliorate their lives.

I don't care however tenuous our connection was, it could be 8, 9, 10, 12 generations ago, to see that [African Americans] come from someplace that is beautiful, that is vast, that is magnificent, it is glorious... Africa ... I went there to have an experience and see try to see something different and try to see if I could frame myself in a different way. (170/176)

Through our informants' experiences, we describe how social capital and collective memory enables the maintenance and representation of identity.

Consumer behaviour literature on possessions and cross cultural movement has focused on consumers negotiating their identity and environment through possessions across home and host environments (Mehta & Belk, 1991; Oswald, 1999; Penaloza, 1994; Thompson & Tambyah, 1999). Individuals employ possessions as symbols of self (Belk, 1988) which may be contested during times of transition (Mehta & Belk, 1991; Oswald, 1999; Penaloza, 1994; Thompson & Tambyah, 1999). Possessions for transitional people has been considered for identity reconstruction reflected in material alterations of the body as well as the recasting of personal history at death (Bonsu & Belk, 2003; Schouten, 1991). That scholarship describes the selection and synthesis of existing and possible aspects of the self that will comprise the (re)presented self. The focus of those scholars is the use of cultural capital, as tastes, individuals engage to navigate society and (re)present identity.

What is lacking in prior research is the consideration of an alternate mechanism enabling possessions across the home and host environments to contribute identity (re)presentation. In our research, we describe the role of collective memory, the shared remembrances of a community (Halbwachs, 1992 [1952, 1941]), on identity (re)presentation in cross cultural movements. Consumer behavior researchers have considered the role of nostalgia and the desires of a mythical yesteryear (Brown, 2003). Collective memory, unlike nostalgia, is the remembrance of the past for the purpose of shaping the present and future (Sherry, 2003; Zerubavel, 1996). Previous research has considered cultural capital as the mechanism for possessing objects in the (re)presentation of self while superficially addressing the role of interpersonal relationships across the home and host environment.

Interpersonal relationships support the desire to maintain or alter identity (re)presentation. In our research, we describe the relationship between movements, appropriation of collective memory, and identity (re)presentation evidenced in consumer behavior through possessions. Identity (re)presentation draws upon notions of liminality (MacCannell, 1976), and negotiating between host and home identity (Mehta & Belk, 1991; Oswald, 1999; Penaloza, 1994; Thompson & Tambyah, 1999). From our data, we derive a framework for the appropriation of collective memory and identity (re)presentation.

Appropriation of collective memory is the result of investing resources to navigate social space (Bourdieu 1984), emphasizing relationships with the self, and their mnemonic communities. The resource enabling African Americans to construct an alternate (re)presentation is social capital, accumulated as entelechy. Entelechy is the vital force fueling the individual pursuit of self fulfillment. Pursuit of self fulfillment requires modification and or construction of the self, including a relevant past, enabled by appropriating collective memory. We describe how African Americans expatriate in South Africa construct and (re)present identity focusing on the appropriation of home and host collective memories. The contribution of this research is the understanding of the role of collective memory in identity construction and representation for people in transition.

In addition to contributing to the consumer behavior literature, this research will inform the collective memory literature. Researchers of collective memory focus primarily on the creation of collective memories in mnemonic communities, periodic commemoration, and the influence on collective identity. The present research illustrates how collective memory is deployed in daily

living and is evidenced in consumer behaviors related to identity (re)presentations.

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"Wearing Identity: The Symbolic Uses of Native African Clothing by African Americans"

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This research explores the construct of consumer comfort through an examination of African Americans' narratives of African clothing consumption. For many African Americans, wearing African clothing is a pilgrimage, as it enables them to (re)connect with Africa and African peoples, both past and present. Their comfort in this dress attire reflects perceived extensions of African traditions and their ability to use this clothing as a vehicle for expressing social disaffection. Consumers recall the political significance of African clothing in the United States during the 1960s, employing both cultural and historical references as a means of creating personalized comfort.

Comfort is an important construct given that consumers frequently use this term to describe their own thoughts and feelings

about consumption experiences. Yet, its abstractness can make it difficult to study as a theoretical concept and may account for the lack of scholarly research focused solely on the concept of comfort. Existing consumer behavior research conceptualizes comfort as a multidimensional construct with physical, physiological, and psychological aspects (Scitovsky 1992) and situates comfort as an endpoint of consumer activity that yields a stable (Cabanac 2000) and balanced state (Simmons 2001). Studies on consumer convenience address personal comfort as it relates to the value placed on products and services that provide personal comfort and/or save time in performing various activities (Brown 1990). Comfort has also been operationalized as a psychological state that promotes risk avoidance in the context of service encounters (Spake et al. 2003). While the research on comfort has examined the construct as a stable end goal for consumers, little attention has been given to comfort as a means to an end except Shove (2003), which conceptualized comfort as a creative and dynamic process. We extend current theorizing by empirically examining comfort as ongoing practices.

Because consumer comfort is contextual, a multi-site ethnography of African Americans wearing African clothing across multiple consumption settings was conducted. The study comprises depth studies of 8 informants per context, wherein each of the informants was observed wearing African clothing in at least three different consumption settings. In addition to the core consumers, over 70 single informant interviews were conducted. The final research product included a compilation of single interviews with different informants, a series of depth interviews with the same informant and extensive observational data.

Our study findings indicate comfort is both an end-goal consumers desire (i.e., to be comfortable), and a practice in which consumers actively engage (i.e. comforting). African Americans seek comfort from African clothing in four ways: 1) an Authenticating practice—sifting through socially constructed images and personalized ideals of African and African American culture; 2) a Resistance practice—using African clothing to symbolize solidarity with current and historical struggles of African Americans in the United States (Field, 1990); 3) a Homecoming practice—using African clothing to connect with an idealized traditional world or “Motherland” that never existed (Rabine 2002), something that Diasporic Africans have sought since their forcible transportation to the Americas (Boateng, 2004); and 4) a Legacy Transmission practice—using clothing to inhabit a “walking history lesson” for self, family, and others.

The comforting practices employed by African Americans in this study highlight the duality of consumer comfort, specifically illustrating both the static and continual nature of this construct. We believe this has important implications for our understanding of consumer behavior. Just as comfort has been shown to be a key element of consumer goals, like customer satisfaction and convenience, understanding comfort as a consumer practice may enable more comprehensive theorizing about other ongoing consumer behavior, such as identity construction, product meaning development, and acculturation, where comforting is most likely an underlying component.

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“How African Americans Use Relationships with Kenyan Immigrants in the Heritage Quest”

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Although extant research explores issues of racism, discrimination and identity formulation among African Americans, no research has examined the role that African immigrants play in the maintenance and reconnection to African culture by African Americans. In recent times, the attempts to reconnect with Africa can be seen through the adoption of the term African American which was intended to stress the cultural aspects of African ancestry and to move away from the distinction between ethnic groups and racial groups (Waters 1991).

This research examines the role of Kenyan immigrants in the maintenance of African culture among African Americans. Interviews were conducted with twenty-four African Americans (12 men and 12 women) who were the friends, spouses or significant others of Kenyan immigrants in a Southern city. Proper interviewing techniques (Wallendorf and Belk 1989) were utilized in order to ensure that trustworthy data was obtained. The data was analyzed by means of coding patterns and themes with the use of the constant comparative method (Glazer and Strauss 1967). The findings demonstrate that the respondents interact with Kenyans as a way to remain connected to the “Motherland.” These interactions were comprised of such things as: a) attending Kenyan parties; b) attending fund raising events; c) becoming members of the Kenya Association in the city. Five of the respondents had been to Kenya with their friends and six of the respondents were either dating or were married to Kenyans. Twelve of the respondents indicated that they had attended church services with their Kenyan friends. The above examples show varying degrees of interaction but clearly show an active attempt to become a part of the Kenyan community.

Respondents described many ways that they attempted to integrate aspects of the Kenyan culture into their lives, including the placement of African artifacts from Kenya and other countries in their homes, eating and cooking Kenyan recipes, and surrounding themselves with reminders of their imagined “home” in Africa. The respondents also described eating goat and subsequently buying goat meat from the international grocery stores. Our findings are consistent with McCracken (1986) who suggests that cultural

meaning is usually drawn from a culturally constituted world and transferred to a consumer good. As such the consumption of “goat” and other Kenyan recipes enables the respondents to metaphorically reconnect with their African heritage through the act of consumption.

Interestingly, the respondents exhibited some degree of situational ethnicity (Stayman and Deshpande 1989) with regards to their identity. Some of the respondents described themselves as African (from a Pan Africanist perspective), while others said that they identify as African American, because the African is first in this descriptor. One of the respondents indicated that when he was around Kenyans that he identified himself as a Kenyan who was born here. He argued that since his ancestors were from Africa that picking a country was just an extension of this recognition of his ancestry. This was also done to ensure that he was fully accepted when he was at a Kenyan party.

Respondents described the mutual benefits that could be derived from positive relationships between the two groups. To this end, some of the respondents described the influence of hairstyles from Africa among African Americans and in turn the influence of African American hairstyles on Africans. Other examples of this dual influence include such things as clothing, music and dance styles. A recent New York Times article suggested that over fifty thousand legal African immigrants enter the United States every year (Roberts 2005). The article further suggests that more African immigrants have migrated from Africa since 1990 than had migrated in the entire preceding two centuries. If these migration patterns continue then opportunities for mutual benefits as well as dual influences will abound. Since going back to Africa is certainly not feasible for many African Americans, then the next best opportunity for them to reconnect with their African heritage will be through interaction with their African brothers and sisters. Given the evolving identity of African Americans in the United States, the future may result in a redefinition of African American identity. A possibility might be that the term “African” might describe all black people and this will add another dimension to the problem of identity in relation to African Americans in the United States.

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Situation Variation in Consumers' Media Channel Consideration

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Recent advances in communication technology such as the Internet have changed managers' and consumers' ideas about how firms and customers should interact (e.g., Watson et al. 2000); increasingly, consumers are viewed as active participants in supply chain value-creation processes (e.g., Wind and Rangaswamy 2001). An important consequence of this new perspective is that it has become more important for firms to provide their consumers with information about their offerings. For example, in the case of online customization (e.g., Dell), consumers must be able to understand the details of many product variants to judge which variant is most suitable for them and provide their made-to-measure specifications (Huffman and Kahn 1998). In the case of food products, consumers need to understand how they can use the manufacturer's product enjoyably and safely.

In turn, manufacturers are faced with new questions about how to communicate with their consumers. First, in the context of specific media channels, how should product information be designed to communicate effectively with consumers? For example, recent research highlights the interactive nature of new media channels such as the Internet, as well as the requirements this places on communication design (Stewart and Pavlou 2002). Second, which media channels should be used to communicate with consumers? Even if product communications are well designed, they may be ineffective if the messages are sent through media channels that consumers do not consider.

We address this second question in the current study. In particular, we analyze consumers' consideration of media channels by investigating which channels they find acceptable for use. Furthermore, we propose that the concept of a consideration set can be extended to the field of media channels and investigate how consumers' media channel consideration is related to the communication benefits (e.g., trustworthy, detailed) they perceive these various media channels to possess. In our analysis, we also investigate the notion that consumers' consideration of media channels depends on the specific usage situation (e.g., Seybold 2001). This phenomenon has been well supported by previous work on the effect of situational variations on consumer preferences for products and services (Srivastava, Leone, and Shocker 1981). We hypothesize that situational differences in consumer preferences exist in consumers' media channel consideration and argue that the usage situation influences which benefits consumers require from a media channel. Specifically, it is expected that consumers' media channel consideration will shift according to the usage situation and that this shift is due to differences in the requirements they have for the media channels.

We formulate a random coefficient binary logit model to test the proposed relationships of respondents' perceptions of various media channel benefits, usage situation-specific requirements, and media channel considerations in their search for product information. We use survey data from 453 consumers who had the responsibility for food purchases in their household.

The survey was constructed on the basis of the Association Pattern Technique (APT) (ter Hofstede et al. 1998; ter Hofstede, Steenkamp, and Wedel 1999) to investigate the different relationships between media channels, media channel benefits, and situations. The APT was originally developed to study the relationships consumers perceive between different products, product benefits

(e.g., low in calories), and their personal objectives (e.g., to be healthy). Unlike qualitative approaches to collecting data, the APT approach allows us to quantify the relationships between the media channels and their perceived benefits, as well as between the situations and benefits in which we are interested in.

Based on three focus groups and discussions with industry experts, we identified 14 relevant channels and 8 media channel benefits that were most relevant in the context of food product information. Of the 14 media channels in the survey, 3 were Internet-based channels: the manufacturer's website, a third-party website about cooking, and a food information website created by an independent agency. We also included 11 more traditional media channels, including television advertising, television programs, radio advertising, radio programs, magazine advertising, magazine articles, newspaper advertising, newspaper articles, in-store magazines, product labels, and educational brochures. The 8 media channel benefits included in the study were whether a media channel was trustworthy ("trustworthy"), provided detailed information ("detailed"), took little time to use ("time saving"), was easy to use ("easy"), was tailored to the individual user ("personal"), was exciting and arousing ("stimulating"), was informative ("informative"), and was relaxing to use ("relaxing"). The following three hypothetical usage situations were identified: (1) a food scare in which an ingredient in one of the manufacturer's food products was contaminated, (2) a new product introduction in which the consumer is interested, and (3) a search for a recipe so the consumer can prepare a meal that includes one of the manufacturer's food products.

Our model provides strong support for the fact that most media channel benefits have a significant effect on media channel consideration. We find significant positive results at the 0.05 level for all media channel benefits except "trustworthy" and "informative." Furthermore, we investigated the role of usage situation as a driver of media channel benefits that consumers require. The results reveal that consumers' required media channel benefits differ significantly across the three usage situations (food scare, new product introduction, and recipe search). In case of a food scare, we observe significant differences from the average at the 0.05 level for almost all required benefits except "easy" and "stimulating," whereas in case of a new product introduction, we find significant effects for the benefits "trustworthy," "detailed," and "informative." Our results also provide support for the hypothesized interaction of consumers' required and perceived media channel benefits on media channel consideration. We find significant positive results at the 0.05 level for the media channel benefits "trustworthy," "easy," "stimulating," and "informative." Furthermore, the results of the random coefficient estimates indicate significant coefficient heterogeneity across consumers' evaluations of the perceived media channel benefits, as well as across the media channel intercepts.

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Perceived Risk and Deliberation in Retailer Choice: Consumer Behavior towards Online Pharmacies

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With the rise of electronic commerce, traditional ways of distributing pharmaceuticals have been supplemented by online pharmacies. However, as the online environment offers further opportunities for fraudulent suppliers, there are also dangers associated with the purchase of drugs online (Arruñada 2004). For example, a consumer's health might be jeopardized by counterfeit medications bought online, or sensitive health-related information may be passed on illegally, resulting in adverse social or financial consequences to the individual. A recent report from the UN highlights the significance of the topic: The online distribution of pharmaceuticals is deemed to facilitate the circulation of dangerous drugs by undermining established control mechanisms (International Narcotics Control Board 2005). Threats to consumers are not restricted to dubious suppliers; even genuine online pharmacies suffer from severe deficiencies in, for example, the quality of the medical advice (Stiftung Warentest 2005).

Research on consumer behavior towards online pharmacies is scarce. Büttner and Göritz (2005) found that perceived trustworthiness of an online pharmacy is a crucial factor effecting consumers' intention to buy as well as their actual risk-taking, and that perceived trustworthiness is related to the risk associated with buying medication online. However, a better understanding of how consumers handle these risks when interacting with online pharmacies would be valuable to both retailers and public policy makers. Studying consumer behavior towards online pharmacies can also contribute to research on e-commerce in general: As online pharmacies were legalized in Germany in January 2004 — only a few months prior to the study — the effects of various factors encountered in more mature markets, such as coexistence of new retailers and established brands or different levels of consumer experience, could be discounted. This enabled an in-depth investigation of the basic processes that underlie consumer choice of online retailers. For this, we drew on the risk-taking framework established by Bauer (1960).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESES

The notion of consumer behavior as risk-taking focuses on the understanding that consumer decisions can have adverse consequences, which may or may not occur (Bauer 1960; for an overview, see Mitchell 1999). The central concept is perceived risk — assumed to consist of a probability and a magnitude component. The probability component refers to the likelihood that a certain action (e.g., buying a product) will have negative consequences for the consumer, whereas the magnitude refers to the severity of those consequences (Dowling and Staelin 1994; Mitchell 1999). If a purchase is perceived as risky, consumers will employ strategies to reduce the perceived risk until it is below their level of acceptable risk or, if they are unable to do so, withdraw from the purchase (Dowling and Staelin 1994). Within this context, Bettman (1973) distinguishes between inherent and handled risk. The former refers to the risk *before* and the latter to the risk *after* the consumer has applied risk-reduction strategies. Thus, inherent risk is a determinant of risk-reduction, whereas handled risk is the result thereof.

Most research on perceived risk has focused on the choice of the product. Here, the product class has been found to contribute to

the risk inherent in the purchase decision (e.g., Dowling and Staelin 1994). Therefore, Dowling and Staelin (1994) distinguish between product class risk (“the riskiness of buying ‘an average product’”, p. 119) and specific product risk (determined by the particular product under consideration and other factors such as the purchase situation). There are also a smaller number of studies explicitly addressing perceived risk and the selection of retailers. Cox and Rich (1964) report that consumers perceive telephone shopping as risky and mainly tend to purchase low risk products by telephone. Dash, Schiffman, and Berenson (1976) observe differences in the level of perceived risk between specialty store and department store shoppers, while Mattson (1982) shows that the selection of a store type varies with social and financial risk inherent in the purchase situation. In the literature on electronic commerce, the risk associated with online shopping in general (Garbarino and Strahilevitz 2004) and with a specific retailer (Jarvenpaa, Tractinsky, and Vitale 2000) has been found to be adversely related to intention to buy. Biswas and Biswas (2004) demonstrate that signals such as reputation matter more in e-commerce because of higher risks associated with buying online.

What conclusions can be drawn from these studies on retailer selection? First, the level of perceived risk varies with the type of retailer. Hence, and in an analogous manner to product class risk, we will consider the risk linked to buying from an “average” retailer from within a particular class (e.g., online pharmacies) as “retailer class risk”. Both product class risk and retailer class risk have been identified as important factors, but the exact way in which these two factors together contribute to the risk inherent in a purchase decision has not been experimentally investigated. While product class risk has been manipulated in studies on product choice (Gürhan-Canli and Batra 2004), retailer class risk has been neglected in experimental research. Moreover, previous research has focused on the final choice of retailer, rather than on the preceding deliberations. We have therefore experimentally investigated the impact of product class risk and retailer class risk on consumer deliberation when choosing between providers. We focused on a larger part of the decision process than previous studies by examining the influence of both risk types on the risk perceived as inherent in the decision, on consumers' information processing while on the website, and on final outcomes of the deliberation process.

Inherent Risk

Within the two-component model, the relationship of product class risk and retailer class risk to the risk inherent in a purchase decision that includes retailer selection can be elaborated further. We assume that the magnitude component of inherent risk perceived in a purchase decision is linked to product class risk, and the probability component predominantly related to retailer class risk. Due to the information asymmetry between customer and retailer, consumers do not know in advance whether a retailer can perform well or intends to cheat the customer (performance and relational risk; Das and Teng 2004 p. 101). With regard to these possibilities, a consumer's assessment of a retailer can be described in terms of their judgment of the likelihood that something will go wrong during the transaction (Kee and Knox 1970), and therefore it is linked to the probability component of perceived risk (cf. Das and

Teng 2004). The magnitude of the consequences, however, can be assumed to be independent of retailer class risk. For instance, the consequences of receiving the wrong medication do not differ whether it is purchased using a 'virtual' online pharmacy or in a 'real' pharmacy.

We further suggest that the magnitude component of inherent risk is determined by the product class. For instance, in the pharmaceutical domain, the magnitude of negative consequences differs substantially depending on the class of medication: A fake headache remedy is less critical than an ineffective counterfeit drug for coronary heart disease. In general, the probability of a negative outcome can be assumed to be independent of the product class. For instance, the likelihood that a hacker gets access to the details of a customer's order or the condition of their health during an online transaction is not linked to the particular class of medication being purchased. Hence, we propose the following hypotheses:

- H1* Product class risk influences the magnitude component but not the probability component of inherent risk in a purchase decision. When product class risk is high (low), consumers judge the seriousness of negative outcomes as high (low).
- H2* Retailer class risk influences the probability component but not the magnitude component of inherent risk in a purchase decision.¹ When retailer class risk is high (low), consumers judge the probability of a negative outcome as high (low).

Information Processing

If a purchase is perceived as risky, the consumer will employ strategies to reduce the perceived risk until it is below his or her level of acceptable risk (Cox and Rich 1964; Dowling and Staelin 1994). One strategy for risk-reduction is to consult information provided by the retailer (Dowling and Staelin 1994; Mitchell and McGoldrick 1996). Hence, we propose that product class risk as well as retailer class risk will influence consumers' information search on the website of an online retailer:

- H3a* When product class risk is high (low), consumers search for more (less) information while visiting the website.
- H3b* When retailer class risk is high (low), consumers search for more (less) information while visiting the website.

Whether customers are persuaded by a website that a purchase is safe depends on how consumers process the information provided. Consumers' level of involvement moderates how such persuasive messages are processed: If involvement is high, consumers focus on the arguments of a message, whereas they process more peripheral cues such as pictures if involvement is low (Petty and Cacioppo 1986). On a website, arguments are provided by the content, while the interface (design, navigation etc.) gives peripheral cues. As the risk associated with a decision has been found to increase involvement (Laurent and Kapferer 1985), we assume that

¹There might be exceptions regarding certain facets of product class risk. For instance, a higher price involves higher financial risk (magnitude component) to the customer but also provides a higher incentive for the provider to cheat, thereby making fraud more probable (probability component). This does not invalidate our assumptions because financial risk is only one facet of product class risk. Moreover, although such links might exist at the level of objective risk, these links might not be obvious enough to the consumers in order to enter their assessment of perceived risk.

the perceived risk influences which elements of a website consumers tend to focus on:

- H4a* When product class risk is high (low), consumers process more (less) content-related aspects of a website while visiting the online shop.
- H4b* When retailer class risk is high (low), consumers process more (less) content-related aspects of a website while visiting the online shop.

Outcomes of Deliberation

The success of retailers in communicating their trustworthiness is reflected by consumers' perception of this quality. Perceived trustworthiness entails judgments regarding a retailer's competence, benevolence, and integrity as well as the predictability of the retailer's behavior (McKnight, Choudhury, and Kacmar 2002). Perceived trustworthiness has been claimed to be the "mirror image" of perceived risk (Das and Teng 2004) and has been found to be inversely related to handled risk (Jarvenpaa et al. 2000). Therefore in an analogous manner to handled risk (cf. Bettman 1973), perceived trustworthiness may be assumed to be influenced by inherent risk both in a direct and an indirect way, the latter mediated by information processing related to risk-reduction. Indeed, perceived trustworthiness of online shops has been found to be related to evaluations of the website (Koufaris and Hampton-Sosa 2004) as well as to the risk inherent in a purchase decision (Büttner and Göritz 2005). Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

- H5* Perceived trustworthiness of an online shop will be determined negatively by product class risk, negatively by retailer class risk, and negatively (positively) by consumers' negative (positive) thoughts formed during their visit to the website.

If perceived trustworthiness is adversely related to handled risk, then high trustworthiness should encourage consumers to take risks with a retailer (McKnight et al. 2002). Indeed, research on electronic commerce has found that trust fosters the intention to buy from an online retailer (Jarvenpaa et al. 2000; McKnight et al. 2002). Hence, we propose the following hypotheses:

- H6a* The more trustworthy an online shop is perceived to be, the higher the consumer's intention to buy from the online shop.
- H6b* Differences in perceived trustworthiness determine a consumer's choice of online shop. Consumers prefer the option that is judged as more trustworthy.

METHOD

Sample and Procedure

Ninety-four participants, mainly from the local university, volunteered to participate in the study. Sixty-nine percent were students and another 19% were employed. The mean age was 27.17 years, SD=6.58, and 49% were female. Eighty-six percent had purchased at least one product online but only 7% had ever visited an online pharmacy. As an incentive, participants were allowed to choose between a box of cookies and a bottle of wine.

The study was conducted in a laboratory. We applied a 2 (product class risk: low vs. high) x 2 (retailer class risk: low vs. high) design. Product class risk (PCR) was manipulated by variations in the task. In the low PCR condition, participants were told that they had run out of headache remedies and were attempting to order an

over-the-counter (OTC) replacement from an online pharmacy. Participants in the high PCR condition were told that they were to order a particular drug for high blood pressure that was only available on prescription. They were told that an older relative with a corresponding prescription had asked them to order the product on their behalf.² Retailer class risk (RCR) was manipulated by a short newspaper report that all participants were required to read. The report provided neutral information about internet pharmacies and their price policy. In the high RCR condition, the report also cited critical comments from consumer protection associations that highlighted the problems of inadequate advice and counterfeit drugs; these comments were missing in the low RCR condition. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental groups.

Participants read the short newspaper report and received instructions to visit the sites of two given online pharmacies and to search for either the OTC medication (PCR low) or the prescription drug (PCR high). They were asked to evaluate both pharmacies and were permitted to move around the websites as well as to switch freely between the two providers. The online pharmacy to start with was counterbalanced across the experimental groups. During the experiment, screen content was recorded in a video using screen capture software. After 15 min surfing, participants' thoughts from the shopping episode were assessed using video-cued thought protocols (Silberer 2005): The captured video was presented and participants were asked to concurrently verbalize the thoughts they remembered from the surfing episode. In order to avoid annoying the interviewee, the interview was stopped after the participant had commented on the first 5 min of the original surfing episode.

Measures

Inherent risk was assessed after participants had visited the websites because asking for perceived risk beforehand may have produced artifacts by sensitizing participants to potential risks. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that inherent risk was captured by the questionnaire, as the items referred to an assessment of buying medication online in general rather than from a particular retailer. For measuring the probability component of inherent perceived risk, six of the seven items from Büttner and Göritz (2005) were used (see table 1). For the magnitude component, the severity of each of the six consequences was estimated on a 7-point rating scale. Perceived trustworthiness was assessed for each online pharmacy using the 12-item scale from Büttner and Göritz (2005), both α s=.90. The intention to buy was assessed for each pharmacy using a single 7-point rating item where participants could indicate the likelihood of purchasing at the respective pharmacy (1=not at all; 7=yes, definitely). Moreover, participants were asked to indicate from which online pharmacy they would have purchased in a forced choice set (A, B, none of the two).

Information search and information processing were coded from the commented videos. Two raters analyzed the transcripts of a number of protocols and discussed the coding of the verbalizations until consensus was established. Then, the remaining proto-

cols were coded verbatim by one rater. Each discrete verbalization that matched one of the established categories was counted for each participant. Information search refers to all verbalizations where participants stated that they had actively sought information concerning the products or the provider (example: "Here, I wanted to know more about this"; participant clicks on shipping expenses). For information processing, we distinguished whether the verbalization referred to content ("By comparing the prices, I noticed that this pharmacy was less expensive") or interface characteristics of the website ("I liked the fact that there were pictures"). Furthermore, all information processing verbalizations were rated as either being positive, negative, or neutral.

RESULTS

Inherent Risk

All statistical tests in this and the following sections have been conducted two-tailed at an α -level of .05. As the treatments for product class risk and retailer class risk cannot be expected to influence all risk items, perceived risk was analyzed at an item-level instead of forming a scale (Garbarino and Strahilevitz 2004). A 2 x 2 MANOVA on the probability ratings for perceived risk showed a significant main effect for RCR, $F(6, 82)=3.65$, $\eta^2=.21$, $p<.01$. Further univariate analyses showed that the probability of receiving counterfeit drugs was rated higher when RCR was high (see table 1). The main effect for PCR is also significant, $F(6, 82)=2.81$, $\eta^2=.17$, $p<.05$. Univariate analyses showed that the risk of late delivery of medication is judged as more likely in the high PCR group, whereas the probability of receiving counterfeit drugs is higher in the low PCR condition (see table 1). The MANOVA yielded no significant interaction effect, $F(6, 82)=1.09$, $p>.37$.

With regard to the magnitude ratings of perceived risk, a 2 x 2 MANOVA yielded no significant main effect for RCR, $F(6, 82)=0.64$, $p>.70$, and no significant interaction effect, $F(6, 82)=0.46$, $p>.83$. The main effect for PCR slightly misses the α -level of .05, $F(6, 82)=2.14$, $\eta^2=.14$, $p<.06$. Further univariate analysis showed significant differences for the risk "loss of medical privacy", $F(1, 87)=4.53$, $\eta^2=.05$, $p<.05$, and for late delivery of medication, $F(1, 87)=7.50$, $\eta^2=.08$, $p<.01$. The consequences of these risks are rated higher when PCR is high (see table 1). In summary, product class risk influences both the magnitude and the probability component. Thus, hypothesis 1 is only partially supported. Hypothesis 2 is clearly supported: Retailer class risk influences the probability component of inherent risk but not the magnitude component.

Information Processing. For testing the influence of PCR and RCR on information search activities, a 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted. The main effect of PCR was significant, $F(1, 84)=10.70$, $\eta^2=.11$, $p<.01$, and as predicted, $M_{PCR-}=2.81$ vs. $M_{PCR+}=3.89$, thus supporting hypothesis 3a. The main effect of RCR was not significant, $F(1, 84)=1.13$, $p>.28$, whereas the interaction effect was significant, $F(1, 84)=4.92$, $\eta^2=.05$, $p<.05$. Simple effects tests show that when PCR is high, information search is higher in the high RCR group, $M_{RCR+}=4.39$, than in the low RCR group, $M_{RCR-}=3.33$, $F(1, 88)=5.20$, $\eta^2=.06$, $p<.05$. No significant difference between low and high RCR was found in the low PCR condition, $F(1, 88)=0.72$, $p>.40$. This finding partially supports hypothesis 3b.

As an indicator of information processing, we used the proportion of content-related verbalizations to all verbalizations. A 2 x 2 ANOVA showed a significant main effect for PCR, $F(1, 88)=47.59$, $\eta^2=.35$, $p<.001$. The main effect for RCR was significant at an α -level of .10, $F(1, 88)=3.35$, $\eta^2=.04$. No significant interaction was found, $F(1, 88)=1.06$, $p>.30$. All differences are as predicted, $M_{PCR-}=.44$ vs. $M_{PCR+}=.68$, $M_{RCR-}=.52$ vs. $M_{RCR+}=.59$. Hence, hypothesis 4a is supported by the data. With regard to RCR, the

²The older relative was introduced to render the scenario more realistic and is not supposed to alter other characteristics of the decision (e.g., its significance) beyond the manipulated product class risk. This assumption is supported by preliminary results from an experiment in which we used the same scenarios but independently manipulated product class risk and target of purchase: Purchase decision involvement was influenced by product class risk but not by whether participants purchased for themselves or for an older relative (Schulz, Mau, Büttner, and Silberer 2006).

TABLE 1
Mean Differences of Perceived Risk Items (for Main Effects)

		Overall	Product Class Risk		Retailer Class Risk	
			Low (N=48)	High (N=46)	Low (N=47)	High (N=47)
Loss of privacy	<i>Prob</i> ^a	3.89 (1.57)	3.70 (1.49)	4.09 (1.64)	4.02 (1.57)	3.77 (1.56)
(medical data)	<i>Magn</i> ^b	4.68 (1.89)	4.28 (1.94)	5.11 (1.75)*	4.43 (1.93)	4.91 (1.84)
Inadequate Advice	<i>Prob</i>	4.91 (1.51)	4.83 (1.37)	5.00 (1.66)	4.93 (1.52)	4.89 (1.52)
	<i>Magn</i>	5.81 (1.44)	5.55 (1.52)	6.09 (1.32) [†]	5.75 (1.41)	5.87 (1.48)
Counterfeit Drugs	<i>Prob</i>	3.13 (1.35)	3.40 (1.30)	2.86 (1.37)*	2.70 (1.37)	3.55 (1.21)**
	<i>Magn</i>	6.71 (0.69)	6.64 (0.85)	6.80 (0.46)	6.73 (0.50)	6.70 (0.83)
Credit Card Misuse	<i>Prob</i>	2.70 (1.32)	2.60 (1.15)	2.82 (1.48)	2.81 (1.32)	2.60 (1.33)
	<i>Magn</i>	6.40 (1.21)	6.23 (1.27)	6.57 (1.13)	6.39 (1.37)	6.40 (1.21)
Loss of Privacy	<i>Prob</i>	4.65 (1.58)	4.60 (1.48)	4.70 (1.69)	4.89 (1.32)	4.43 (1.78)
(nonmedical)	<i>Magn</i>	5.00 (1.49)	5.06 (1.31)	4.93 (1.68)	5.20 (1.34)	4.81 (1.61)
Late Delivery	<i>Prob</i>	3.66 (1.45)	3.32 (1.34)	4.02 (1.49)*	3.77 (1.43)	3.55 (1.47)
	<i>Magn</i>	5.70 (1.12)	5.40 (0.99)	6.02 (1.12)*	5.77 (1.10)	5.64 (1.15)

Note: SD in parentheses; ^aprobability component (1=not at all, 7=definitely); ^bmagnitude component (1=not serious, 7=very serious); [†] $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (main effects)

result could be interpreted as favoring hypothesis 4b because the nature of the hypothesis would allow for one-tailed testing. Effect sizes, however, indicate that its impact is negligible compared to those of PCR.

Outcomes of Deliberation

As we assume that perceived trustworthiness is influenced both by information processing and by the two risk types, we regressed intention to buy on four information processing variables (negative and positive content-related, negative and positive interface-related verbalizations; respective proportions on all verbalizations including neutral ones), on product class risk, and on retailer class risk. Due to the video-cued thought protocols being only 5 min in length, we decided to analyze only thoughts referring to the first pharmacy each participant started with and the perceived trustworthiness of this pharmacy. The respective pharmacy was included as a dichotomous control variable in the regression. The regression equation was significant, $F(7, 80)=5.57$, $R^2=.22$, $p < .01$. However, only the proportions of negative content related thoughts, $\beta = -.33$, $p < .01$, and of negative interface related thoughts, $\beta = -.29$, $p < .05$, are significant predictors of perceived trustworthiness (all other $ps > .35$). This only partially supports hypothesis 5. The finding might be attributed to the fact that the treatments PCR and RCR only influence certain aspects of inherent risk and that using an aggregated measure of inherent risk might be more accurate. To further

investigate this issue, we regressed perceived trustworthiness on the significant predictors from the first regression (i.e., proportion of negative content and interface related thoughts) and on the average of the probability, $\alpha = .66$, as well as the magnitude, $\alpha = .56$, measures of perceived risk (internal consistency is no useful criterion as the measures are rather formative than a scale; Mitchell 1999). The regression was significant, $F(4, 80)=8.64$, $p < .001$. Negative content-related thoughts, $\beta = -.26$, negative interface-related thoughts, $\beta = -.31$, and the probability component, $\beta = -.31$, contribute significantly to the equation (all $ps < .01$), whereas the magnitude component is not a significant predictor, $p > .14$.

With regard to the relationship between perceived trustworthiness and intended risk-taking, we found substantial correlations between perceived trustworthiness and intention to buy from the respective pharmacy, $r_A = .62$, $r_B = .60$, $ps < .001$. This supports hypothesis 6a. For testing hypothesis 6b, we used the difference between each pharmacy's perceived trustworthiness. Testing mean differences showed that those who opted for pharmacy A, judged A as more trustworthy than B, $M_{B-A} = -0.60$, and that those who opted for B, judged B to be more trustworthy than A, $M_{B-A} = 0.34$, $t(59) = -4.40$, $p < .001$, supporting hypothesis 6b.

DISCUSSION

In the experiment presented here, we systematically investigated the impact of product class risk and retailer class risk on

consumers' deliberations regarding retailer choice in an online purchase decision. By manipulating these risk types, we found evidence for differentiated influences on the components of inherent risk. When the retailer class risk is higher, the likelihood of a negative outcome is judged to be higher. In contrast, product class risk influences judgments on the magnitude of negative outcomes. However, we also found an influence of product class risk on two facets of the probability component. This might be an artifact of the PCR factor's link with requirement for prescription. Having to send the prescription to the pharmacy before receiving medication makes late delivery more probable. Moreover, prescription drugs are paid for directly by the social insurance. This might be perceived as a control mechanism, thereby lowering the probability of counterfeit in the high PCR condition.

The two risk types also have different impacts on consumers' use of risk-reduction strategies. Product class risk fosters information search on the website, whereas retailer class risk only becomes important if product class risk is high. This is consistent with the view of consumers as adaptive decision makers (Payne, Bettman, and Johnson 1993). If little is at stake, consumers might not feel the need to reduce perceived risk. If the possible losses are high, however, consumers consider further information, such as the likelihood of a negative outcome, when allocating resources to the decision (cf. Laurent and Kapferer 1985). A similar interaction effect between retailer class risk and product class risk is reflected in the findings of Cox and Rich (1964) with a more straightforward risk reduction strategy: When product class risk is high, do not buy from high risk retailers.

Another aspect of consumers' adaptations to the riskiness of the purchase decision has been found for the process of evaluating the website. In accordance with our hypotheses derived from research on persuasion (Petty and Cacioppo 1986), participants process more content-related features of the website when product class risk is high and, to a lesser extent, when retailer class risk is high, thus indicating a more in-depth evaluation of the retailer's website. Perceived trustworthiness, the result of the website evaluation, was found to depend on the information processing as well as on the probability component of perceived risk but not on the magnitude component. The finding indicates that the probability component contributes to the evaluation of a particular retailer as a "general component" – or a baseline –, which is then modified by specific, retailer-related judgments. This is related to Dowling and Staelin's (1994) additive model on product class risk and specific risk as constituents of overall perceived risk.

The results stress the importance of considering both retailer class risk and product class risk in research on online shopping. From the findings presented above, we conclude that product class risk is a determinant of how consumers adapt their strategies when evaluating an online retailer. Retailer class risk adds a little extra to this process, but its main impact can be assumed to be a "base line" to the evaluation of a specific retailer. Whether a particular retailer is judged as trustworthy also depends on the evaluation of the particular retailer. Consistent with findings from research on electronic commerce addressing other product classes (Jarvenpaa et al. 2000; McKnight et al. 2002), perceived trustworthiness has been found to be crucial for a consumer's intention to buy from a provider and in making the choice between competing online shops.

The results from the study also contribute to the ongoing debate on whether the probability and magnitude components of perceived risk are truly independent from each other (Mitchell 1999). The findings that these two components can be separately influenced and play different roles when evaluating a retailer, provide further evidence supporting the assumption that the two are independent.

This study, however, has certain limitations. In real life settings, a wide variety of risk reduction strategies are available to the consumer (Mitchell and McGoldrick 1996). The strategies in our study were limited by both the laboratory setting (e.g., participants could not consult a friend) and the relative immaturity of the market under investigation (e.g., too young to establish brand loyalty). This, however, allowed us to attribute information search to perceived risk; a link that has not always been successfully established (Gemünden 1985). Furthermore, the high proportion of students in the sample may limit the readiness with which the results can be generalized. Nevertheless, the results pertaining to the relationships between the probability components of perceived risk, perceived trustworthiness, and intention to buy have also been demonstrated in a correlational study on online pharmacies that draws on a more heterogeneous sample (Büttner and Göritz 2005). Restricting the study to pharmacies may also have limited the extent to which the conclusions can be generalized. We argue, however, that the results can be applied to online shopping in general because we focused on the basic processes underlying consumer choice when developing our hypotheses. This conclusion is supported by the observation that results from our study are consistent with studies on online shops other than pharmacies (see above).

Keeping these limitations in mind, we are able to make a number of recommendations for the management of online shops. Consumers exhibit different behaviors towards online shops depending on the class risk of the product they wish to purchase. High risk customers will search for more information and evaluate it more critically: They will not be satisfied with nice pictures of the products. Nevertheless, both content and interface have to be considered in the design of the online shop. The finding that negative but not positive evaluations contribute to perceived trustworthiness highlights that customers' requirements have to be considered carefully. If customers' requirements are not met, trustworthiness will decline and, consequently, consumers' willingness to use the online shop.

With regard to online pharmacies, what are the implications for public policy makers? At first sight, the results suggest that consumers do well in handling the situation as they adapt their strategies according to the amount at stake. Shall we therefore claim to leave it all up to the market instead of searching for new ways to protect consumers — even in the high risk domain of medication? Our results do not support such a conclusion. The study examines how consumers evaluate online shops — not how effectively they detect fraud. Indeed, results from Grazioli and Wang (2001) show that consumers often fail to do so. The pitfalls consumers encounter during the evaluation of online retailers should be thoroughly investigated by further research. Providing recommendations that would help consumers to make successful decisions in situations where their health might be at stake would undoubtedly make consumer research more relevant to consumers themselves.

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The Moderating Effect of Online Purchase Experience on the Evaluation of Online Store Attributes and the Subsequent Impact on Market Response Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to propose and test an integrative theoretical model that allows one to determine the relative importance of online store attributes on market response outcomes (i.e., trust, satisfaction, and loyalty), and to examine the moderating effect of online purchase experience on the impact of online store attributes on trust and satisfaction. The empirical results showed that merchandising was the most important attribute to enhancing both trust and satisfaction, followed by security/privacy and order fulfillment. The findings also revealed that the source of consumer trust changes as consumer purchase experience increases, whereas the source of consumer satisfaction remains the same regardless of consumer purchase experience.

INTRODUCTION

One of the critical aims of retailers is to increase consumers' market response outcomes, such as trust, satisfaction, and loyalty. In the online retailing setting, several online store aspects (i.e., website design, security, website quality, etc.) are individually studied as important antecedents of market response outcomes. Although prior studies pertaining to market response outcomes and their antecedents have contributed to understanding consumers' online shopping behavior, some critical gaps remain. First, individual links of market response outcomes with online store aspects are well established. Examples are trust-loyalty (e.g., Harris and Goode 2004), satisfaction-loyalty (e.g., Shankar, Smith, and Rangaswamy 2003; Wallace, Giese, and Johnson 2004), trust-satisfaction (e.g., Singh and Sirdeshmukh 2000), website design-satisfaction (e.g., Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal 2003), and privacy-trust and satisfaction (e.g., Wagner and Rydstrom 2001). However, integrative attempts of outcomes with online store aspects are lacking. In order to understand consumers' online purchases, it is important to integrate these disparate discoveries so the relative importance of each factor can be judged and appropriately implemented by retailers.

Second, prior studies implicitly assume that consumers' evaluation of online store attributes and the impact on market response outcomes is identical across customers. Several pieces of evidence suggest this assumption might be too simplistic. According to Hoffman, Novak, and Peralta (1999), consumers' evaluation of an online retailer is likely to be different by customers' Internet usage patterns. Online trust varies by a consumer's buying experience (Liu, Dixon, and Murphy 2002) and is moderated by the consumer's degree of trust propensity (Lee and Turban 2001) and duration of relationship (Gounaris and Venetis 2002). Extending these notions, this study posits that consumer evaluation of online store attributes and the impact on consumer trust and satisfaction vary by the degree of consumer online purchase experience. For example, inexperienced e-shoppers might consider the security and order fulfillment aspects of e-tailers more important than other online attributes in building trust, which in turn may lead to customer loyalty. This study attempts to fill such gaps in the literature. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to propose and test an integrative theoretical model that identify the relative importance of each online store attribute on market response outcomes (i.e., trust, satisfaction, and loyalty), and to examine the moderating effect of online purchase experience on the impact of each online attribute on trust and satisfaction.

RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

Online Store Attributes and Trust

In the literature, a significant number of studies focus on a discrete aspect of online store attributes in examining its impact on market response outcomes (e.g., Loiacono, Watson, and Goodhue 2002; Montoya-Weiss et al. 2003; Wagner and Rydstrom 2001; Wolfenbarger and Gilly 2003; Yoo and Donthu 2001). Because a single online store aspect does not determine consumers' reaction to e-tailers, this study considers a comprehensive set of online store attributes, rather than a single aspect. Lindquist (1974-75) synthesized store attributes into nine categories: merchandising, service, clientele, physical facilities, convenience, promotion, store atmosphere, institutional factors, and past transactions. Considering this classification and incorporating online specific characteristics from intensive literature review, this study considers six aspects of online store attributes: website design, order fulfillment, communication, merchandise, security/privacy, and promotion.

In this study, trust is defined as a belief or expectation that the word or promise by the merchant can be relied upon (i.e., credibility) and that the seller will not take advantage of the consumer's vulnerability (i.e., benevolence) (Geyskens et al. 1996). While few studies have attempted to find out the relative influence of each of the online store attributes in building consumers' trust toward the online store, literature provides evidence of individual attributes doing so. For example, Lohse and Spiller (1999) claimed that information content and website design played an important role in building customer trust as these attributes replace the salesperson and physical surroundings of a traditional retail store. Security/privacy, order fulfillment, and communication dimensions are conceptually suggested as important consumer trust builders (i.e., Hoffman et al. 1999; Urban et al. 2000), but empirical support has not been provided. Neither is empirical evidence available with respect to merchandise. It is expected, though, that providing merchandise that satisfies customers' needs will be positively related to customer trust toward e-tailers. One of the most important factors that attracts consumers online is saving money (Abbott et al. 2000). Accordingly, providing monetary incentives may create the impression that the e-tailer is benevolent (i.e., trustworthy). In line with previous literature and reasoning, the following hypotheses are developed.

- H1: The following online store attributes have a positive influence on consumer trust toward e-tailer.
- H1a. Website design,
 - H1b. Order fulfillment,
 - H1c. Communication,
 - H1d. Merchandising,
 - H1e. Security/Privacy, and
 - H1f. Promotion

Online Store Attributes and Satisfaction

Satisfaction is defined as the perception of pleasurable fulfillment and occurs when retailer performance matches or is higher than consumers' expectations (Oliver 1997). Overall, prior studies indicate that satisfaction toward an e-tailer depends primarily on customers' evaluation of performance on various online store attributes. Specifically, the relationship of website design to satis-

faction has received moderate attention. In two service contexts (i.e., a financial service institution and a university), Montoya-Weiss et al. (2003) found that three website design factors (information content, navigation structure, and graphic style) influenced customers' use of an online channel and overall satisfaction. Of the three website design factors, information content perceptions exerted stronger effects on overall satisfaction than navigation structure or graphic style. Site design and convenience were found to have a more prominent role in consumer e-satisfaction than greater breadth of offerings (Szymanski and Hise 2000). Communication with customers by providing information has been found to be important in enhancing customer satisfaction toward e-tailers, too. Shankar et al. (2003) found that ease of obtaining information and depth of information at the website increased overall satisfaction. Information quality also affected satisfaction levels (Park and Kim 2003). Wagner and Rydstrom (2001) provided additional support that customer satisfaction is a positive function of communication, user-friendliness, and privacy. The security and privacy aspect is a significant contributor to customer satisfaction (Park and Kim 2003; Szymanski and Hise 2000; Wagner and Rydstrom 2001). While the influence of the merchandise aspect on customer satisfaction remained unexplored, this study deems that retailers' successful merchandising has a strong impact on consumers' satisfaction levels as consumers seek merchandise that will satisfy their needs through e-tailers. The promotion aspect may lead marginally to customer satisfaction as expectation of savings may be better met by placing online orders than by purchasing offline. This view is supported by Jin and Sternquist (2004), who found that price savings create higher levels of satisfaction. Taken together, we put forth the following hypotheses.

- H2: The following online store attributes have a positive influence on consumer satisfaction toward e-tailier.
- H2a. Website design,
 - H2b. Order fulfillment,
 - H2c. Communication,
 - H2d. Merchandising,
 - H2e. Security/Privacy, and
 - H2f. Promotion

Trust and Satisfaction

While the notion that satisfaction precedes trust is well established in the marketing channel (e.g., Garbarino and Johnson 1999; Geyskens, Steenkamp, and Kumar 1998), we posit that trust leads to satisfaction in the e-tailing context, where trust serves a pivotal role in attracting customers to shop (Hoffman et al 1999; Reichheld and Schefter 2000; Urban, Sultan, and Qualls 2000). Unlike offline retail stores, the inability to interact with a salesperson and merchandise, as well as electronic payment methods, increases consumers' perceived risk of online purchasing. Consequently, trust may provide a stimulus to purchase over the Internet. Singh and Sirdeshmukh (2000) proposed a circular trust model. That is, trust before a specific exchange episode enhances consumers' postpurchase satisfaction, which in turn increases postpurchase trust. As such, this study suggests that customer satisfaction can be achieved only when customers feel comfortable about placing orders over the Internet. Recent empirical findings by Harris and Goode (2004) support a positive direct trust-satisfaction link. Therefore, we expect customer satisfaction to be reflective of customer trust toward the e-tailier.

- H3: Consumer trust positively influences consumer satisfaction with e-tailier.

Trust and Loyalty

Considerable studies have confirmed that trust is a significant driver of customer loyalty (e.g., Chaudhuri and Holbrook 2001; Reichheld and Schefter 2000). According to Reichheld and Schefter (2000, 107), retailers must first gain trust, asserting "to gain the loyalty of customers, you must first gain their trust. That's always been the case but on the web...it's truer than ever." Harris and Goode (2004) concluded that trust might be more important in establishing loyalty in online retailing than in offline purchasing. And, Lynch, Kent, and Srinivasan (2001) found that trust is consistently associated with online loyalty in a number of contrasting national contexts.

- H4: Consumer trust positively influences consumer loyalty with e-tailier.

Satisfaction and Loyalty

Overall, a significant positive relationship between satisfaction and loyalty has been sufficiently documented (Cronin, Brady and Hult 2000; Shemwell, Yavas, and Bilgin 1998; Wallace et al. 2004). Oliver (1999, 42) viewed satisfaction as the "seed" out of which loyalty develops. In a multichannel context, Wallace et al. (2004) found that satisfaction is a significant predictor of loyalty for multiple channel customers, while it is not for single channel customers. The relationship between satisfaction-loyalty is found to be higher online than offline (Shankar et al. 2003). Therefore, our next hypothesis is given:

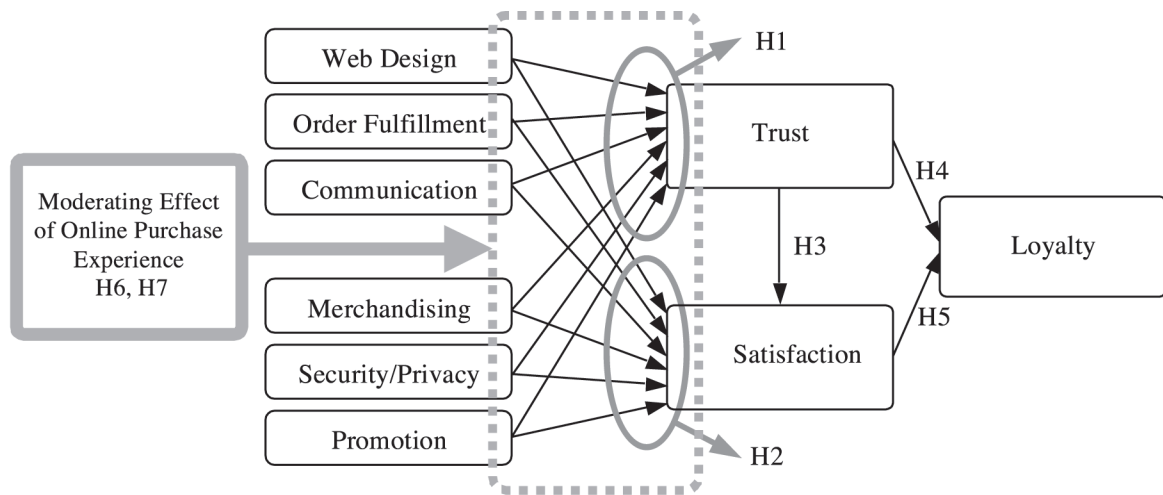
- H5: Consumer satisfaction positively influences consumer loyalty toward e-tailier.

The Moderating Effect of Online Purchase Experience

When deciding whether and how much to trust, consumers look for cues (e.g., trustworthiness attributes). Gounaris and Venetis (2002) found in the industrial service context that the impact of trust antecedents is moderated by the duration of the relationship and that the source of trust changes as the relationship progresses. For example, as the relationship matures, higher levels of the quality dimension (i.e., immediate outcome quality, actual performance of the provider in delivering the service) were found to be more important, whereas potential quality (i.e., cues) was more important at the early phase of the relationship. Following this notion, our study speculates that trust building cues, such as security/privacy, order fulfillment, website design, and promotion become less critical as e-shoppers' experiences increase. Website design serves as the store atmosphere (Abbott et al. 2000; Lohse and Spiller 1999) and, accordingly, is a trustworthiness cue, especially at the beginning of transactions with an e-tailier. E-shoppers are particularly fearful of disclosing personal information related to security, privacy and order fulfillment aspects (e.g., Andrade, Kaltcheva, and Weitz 2002; Hoffman et al. 1999). This concern may be lessened as their purchase experience increases. Consumers are more likely, too, to trust an e-tailier that continuously offers lower prices than competitors. Inexperienced shoppers may be more reactive to this aspect as saving money draws shoppers online (Abbott et al. 2000). Merchandising is an actual performance of the e-tailier. Accordingly, the merchandising aspect is thought to be more critical as an e-shopper's experience with an e-tailier increases. Taken together, the following hypothesis is derived.

- H6: Online attributes-trust link is moderated by the customers' online purchase experience.

FIGURE 1
The Proposed Research Model and Hypotheses



As with the online attributes-trust link, we expect that the online attributes-satisfaction link is also moderated by consumers' online purchase experience. Important attributes that affect the satisfaction level are likely to differ by consumer decision process stages. Chen-Yu and Kincade (2001) discovered that product image was important in the alternative evaluation stage, while product performance and product image affected satisfaction in a post-purchase stage. Abbott et al. (2000) viewed satisfaction as either latent satisfaction (i.e., initial evaluation before purchase) or manifest satisfaction (i.e., after purchase through explicit comparison between consumer expectation and performance). As such, they proposed different impacts of online store attributes on latent and manifest satisfaction. For example, they proposed that the effect of perceived security is higher for latent satisfaction than for manifest satisfaction. Similarly, atmospherics (i.e., website design) and price (i.e., promotion) are critical in latent satisfaction, but their importance is diminished in manifest satisfaction. However, the importance of product assortment and information availability is proposed equally high across the two satisfaction stages. In line with the above study, this study posits that website design, order fulfillment, security, and promotion aspects are more important to consumer satisfaction for consumers with less purchase experience than for their counterparts. In contrast, merchandise and communication aspects are more important for experienced online shoppers.

H7: Online attributes-satisfaction link is moderated by the customers' online purchase experience.

METHOD

Data was collected using two different formats, a mall intercept method and an online survey. This mixed mode approach mitigates coverage errors or other biases resulting from data collection methods. Males and females over 18 who reside in South Korea and who have online purchase experience were chosen as respondents. For the mall intercept method, shoppers at two major department stores and one major discount store in Seoul, Korea, were asked by trained interviewers to complete a questionnaire. An online survey was conducted in cooperation with a major online retailer. The survey was posted on the retailer's website and visitors were invited by means of a pop-up window to fill out the survey.

After checking equivalence of the two covariance matrices using LISREL 8.50 ($\chi^2=56.93, df=45, p=.11$), two data sets (226 from the mall intercept and 227 from the online survey) were combined as a total for further analysis.

Survey Instrument Development

The questionnaire in this study was developed through three phases. In the first phase, 58 items that measure six proposed aspects of online store attributes (i.e., website design, order fulfillment, communication, merchandising, security/privacy, and promotion) were adopted from Loiacono et al. (2002); Mathwick, Malhotra, and Rigdon (2001); Wolfenbarger and Gilly (2003); Yoo and Donthu (2001). Twenty-two items for measuring three market response outcomes (i.e., trust, satisfaction, and loyalty) were compiled from prior studies (Doney and Cannon 1997; Garbarino and Johnson 1999; Srinivasan, Anderson, and Ponnayolu 2002) and translated into Korean by one of the researchers who is fluent in both English and Korean. In the second phase, based on a focus group interview and person-to-person interview results, seven Korean-specific website attributes (e.g., no interest up to 18 months installment) were incorporated into the questionnaire. Lastly, a pretest was conducted with 53 respondents. Based on results of the pretest, the final 35 items for online store attributes and 16 items for assessing the market response outcomes were developed. All items were measured by the seven-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree), except the extent of online shopping and demographic variables. Respondents were asked to write the name of the e-retailer from which they most frequently shopped and to answer questions with the store in mind.

Respondents

Regarding the respondents, 67% were female, 71% were between the ages of 25 and 39, 84.8% had earned a bachelor's degree or higher, 51.2% were single, and 67.9% had average monthly incomes of \$2,500 or above. This sample could be considered representative of e-shoppers as it was previously reported that frequent e-shoppers are female with high income and education and who are relatively young (Korea Information Strategy Development Institute 2004, June 28).

TABLE 1
The Results of CFA on Evaluation of Online Store Attributes

Latent	Indicators	CSS	CR	α
<i>Website Design</i>	In this website, I can enlarge product pictures.	.71(15.63)	.74	.73
	This website provides product pictures from various angles.	.76(17.04)		
	This website design has a nice impression.	.63(13.41)		
<i>Order Fulfillment</i>	This website provides error-free ordering and delivery.	.70(15.92)	.76	.76
	Information on delivery time and fee is available.	.73(16.79)		
	This website delivers ordered products without defects.	.71(16.37)		
<i>Communication</i>	This website provides personalized information for me.	.58(12.57)	.77	.77
	This website makes purchase recommendations that match my needs.	.63(13.92)		
	This website cares about business with me by sending thank you mail.	.59(12.78)		
	I feel that this website appreciates my business.	.70(15.94)		
	This website sends me information that is related to the purchase item.	.67(14.98)		
<i>Merchandise</i>	Detailed merchandise information is provided.	.73(17.55)	.86	.83
	I can easily find the product that I need in this website.	.85(21.71)		
	Merchandise purchase procedure is fast and easy in this website.	.77(18.83)		
	Wide variety of products is provided in this website.	.66(15.21)		
<i>Security/Privacy</i>	My personal information is confidential in this website.	.61(13.09)	.72	.71
	Credit card information is secure in this website.	.67(14.70)		
	This website clearly states privacy policy.	.75(16.85)		
<i>Promotion</i>	Online discount coupons are provided in this website.	.66(14.41)	.73	.73
	This website provides a mileage program (e.g., accumulating points to earn free gifts).	.78(17.63)		
	This website offers customer services that provide monetary benefits such as no interest up to 18 months installment.	.61(13.04)		

The number in parentheses denotes t-values.

CSS: Completely Standardized Solution CR: Construct reliability

Measurement Validation

To provide an assessment of the overall validity of the measures, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of online store attributes and market response outcomes was undertaken. The CFA result for online store attributes indicated an acceptable fit ($\chi^2(174)=890.15, p=.00$; GFI=.85; CFI=.83; NFI=.80; RMR=.07). Factor loadings were generally in the .61-.85 range and statistically

significant at $p<.01$, suggesting construct validity. Internal consistency was also proved (table 1). The CFA result of market response outcomes showed an acceptable fit ($\chi^2(51)=289.28, p=.00$; GFI=.91; CFI=.94; NFI=.92; RMR=.04) and factor loadings were in the .63-.89 range, providing construct validity for the measures (trust, satisfaction, and loyalty). Internal consistency was also verified through construct reliability (ranging .81-.89) and Cronbach's

TABLE 2
The Results of CFA on Consumer Trust, Satisfaction, and Loyalty toward e-tailer

Latent	Indicators	CSS	CR	α
<i>Trust</i>	I trust the website will deliver what I ordered.	.66(15.76)	.84	.84
	Ordered products always meet my expectation.	.73(18.03)		
	I trust this website.	.83(21.62)		
	This website consistently provides products in good quality.	.79 (20.08)		
<i>Satisfaction</i>	I am satisfied with the product provided from this website.	.63(14.68)	.81	.80
	I am satisfied with the shopping experience of this website.	.81(20.87)		
	I am overall satisfied with this website.	.85(22.36)		
<i>Loyalty</i>	I mostly use the website whenever I need to make a purchase.	.66(15.14)	.89	.88
	When I need to make a purchase, this website is my first choice.	.74(18.14)		
	I like using this website.	.89(23.95)		
	To me this website is the best retail website with which to do business.	.85(22.07)		
	I believe that this is my favorite retail website.	.77(19.18)		

The number in parentheses denotes t-values.

CSS: Completely Standardized Solution CR: Construct reliability

alpha (ranging .80-.88) (table 2). Items in one factor were averaged for further analysis.

RESULTS

The hypotheses of the research model were tested with three structural equation path models. The first model involved testing H1-H5 with the full sample (n=453). The other two models tested H6 and H7 (i.e., the moderating effect of online purchase experience). To test the moderating effect, the total sample was divided into two groups based on the respondent’s number of online purchases in the past year. To ensure high versus low online purchase groups, the top one-third (approximately 33%) was classified as the high online purchase experience group (High, n=150) and the low one-third was classified as the low online purchase experience group (Low, n=154). High group purchased 18 times or more in a year, while Low purchased 6 or fewer times in a year.

Testing the Proposed Model

Results pertaining to the proposed model (H1-H5) are shown in table 3. The overall fit statistics ($\chi^2(6)=18.49, p=.01$; GFI=.99; CFI=.99; RMSEA=.07; RMR=.03) indicated an acceptable level of fit. In testing the effect of online store attributes evaluation on trust, four out of six paths were statistically significant. That is, four online attributes, Order Fulfillment (.14), Merchandising (.36), Security/Privacy (.23), and Promotion (.12), played an important role in improving consumers’ trust toward e-tailers. These results are consistent with Hoffman et al (1999) and Urban et al. (2000). However, the other two paths, Website Design-trust (.00) and

Communication-trust (.04), were insignificant. This finding contradicts Lohse and Spiller (1999) who found that website design increases the customer trust level. Therefore, H1b, H1d, H1e, and H1f were accepted; H1a and H1c were rejected.

In testing the effects of online store attributes evaluation to satisfaction, Order Fulfillment (.20), Merchandising (.27), and Security/Privacy (.20) had significant positive effects on consumer satisfaction toward e-tailers. These results are parallel to previous studies (Park and Kim 2003; Wagner and Rydstrom 2001). However, Website Design (.02), Communication (.05), and Promotion (.03) did not increase consumers’ level of satisfaction. This finding is inconsistent with Montoya-Weiss et al. (2003), Shankar et al. (2003), and Szymanski and Hise (2000) who found that website design and information were important to satisfaction. Therefore, H2b, H2d, and H2e were accepted and the other three hypotheses were rejected.

Hypotheses testing relationships among the three market response outcomes (i.e., paths from trust → satisfaction (.24), trust → loyalty (.36), and satisfaction → loyalty (.38)), were all proved to be significant in our path model. This finding corresponds to prior studies (Harris and Goode 2004; Reichheld and Scheffer 2000; Wallace et al. 2004). Therefore, H3, H4, and H5 were accepted.

Testing the Moderating Effect of Online Purchase Experience

To test the moderating effect of online purchase experience, three steps of multiple group analysis method in LISREL were taken. First, all path coefficients across the two groups (high versus low) were set to free (free model). The chi square value of the free

TABLE 3
The Result of Testing the Proposed Model
n=453

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient (t-Value)	Result
Hypothesis 1	<u>Online Store Attributes and Trust</u>		
H1a	Website Design → Trust	.00(.04)	Rejected
H1b	Order Fulfillment → Trust	.14(2.72) ^a	Supported
H1c	Communication → Trust	.04(.87)	Rejected
H1d	Merchandising → Trust	.36(7.57) ^a	Supported
H1e	Security/Privacy → Trust	.23(4.85) ^a	Supported
H1f	Promotion → Trust	.12(2.71) ^a	Supported
Hypothesis 2	<u>Online Store Attributes and Satisfaction</u>		
H2a	Website Design → Satisfaction	.02(.51)	Rejected
H2b	Order Fulfillment → Satisfaction	.20(4.61) ^a	Supported
H2c	Communication → Satisfaction	.05(1.43)	Rejected
H2d	Merchandising → Satisfaction	.27(6.47) ^a	Supported
H2e	Security/Privacy → Satisfaction	.20(4.98) ^a	Supported
H2f	Promotion → Satisfaction	.03(.80)	Rejected
	<u>Trust, Satisfaction, and Loyalty</u>		
Hypothesis 3	Trust → Satisfaction	.24(6.34) ^a	Supported
Hypothesis 4	Trust → Loyalty	.36(8.08) ^a	Supported
Hypothesis 5	Satisfaction → Loyalty	.38(8.53) ^a	Supported

$\chi^2=18.49$ ($df=6$), p -value=.01, GFI=.99, CFI=.99, RMSEA=.07, RMR=.03

a. $p < .01$

model ($\chi^2=18.13$, $df=12$, $p=.11$) was then used as a base model for comparison of the two groups. In the second step, all path coefficients across the two groups were constrained to be equal (constrained model, $\chi^2=53.88$, $df=24$, $p=.00$). The chi-square difference test (change in $\chi^2=35.8$, $df=12$, $p < .01$) indicated that, as a group, the constrained model was significantly poorer than the free model, allowing us to test individual paths. Therefore, in the third step, the individual path coefficient, taken one at a time, was compared between the two groups (see Sauer and Dick 1993). The chi-square of the free model ($\chi^2=18.13$, $df=12$, $p=.11$) was also used as a base. The twelve constrained models (six online store attributes → trust and six online store attributes → satisfaction) were examined (i.e., each time, just one path was set to equal between groups and the rest were set to free). As table 4 shows, five paths out of twelve were significantly different between groups. That is, the effects of Website Design, Order Fulfillment, Merchandising, and Promotion on trust are significantly different between the groups. In the paths to satisfaction, group difference was found in the Communication-satisfaction path. However, this path was not significant in both groups. This finding indirectly opposes the proposition of Abbott et

al. (2000) that online store attributes had differing influences on latent and manifest satisfaction. Therefore, taken together, H6 was partially accepted and H7 was rejected.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was two-fold. First, the study proposed and tested an integrative model for examining the relative influence of diverse online store attributes on market response outcomes. The findings revealed that Merchandising was the most important attribute in enhancing both trust and satisfaction, followed by Security/Privacy and Order Fulfillment. Promotion exerted the smallest contribution, increasing only consumer trust, not satisfaction. Second, this study examined the moderating effect of online purchase experience on the impact of each online attribute on consumer trust and satisfaction. Specifically, Order Fulfillment, Promotion, and Website Design were the most critical in enhancing consumer trust for low online purchasers, while Merchandising was the most critical in cultivating trust for high online purchasers. Security/Privacy was found to be important in increasing trust for both groups.

TABLE 4
The Moderating Effect of Online Purchase Experience

Hypothesis	Path*	Coefficient (t-Value)		χ^2 value		Result
		High Experience Group (n=150)	Low Experience Group (n=154)	Constrained Model (df=13)	χ^2 diff. from Free Model ($\Delta df=1$)**	
Hypothesis 6	<u>Online Store Attributes and Trust</u>					Partially Supported
	Website Design → Trust	.00(.05)	.14(1.85)	22.63	4.5 ^b	
	Order Fulfillment → Trust	.10(1.04)	.26(2.81) ^a	22.56	4.43 ^b	
	Communication → Trust	-.02(-.21)	.02(.27)	19.33	1.2	
	Merchandising → Trust	.39(4.62) ^a	.04(.54)	28.33	10.0 ^a	
	Security/Privacy → Trust	.25(3.08) ^a	.23(2.90) ^a	18.58	.45	
Hypothesis 7	<u>Online Store Attributes and Satisfaction</u>					Rejected
	Website Design → Satisfaction	.02(.29)	.02(.29)	18.13	.00	
	Order Fulfillment → Satisfaction	.21(2.82) ^a	.15(1.96) ^a	20.28	2.15	
	Communication → Satisfaction	.05(.74)	-.04(-.63)	21.56	3.43 ^c	
	Merchandising → Satisfaction	.26(3.58) ^a	.17(2.70) ^a	20.33	2.2	
	Security/Privacy → Satisfaction	.19(2.74) ^a	.18(2.61) ^a	18.46	.33	
	Promotion → Satisfaction	.04(.64)	.08(1.37)	19.96	1.83	

High Experience group: $\chi^2=6.19$ (df=6), p -value=.40, GFI=.99, CFI=.99, RMSEA=.01, RMR=.03
 Low Experience group: $\chi^2=9.16$ (df=6), p -value=.16, GFI=.99, CFI=.99, RMSEA=.02, RMR=.03

*The group differences on paths among the market response outcomes are not tested
 **This value is calculated by subtracting the chi-square value of each constrained model from the χ^2 of the free model (18.13)
 a. $p < .01$ b. $p < .05$ c. $p < .10$

An important theoretical contribution of this study stems from discovering the relative importance of diverse online store attributes in enhancing consumer trust and satisfaction. By integrating the online store attributes and market response outcomes, this study enables us to find merchandising to be foremost in enhancing trust and satisfaction. In addition, the merchandising aspect is proved to be more critical in cultivating heavy purchasers. Surprisingly, despite the importance of merchandising, this aspect has not received attention in previous e-tailing study. This study provides multiple reasons why merchandising needs to be taken into account in future studies. A more important contribution of this study comes from examining the differing moderating role of online purchase experience on trust and satisfaction. That is, the source of trust changes as consumer purchase experience increases, whereas source of satisfaction remains the same regardless of consumer experience. Previous studies tended to assume that trust is developed as time passes. This study suggests that consumer trust toward e-tailer may be developed through different sources as experience with e-tailers evolves. This result further adds to the literature that different aspects of online store attributes need to be strategically managed,

keeping in mind consumer online purchase frequency, in order to continue to build trust.

Our findings also generate relevant insights that are more directly applicable to marketing management. A key empirical finding in our study is the relative importance of merchandising in building trust and satisfaction. This parallels Lindquist (1974-75) that merchandise related considerations (e.g., assortment) appeared to be the most critical dimension. This finding, thirty years ago in the offline setting, is still highly relevant in the online context. Therefore, e-tailers are required to maintain a competitive merchandising strategy. Contrary to prior studies, website design and communication aspects did not contribute to enhancing consumer trust or satisfaction. This may be due to the lack of differentiation found among e-tailers and inadequate approaches. For example, most e-tailers use the same communication approach toward every customer, regardless of the customer's experiences. One possible solution would be to tailor communication messages based on the consumer's purchase experience. Such a solution would be possible using data mining. Unlike offline retailing, data mining technology allows e-tailers to easily discern heavy purchasers versus light

purchasers. As order fulfillment was an important aspect to gain trust for low purchasers, e-tailers need to ensure flawless delivery and to communicate this fact to low purchasers. For heavy purchasers, the more diverse aspect of merchandising needs to be communicated because merchandising was proved to be a critical trust cultivator for heavy purchasers. Lastly, this study found that trust precedes satisfaction. Therefore, e-tailers need to build consumer trust first via the identified sources of trust so it can be transferred to satisfaction and eventually to loyalty. In building trust, e-tailers need to remember that the same strategies may not work for every customer.

A couple of limitations of this study suggest potential research opportunities. The proposed model is empirically tested only in one country (i.e., Korea). Comparison of the model with other countries would increase generalizability. Surprisingly, no comprehensive and detailed measurement of online store attributes exists. As antecedents of consumer trust, satisfaction, and loyalty, online store attributes are critical elements that e-tailers can control. Therefore, developing a comprehensive and detailed set of online store attributes could trigger fruitful research in the future.

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Consumers' Privacy Concerns and Willingness to Provide Marketing-Related Personal Information Online¹

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INTRODUCTION

The Internet has triggered revolutionary changes in our lives. People consider it to be a reliable source of information on products and services (Gervy and Lin, 2000). However, the use of the Internet for consumer purchasing has not been growing as fast as its other uses as an information source. One explanation for this disparity in growth rates may be consumers' reluctance to provide personal information on the Internet. For example, Ernst and Young's survey (1999) indicated that the most important reason why consumers do not make purchases on the Internet is their concern about sending out credit card information. A survey showed that only 24.9% of consumers felt comfortable using their credit card for purchasing on the Internet (Graeff and Harmon 2002). Media scrutiny of Internet fraud, hacking, and identity theft has heightened people's awareness of the risks of conducting transactions on the Internet.

While Internet marketing is perceived as either a threat or a nuisance by many consumers, it is a valuable tool for both online and offline businesses. Rapid advances in information technology and the increase of Internet use enable companies to gather, store, and exchange consumer data that can be used for developing more accurately targeted marketing. A typical Internet marketing strategy focuses on a long-term relationship and a series of business transactions with a customer. This strategy becomes possible through the collection of data on customers' buying patterns, preferences, and/or personal information. These databases, however, require consumers to share their personal information, whether voluntarily or involuntarily. In most cases, the nature of e-commerce requires consumers to disclose a certain amount of personal information (e.g., their name, address, and telephone number) and payment information (e.g., their credit card number). The problem is that consumers have generally shown increasing concerns over privacy due to an increase in questionable and illegal activities in the Internet, such as the precipitous rise of junk mail, identity theft, and fraud. Thus, issues of privacy and security in e-commerce have been receiving more attention by researchers in different fields (e.g., Caudill and Murphy 2000; Culnan and Armstrong 1999). Consumers' growing concern over their privacy is a significant problem for the potential growth of e-businesses. According to a survey of Internet marketers, 92% believe that greater consumer confidence of online privacy would lead to an increase in online purchasing (Javis 2000).

A crucial question is what makes consumers voluntarily share their personal information with businesses. The present paper proposes and empirically tests a model of how individuals' willingness to share personal information is determined. More specifically, this paper examines relationships between three factors related to consumers' privacy concerns and one dependent variable: consumers' willingness to disclose personal information.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH MODEL

Privacy concerns in the Internet era

Privacy is often understood as the right to be left alone (Cheskin Research and Studio Archetype/Sapient 1999). The invasion of privacy on the Internet is commonly regarded as the unauthorized collection, disclosure, or other use of personal information (Wang, Lee, and Wang 1998). Even before the Internet era, consumers' personal information was often collected, analyzed, and exchanged for various marketing purposes such as direct marketing and telemarketing. However, pre-electronic consumer transactions provided a natural protection of consumer privacy, particularly where transactions were made in cash and consumers refused to release personal information. Since then, Internet commerce has eroded the benefits of such anonymity (Caudill and Murphy 2000). In fact, Internet has facilitated collection, process, and exchange of personal data in both speed and scope. Now, some commentators argue that it is almost impossible for consumers to transact businesses on the Internet without revealing information about themselves (Rust, Kannan, and Peng 2002). This also caused increased attention to the issue of consumer privacy showing dramatic increase in mass media coverage of the topic in all media formats between 1990 and 2001 (Roznowski 2003). It identified retailers as the most prevalent problem source.

Due to the nature of Internet-based business transactions, one of the major research trends in online marketing or e-commerce has been consumers' concern about their privacy. In a telephone survey, only 24.9 percent responded that they were comfortable using their credit card to make purchases on the Internet (Graeff and Harmon 2002). According to an October 2001 report by Forrester Research, about 60 percent of online users are wary of giving out personal information online, inhibiting roughly \$15 billion of potential e-commerce revenue in 2001 (Kelley, Denton, and Broadbent 2001).

Privacy concerns regarding Internet marketing are not limited to the better known cases of junk-mailing and illicit cookie distribution, but to the selling of consumer databases for direct marketing purposes. Thus, Rust et al. (2002) even argued that the Internet will inevitably cause individual privacy to disappear, and that a specialized market for privacy will emerge. In other words, consumers may have to pay for a certain degree of comparative privacy in the future, but the underlying degree of privacy will continue to be eroded.

In the light of the perceived and actual erosion of consumer privacy, one comprehensive study examined four groups of input factors: types of personal information, the amount of control that consumers were given over how the information is used, the potential consequences for and benefits to consumers, and the consumer characteristics associated with overall privacy concerns, and found that 45 percent of people were very concerned about the way in which their personal information is used by companies, and most respondents wanted more control over the gathering and use of their personal information (Phelps, Nowak, and Ferrel 2000). Another study focused on procedural justice and found that fair procedures to protect consumers' privacy can alleviate their concerns by building trust (Culnan and Armstrong 1999). In a study that was

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not specific to the Internet, Phelps, D'Souza, and Nowak (2001) conducted a national mail survey to test a model of consumer privacy concerns about direct marketing, and found that consumers' attitudes towards direct marketing and their desire for control over the use of their personal information were associated with privacy concerns.

A number of studies have surveyed consumers' attitudes towards various marketing tactics, including the gathering and use of personal data, both online and offline. For example, Graeff and Harmon (2002) studied consumers' awareness and concerns regarding the general collection and use of personal data. One of their findings was that a majority of consumers believe it is easier to obtain their personal information through the Internet than through other means. Even though there has been increasing awareness of the erosion of privacy, consumers are aware of the benefits of using the Internet, and some—24.9 percent of the respondents—do feel comfortable making credit card purchases on the Internet (Graeff and Harmon 2002). In particular, younger Internet users tend to have positive views on information collection for marketing purposes (Gervey and Lin 2000), while older consumers tend to feel less comfortable making credit-purchases on the Internet (Graeff and Harmon 2002). In comparison with female consumers, male consumers show fewer privacy concerns, and feel more comfortable making purchases on the Internet (Graeff and Harmon 2002). Another study examined the role of e-consumers' personality trait on their shopping, surfing, and information seeking behaviors on the web, and suggested that e-consumers with low interpersonal trust tend to have high security concerns which in turn lead to lower intent to purchase on the Web (Das, Echambadi, McCardle, and Luckett 2003).

According to consumers, two of the most important attributes of commercial Websites are ease of use (e.g., simplicity, speed, convenience) and security (e.g., privacy, trustworthiness, transaction security) (Gervey and Lin 2000). Bush, Bush, and Harris (1998) found that security and privacy issues are major barriers to using the Internet as a marketing tool. Hershel and Andrews (1997) also reported that many users are reluctant to purchase products because of uncertainty regarding the privacy and security of information transactions. Thus, it is of great importance that e-businesses to find a way to reduce consumer privacy concerns.

Antecedents of privacy concerns

Reducing privacy concerns and, in turn, increasing consumers' willingness to disclose personal information, is one of vital keys to the success of e-commerce. Research in this field identifies antecedents that lead to a decrease in privacy concerns, namely (1) consumer trust in the e-vendor, and (2) the value provided by the Website. Trust is widely considered to be vital in allaying the privacy concerns of consumers. Considering that consumers in the Internet market are likely to interact with unfamiliar vendors, trust is an even more important construct in e-commerce than in traditional business transactions. In her review of consumers' trust in online shopping, Grabner-Kraeuter (2002) claimed that trust arises in two environmental conditions, the uncertain and the risky, and further categorized the uncertainties as system-dependent and transaction-specific. Trust plays an important role in consumers' overcoming their perceptions of risk and insecurity in online business transactions (McKnight, Choudhury, and Kacmar 2002). Based on the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975), Liu, Marchewka, and Ku (2004) also proposed a privacy-trust-behavioral intention model to explain consumer's behavioral intention for online transaction. Their laboratory experiment showed that four dimensions of privacy strongly influenced the level of trust, which in turn influenced a

customer's behavioral intentions to purchase from or visit a Website. A joint research project by Cheskin Research and Studio Archetype/Sapient (1999) on consumer trust in e-commerce concluded that trustworthiness is a result of a consumer's experience of a website over time. According to the report, it is the brand image, navigation, consequent consumer fulfillment, presentation, up-to-date technology, and the logos of security-guaranteeing companies that constitute the essential characteristics of a website that communicate trustworthiness to a visitor. In the same way as for offline transactions, the trusting process in online transactions begins when an individual perceives that a company may be worthy of trust. Such a perception can be strengthened over time, and is eventually transformed into personifications of character, such as dependability, reliability and honesty. Using structural equation modeling, it has been found that trust is one of the most important determinants of a customer's attitude towards using Internet banking (Suh and Han 2002).

Building consumers' trust, a core component of social exchange theory and relationship marketing can be one of the solutions for enhancing e-retailing. Campbell (1997) viewed trust as an effective way of managing consumer privacy concerns, and noted that if consumers know that the personal information collected has the potential to build a relationship in which they could participate in the transfer of goods or services, their privacy concerns might be diminished or superseded by their desire to participate. Phelps and his colleagues (2001) found that a consumer's attitudes towards direct marketing and desire for information control as antecedents to privacy concerns are related to subsequent purchase behavior.

The second category of antecedents concerns how value provided by an e-vendor can reduce privacy concerns and increase the use of e-shopping. Exchange theory and a cost-benefit perspective suggest that consumers might be willing to provide information if they receive more than a certain level of value in exchange for their privacy disclosures.

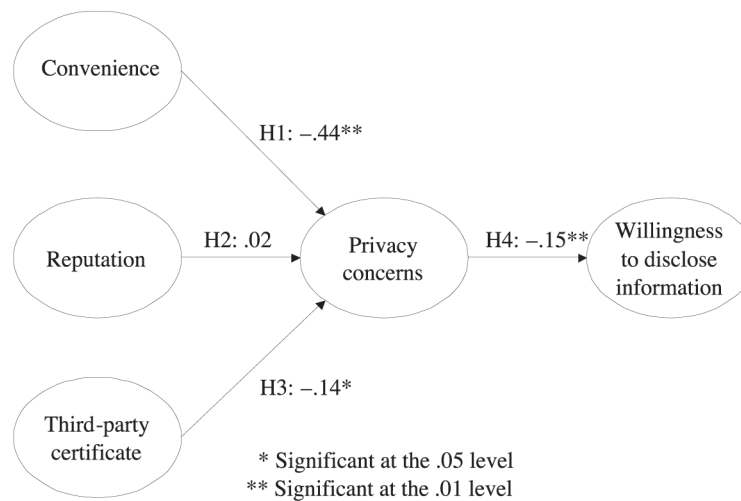
In the field of Web research, the most important values perceived by consumers who accept the technology-based retailing of a product are two beliefs, both related to the utility and ease of using e-retailing (Gefen, Karahanna, and Straub 2003; Phelps et al. 2000). In addition, Chen and Dubinsky (2003) posit that values such as e-retailer reputation and the perceived quality and price of a product influence privacy concerns, which represent one type of perceived risk. Empirical evidence by Phelps and associates (2000) shows that privacy concerns will be reduced if consumers experience shopping benefits such as time saving and wider selection. Another study suggests that 'having a mutually beneficial relationship with an online entity will have an influence on privacy concern' (Sarathy and Robertson 2003).

Research model and hypotheses

Information gathered during e-business transactions are considered to be both a blessing and a curse to both businesses and consumers. Consumers are greatly concerned about the erosion of their privacy and are reluctant to share their information or to conduct business transactions in the Internet environment. Information collected using the Internet has enabled effective and efficient marketing strategies to benefit both businesses and consumers.

Research has shown that value and trust are separate but interrelated and complementary constructs. A study of Internet banking examined the effect of trust on customers' attitude and behavior, and showed the effect on trust of perceived ease of use and perceived utility and the effect of trust on attitudes towards Internet usage and purchasing intentions (Suh and Han 2002). Each of these aspects has different types of sub-constructs and some are included

FIGURE 1
Research model with standardized coefficients



in both 'trust' and 'value' antecedents (Chen and Dubinsky 2003; Gefen et al. 2003). We investigated the three most prominent constructs of trust and/or value in the model—convenience of a website, a website's reputation, and a third-party certificate—to identify their effects on consumers' privacy concerns and willingness to disclose personal information. The research model is depicted in Figure 1.

Nowadays, a growing proportion of consumers are aware that their personal information can be collected, shared, and sometimes even stolen by unknown numbers of businesses, organizations, or criminals for financial gain. For example, "phishing" (a newest scam leading to identity theft) is estimated to cost victims more than \$1.2 billion between April 2003 and April 2004 (Lepofsky 2004). Thus, consumers are starting to protect their privacy by refusing to disclose personal information or, where possible, providing deceptive information. Meanwhile, for the collected information to be useful, it must be accurate and up to date. To maximize usefulness of the collected information, Internet websites need to reassure users that their privacy is well protected. Milne and Boza (1999) showed that building trust was a key element in reducing the privacy concerns of consumers and improving relationships between consumers and businesses. Trust is developed through the effective communication of privacy safeguards, market signals that effectively convey high reputation and credibility, and previous favorable consumer experiences of perceived value. The development of trust between direct marketers and consumers reduces consumers' perceived risk, which then improves consumers' willingness to share their personal information with marketers.

The characteristics of an Internet website may impact on users' privacy concerns. According to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), perceived ease of use and utility are major values provided by a website (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Malhotra 2002) and are key determinants of users' technology acceptance (Gefen et al. 2003). Even though Salisbury and his colleagues (2001) showed that ease of navigation and usefulness were not significantly related to purchasing intention, a meta-analysis showed a weighted average correlation between ease of use and intention to use of .51 (Saeed, Hwang, and Yi 2003). Meanwhile, web security was related with

purchase intention (Salisbury et al., 2001), and this suggests that users' perception of web security is related to their perception of security.

Similarly, in his discussion of the nature of and conditions for online trust, Koehn (2003) recommended several guidelines for Internet retailers. For example, to maximize knowledge-based trust, Koehn (2003) recommends that Internet retailers should avoid poor spelling, grammar, and syntax that may cause doubts about their identity. For respect-based trust, purchasing processes should be user-friendly and customer-oriented.

Online consumers are also influenced by user interfaces (Chen and Dubinsky 2003), and are likely to shop at well-designed Websites (Liang and Lai 2002). A meta-analysis also indicated that system quality, including interface, navigation, and aesthetics, influences consumers' behavior by changing their perceptions of ease of use, usefulness, trust, and shopping enjoyment (Saeed et al. 2003). Based on reviews of existing literature on this subject, we developed a hypothesis about the relationship between users' perceived convenience of a website and their privacy concerns.

Hypothesis 1: The perceived convenience of a website is negatively related to users' privacy concerns.

Another determinant that may influence Internet users' sense of trust and privacy concern is a website's reputation. Consumers develop a perception of the reputation of a retail outlet based on the service quality they experience, the nature of the store's advertising, and the opinions of friends and relatives (Assael 1998). As the reputation of a store is equivalent to the total perception based on a consumer's experience, knowledge, and belief in relation to that store, it has a strong effect on the consumer's perception of the value offered by the store. This perception helps consumers to evaluate the differences between stores and choose between them. According to Sheehan and Hoy (2000), online users are less concerned about their privacy when they are interacting with companies with whom they are familiar. Consumers may feel familiar with a company when they have heard a positive evaluation of the company. Chen and Dubinsky (2003) also proposed that there is a positive relationship

between an e-retailer's reputation and perceived risk that includes financial, performance, and privacy matters, but did not find a significant relationship. Chen and Dubinsky (2003) tried to explain this non-significant relationship by proposing that product price is a moderator. Specifically, the relationship between an e-retailer's reputation and perceived risk might be stronger when the product being purchased is expensive. A study showed that an e-retailer with a good reputation tends to be more trusted and perceived as more credible than those with a poor reputation (Hendrix 1999). A meta-analysis by Saeed et al. (2003) showed that vendor characteristics such as size and reputation have an impact on online consumer behavior through vendor trust and the perceived usefulness of the vendor. Based on the present literature review, a relationship between a website's reputation and users' privacy concerns has been encapsulated in the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: The perception of a website's reputation is negatively related to users' perceived privacy concern.

Meanwhile, Zucker (1986) proposed that the trust placed in an institution depends either on company-specific attributes (e.g., certification as an accountant) or on an intermediary mechanism (e.g., the use of escrow accounts). Such trust has a formal marketable structure similar to that of institutions and third-party guarantors that sell certificates guaranteeing integrity, ability, and intention. Such certifications are deliberately designed and used to build trust in the bearer's ability and behavior, through external guarantors such as universities and state regulators.

For example, the Korean government issues an e-privacy certificate to Internet sites as supporting evidence of a vendor's respect for personal privacy. In the United States, online seal programs, such as TRUSTe, the Online Privacy Alliance, and the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc. (BBBOnline), are designed to build consumers' trust and confidence in the Internet. The certificates are typically conferred on the Internet sites by the government, institutions or the mass media. The conferred Internet sites display the certificate so that visitors will recognize that their privacy protection is dependable. Miyazaki and Krishnamurthy's (2002) study indicated that participation in seal programs reduces consumers' privacy concerns, although it has no influence on the actual online privacy practices of companies. The presence of seal logos was found to increase personal information disclosure among online shopping consumers who are highly risk-averse with respect to privacy security, but no effect was found for those who are less risk-averse. Kimery and McCord (2002) found that third-party assurance seals had no influence on consumers' trust of a specific e-retailer, with the exception of the use of one particular seal, TRUSTe. Accordingly, a relationship between third-party approval of a Web site and users' perceived privacy concern was hypothesized as follows.

Hypothesis 3: The perception of third-party certificates in a Web site is negatively related to users' perception of privacy concern.

Consumers' willingness to disclose their personal information and their attitudes towards marketers' use of that information are affected by various factors, such as their awareness of the risks of the misuse of personal information and the potential advantages of disclosure. Culnan (1993) showed that consumers with positive attitudes towards the use of personal information are less concerned about privacy (defined as control over personal information). For the purposes of the present study, Internet users' privacy concerns

are determined to be the sole factor affecting their willingness to disclose personal information.

Hypothesis 4: There is a negative relation between users' privacy concerns about a Website and the intention to disclose personal information on the website.

RESEARCH METHODS

To test the proposed model, an online survey was conducted. A Website was created for the Web survey and five thousands of e-mails requesting participation were sent to Internet users in Korea. E-mailing list was purchased from a research company. There were 395 online participants over a two-week period. After eliminating responses with insincere answers and excessive amounts of missing data, 323 responses were analyzed to test the proposed model. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents were male, almost all in their 20s or 30s.

Measurements

The respondents were first asked to identify a Website they had recently visited. They were then asked to answer a series of questions about that Website. Questionnaire items were developed based on the literature review. Most of the items related to the three antecedents (i.e., perceived ease of using the Website, perceived reputation of the Web site, and third-party certificates in the Website) were conceptually based on Cheskin Research and Studio Archetype/Sapient (1999) and Luo (2002). The perceived convenience of using the Website was defined as the development of a trust based on convenience, usefulness, familiarity, and cultural similarity. The perceived reputation of the Website was based on brand name and experience. The perception of third party certificates was measured in relation to certificates, marks, and symbols authenticated by a third-party guarantor. Items for measuring privacy concerns and willingness to disclose personal information were adapted from Culnan (1993) and Cranor, Reagle, and Ackerman (1999) to fit the Internet context. Privacy concerns were measured in relation to uneasiness about unauthorized (internal and external) secondary use of personal information and improper access by third parties to the data. Willingness to disclose personal information was measured by asking respondents about the extent to which they were willing to disclose their personal information to the website.

The data were examined to assess the validity and reliability of the scales. First, exploratory factor analysis was conducted with a Varimax rotation to examine whether all items fell into the five conceptual categories, as expected. The five categories were extracted as expected, and no item failed to fall into these categories. The factor loadings were greater than .60, which is considered to be sufficient (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). As a measure of reliability, the internal consistencies of the variables were calculated. Internal consistency is an expression of the stability of individual measurement items across replication from the same source of information (Straub 1989). The Cronbach alphas of the constructs ranged from 0.83 to 0.95, which is considered to be an acceptable level of reliability (Hair, Anderson, and Tatham 1998; Straub 1989). The correlation matrix of the entire data set indicates that each item showed a higher correlation with items reflecting the same construct than with items reflecting other constructs, in accordance with the MTMM (Multitraits-Multimethod) principle (Bagozzi 1991).

Finally, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was run using LISREL 8. The CFA indicated that several items had shared residual variance, which means that they needed to be dropped to achieve unidimensionality and good fit indexes in LISREL. The

resulting CFA showed that all remaining items loaded significantly and highly on their assigned constructs and that LISREL reliability coefficients and extracted variances of constructs were acceptable. The CFA also showed that the overall models' fit indices were good, except for χ^2 , which is typical for a large sample: RMSR=.05, GFI=.93, AGFI=.90, NFI=.93 and $\chi^2_{109}=213.23$ ($p=.00$) (Kelloway 1998).

Hypothesis testing

The hypotheses were analyzed using LISREL 8; the results are presented in Figure 1. There was good model fit $\{\chi^2_{112}=227.35$ ($p=.00$), GFI=.92, AGFI=.90, NFI=.93, RMSR=.062}, except for χ^2 , which is typical for a large sample. In addition to the overall fit of the model, four relationships were proposed. In Hypothesis 1, a negative relationship was proposed between consumers' perceived convenience of using a Website and their privacy concerns about the Web site. The data showed a significant negative relationship ($\gamma = -.44$, $p < .01$) as proposed. However, Hypothesis 2 was not supported ($\gamma = .02$, $p > .10$). In other words, the relationship between the perceived brand reputation of a Website and an individual's privacy concerns about that Website was not significant. Hypothesis 3 proposed a negative relation between third-party certificates and privacy concerns, and was supported ($\gamma = -.14$, $p < .05$). The data supported Hypothesis 4, which proposed a negative relation between users' privacy concerns and their willingness to disclose personal information ($\beta = -.15$, $p < .01$).

DISCUSSION

This research makes two primary contributions to the field of Internet marketing. Most previous studies incorporated constructs of value and trust separately and used sub-dimensions such as ease of navigation, usefulness, web security, brand, technology, and clarity of interface interchangeably to determine whether these are related to the willingness to disclose personal information. However, the present study tried to reclassify three categories of antecedent simultaneously in relation to benefits and trust. The present study proposed a model incorporating antecedents, privacy concern, and intent to disclose personal information. This study is one of the first attempts to examine empirically a model that embraces antecedents that are associated with Internet users' privacy concerns and their willingness to cooperate Internet sites for direct marketing. Most studies incorporated those factors separately as determinants of trust in or perceived value of the Internet, or attitudes towards direct marketing, or examined causal relationships between trustworthiness and attitude towards disclosure. Thus, the present study embodies a more comprehensive approach.

All proposed path relationships were significant, with one exception: between perceived brand reputation of a Website and privacy concerns about the Website. This implies that Internet users tend to feel more secure and safe at Websites that they perceive as more comfortable, convenient, and easy to use, and where they can recognize reliable third-party certificates or logos. Accordingly, a business may be wise to maximize the user-friendliness of its Website by making it more consistent with potential visitors' value and preferences. The business may consider acquiring authentic third-party certification by establishing concrete privacy-related policies and practices. By doing so, the business could gather high-quality data regarding current and potential consumers, which may increase its profitability.

However, the reputation of a Website will not directly allay the privacy concerns of consumers. This may be because the experience of most online shoppers has not yet accumulated to the extent that it supports a good reputation for Websites. Meanwhile, consumers who are less concerned about their privacy at a Website are more

willing to share their personal information for marketing purposes. Considering that marketers need quality data for individualized marketing strategies, individuals who are willing to share their personal information are a valuable source of quality data. Consumers who are willing to provide accurate and current data in comparison with those who are forced to or deceived into disclosing their personal information may provide more reliable data. According to our findings, Websites that collect, store, and exchange consumer data are likely to improve their data quality and quantity if they establish the trust of their Website visitors by developing visitor-friendly Websites and obtain and display privacy-related certificates and logos conferred by credible third-party organizations.

Our proposed model and its empirical testing could provide valuable information to policy makers who intend to boost e-commerce. The model suggests that governments should consider establishing comprehensive and clear-cut policies regarding consumer privacy issues in e-businesses and direct marketing. Under such policies, a certificate could be conferred to compliant e-businesses. In this way, consumers would become less reluctant to make business transactions on the Internet, thereby assisting the expansion of e-business.

Like other studies, this study has a number of limitations. First, most of the respondents were regular Internet users. Thus, the findings may not be applicable to those who are unfamiliar with it. However, this may not be a significant concern because Internet businesses are also mostly interested in understanding the attitudes and behaviors of consumers who already are regular Internet users. The second limitation is also related to the sample. Most of the respondents were students or office workers. Considering a growing number of housewives are active Internet users, a portion of the population could be considered as under-represented, and the findings may not be generalizable to other populations.

The present study raises other questions that call for future research. Future studies should measure actual disclosure rather than merely stated willingness to disclose personal data. Considering the variety of Websites, privacy concerns and behaviors could be compared among various categories of Websites with different characteristics. For example, the Website of a non-profit organization may not be perceived to be as much of a threat to privacy as a commercial website.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY
Understanding Consumer Enjoyment and Happiness

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SESSION OVERVIEW

A recent focus in consumer research is on improving consumer welfare and the quality of life. Consistent with this focus, this session aims to make the important first steps toward understanding how consumer welfare may be improved by adopting a systematic approach to examine what contributes to consumer subjective well-being (SWB; i.e., what makes consumers happy), and how to measure it. The three papers seek to take a closer look at what happiness means to different people, what type of TV viewing behavior would make people happier, and how happiness should be measured and compared.

The first paper by Williams and Lee examines the relationship between wealth and SWB. The authors define transaction wealth as assets associated with material possessions and exchange value, and relationship wealth as assets associated with security from close relationships. They argue that those with an independent self-construal derive more happiness from transaction than relationship wealth, and the reverse is true for those with an interdependent self-construal. The authors present the results of four studies in support of their hypothesis. Across these studies, self-construal is operationalized as a personal disposition, a cultural orientation, and as a situational prime. Their results also demonstrate the implications of the two distinct self-construals on helping behavior: Independents are more likely to donate money to a charity than interdependents, whereas interdependents are more likely to contribute by volunteering to the charity than independents.

Whereas the first paper approaches happiness from an overall life satisfaction perspective, the second paper by Mandel and Nowlis examines happiness from a more focused, situation-based angle. More specifically, they propose to understand some of the factors underlying consumers' enjoyment of popular game shows on TV (e.g., *The Weakest Link*, *Fear Factor*). The prevalence of office pools and online betting websites suggest that predicting the outcome of the game or competition enhances a viewer's enjoyment while watching these hugely popular TV shows that involve audience participation with uncertain outcomes. However, the authors find that participants who made outcome predictions enjoyed the show less than those who simply watched the show, especially when they were made accountable for their predictions. These effects were observed despite participants' expectations to the contrary.

In the third paper, Hsee discusses how happiness should be measured to capture the true construct of life satisfaction and happiness that researchers are interested in. More specifically, this research highlights the problem with traditional Likert scales used to measure feelings of happiness in that the scales are susceptible to scale-renorming (i.e., respondents are prone to interpret the scales differently in different contexts). As a result, researchers may confuse spurious difference in people's responses to life satisfaction and happiness scales with real differences in their subjective well-being. Hsee proposes a modulus-based approach to measure happiness to enhance construct validity in happiness-related research.

The theme of the session is in line with the mission of the conference to make a positive difference in the lives of consumers. Together, the three papers address an important gap in consumer research by focusing on consumer welfare. The papers contribute to

the literature methodologically as well as theoretically, and the results have implications for both researchers and practitioners. This research represents critical first steps toward understanding and improving consumers' quality of life and subjective well-being. Dipankar Chakravarti as discussant raised interesting issues regarding how consumer psychologists can more actively enable a better understanding of subjective well-being, and how it can be enhanced.

“Benjamin My Friend or My Money: Wealth and Subjective Well-Being”

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The relationship between Subjective Well-Being (SWB) and wealth has been examined extensively in an attempt to expose causality. Although there is a general belief that wealth leads to SWB, unambiguous evidence of a causal relationship is still lacking (Burroughs and Rindfleisch 2002; Csikszentmihalyi 1999; Easterlin 2004; King and Napa 1998; Myers 2000; Ormel et al. 1999). In fact, recent research shows that wealth, as defined and operationalized in economic terms (e.g., GNP), does not further increase SWB beyond attaining biological needs of food and housing (Diener et al. 1995; Diener and Fujita 1995; Diener and Oishi 2000; Tatzel 2003). More specifically, Diener et al. (1995) examined the relationship between wealth and SWB across 20 different nations representing different cultures, and found that GNP and SWB are positively correlated ($r=.55$), as are individualism and SWB ($r=.77$). However, in a more recent study, Diener (2002) found that the correlation between income and SWB within each nation is tenuous (ranges from $-.06$ in Germany to $.45$ in poor areas in Calcutta). If wealth does not imply SWB or happiness, then what does? The objective of the current research is to understand what makes people happy, and to further examine the relationship between wealth and SWB.

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, wealth is defined as “all property that has a money value or an exchange value” or “abundance of valuable possessions or resources.” While the concept of wealth as money and worldly possessions is familiar to most people, it is interesting to note that resource is defined in the same dictionary as “a means of spending leisure time.” Our own experience tells us that spending leisure time does not always involve money; being with friends and family, for instance, is often a very enjoyable way to spend leisure time. And Mother Theresa once said “the most terrible poverty is loneliness and the feeling of being unloved.” Thus, to understand what affects SWB, we may need to start with a broader conceptualization of wealth that also includes close relationships.

Although most people would agree that material possessions as well as family and friends all contribute to wealth and in turn happiness, our view is that those with an independent self-construal are more likely to emphasize personal desires and possessions (termed transaction wealth), whereas those with an interdependent self-construal are more likely to focus on communal desires and relationships (termed relationship wealth). Across four studies, we provide convergent evidence in support of this hypothesis.

In Study 1, participants were presented with pictures of smiling people (individuals as well as groups), and were asked to indicate how happy they thought these people were, and the extent

to which these people had transaction or relationship wealth. Participants' chronic self-construal was measured using the Independence-Interdependence Scale (Singelis 1994). The results showed that the more independent participants were, the more likely they thought happiness comes from transaction wealth, and the more interdependent they were, the more likely they thought happiness comes from relationship wealth.

In Study 2, we used a 2 (country: Chinese, US) x (self-construal: independent, interdependent) x 2 (wealth: transaction, relationship) between-participant design, and self-construal was manipulated by country status as well as by priming. Participants were presented with an "ideal life" situation that either emphasized transaction wealth (e.g., I/We live in a comfortable home) or relationship wealth (e.g., I am/We are surrounded by friends who care about me/us), and were asked to indicate how happy they would be if they were in that situation. The results showed that among our U.S. participants, independents were happier with transaction wealth than relationship wealth, whereas the reverse was true of the interdependents. However, among our Chinese participants, both independents and interdependents derived more happiness from relationship than from transaction wealth.

We also examined the behavioral implications of these results on happiness by investigating whether independents versus interdependents might be more willing to contribute money or volunteer time to a charity (Study 3). We first primed participants with either an independent or an interdependent self-construal and then presented them with an ad for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Our results showed that independents were more likely to donate money as compared to the interdependents, whereas the interdependents were more likely to volunteer their time than the independents. We present further evidence showing that independents valued a monetary contribution to community projects higher than interdependents, whereas the reverse was true for volunteering.

Our results across four studies provide convergent support for our hypothesis that for those with an independent self-construal, financial possessions bring about greater SWB, whereas for those with an interdependent self-construal, relationship harmony and belongingness bring about greater SWB. These findings enrich our understanding of what makes people happy, and offers one explanation to account for the tenuous relationship between SWB and wealth documented in the literature.

"The Effect of Prediction on the Enjoyment of a Consumption Experience"

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Stephen M. Nowlis, Arizona State University

Does predicting the outcome of a television show enhance a consumer's enjoyment while watching the show? For example, if a consumer is watching a game show like *Survivor*, she might explicitly predict the winner of this show by participating in an office pool, message board, or through online betting. Alternatively, this consumer might just watch *Survivor* without making any explicit predictions about who the ultimate winner will be.

One line of research suggests that people enjoy the feeling of suspense, and that predictions can increase the involvement with a task and heighten suspense (Caplin and Leahy 2001). This research would predict that consumers will end up liking a hedonic experience *more* if they make a prediction in advance.

Another line of research suggests that consumers attempt to minimize the uncertainty they experience toward events (McGregor and Marigold 2003; Wu 1999) and that uncertainty can lead to anxiety (Arai 1997). When consumers make explicit predictions about the outcome of an uncertain hedonic event, this can increase

feelings of anxiety and *lower* the enjoyment of a hedonic experience.

Our results support the second of these predictions, that making predictions lowers the enjoyment of a hedonic event. Across a series of four experiments, we found that participants who made outcome predictions enjoyed the show significantly less than those who did not make predictions, despite participants' expectations to the contrary.

In study 1, participants watched a video clip from the game show *The Weakest Link* and then answered questions about it. Participants who predicted which contestant would win the current round of the game demonstrated a significantly lower level of enjoyment than those who did not make predictions ($M=0.81$ vs. 2.69 on a 7-point scale; $F(1, 144)=9.25, p<.005$). In fact, participants who were told in advance who would win the round demonstrated the highest level of enjoyment ($M=3.00$).

In study 2, we wanted to see whether participants' expectations about their enjoyment in these conditions would match their actual enjoyment, and we found that they didn't. While participants believed, in hypothetical scenarios, that they would be happiest watching *The Wheel of Fortune* after predicting the outcome, and least happy when the outcome was revealed before watching, in fact the opposite was true. Replicating our findings in study 1, we found that participants were least happy when they had to write down their predictions before watching the show.

In our third study, we explored the moderating effects of accuracy and certainty on our results, and found that the combination of both accuracy and certainty is required for prediction to enhance viewing enjoyment. Participants who were both highly certain of their predictions and correct were significantly more likely to enjoy the clip ($M=4.29$) than were those who were certain but incorrect ($M=2.00$), uncertain but correct ($M=2.43$), or uncertain and incorrect ($M=1.92$; $F(1, 63)=4.07, p<.05$).

In study 4, we found that these effects became even more pronounced when individuals were made accountable for their predictions. We manipulated three levels of accountability: High (where participants were told they would have to explain their predictions to a group), Low (where participants were told that their answers were unimportant), and Control (where no instructions were given). Consistent with our findings in prior studies, participants who made predictions enjoyed a Fear Factor clip less ($M=1.98$ vs. 3.24 ; $F(1, 244)=10.38, p<.001$) and were less likely to want to keep watching the show ($M=2.13$ vs. 3.73 ; $F(1, 244)=16.55, p<.0001$) than were those who did not make predictions. A series of planned comparisons revealed that participants who made predictions under high accountability enjoyed the clip significantly less ($F(1, 250)=6.80, p<.01$) and expressed less desire to keep watching the clip ($F(1, 250)=12.71, p<.0005$) than participants in the other conditions.

Furthermore, we confirmed the moderating role of certainty on our findings. Participants who felt certain about the outcome did not mind predicting; in fact, they were equally likely, in both the prediction and no-prediction conditions, to enjoy ($M=2.19$ vs. 2.52 ; $F(1, 135)=0.21, p>.50$) and want to keep watching ($M=2.58$ vs. 3.27 ; $F(1, 135)=1.52, p>.20$) the video clip. In contrast, participants who were uncertain about the outcome were unhappy about predicting. They were significantly less likely to enjoy ($M=1.58$ vs. 3.84 ; $F(1, 114)=20.92, p<.0001$) and want to keep watching the show ($M=1.24$ vs. 4.10 ; $F(1, 114)=26.72, p<.0001$) than those who were not required to make predictions.

In conclusion, our research found that participants did not enjoy television shows as much when they made predictions as to the outcome of these shows. If we generalize beyond television shows, our results suggest that consumers will not enjoy hedonic

experiences where there is an element of risk involved as much when they predict the outcome of those experiences in advance. This could apply to all sorts of situations, such as going to an amusement park, where the prediction could be how much a new ride is enjoyed, to visiting a museum, where the prediction could be whether or not one's favorite paintings will be carried in a new exhibit. Thus, our research offers insights into factors that affect consumer happiness. Managerially, our findings suggest that the current practice of encouraging consumers to participate in interactive, online games and internet discussions about a consumption experience can actually backfire, in that consumers' resulting consumption enjoyment may be lowered.

"A Sunny-Day Measurement of Happiness"

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The topic of happiness (broadly defined) is popular in both basic disciplines (e.g., psychology and economics) and applied fields (e.g., marketing, and HR management). Research on this topic has produced provocative findings. For example, paraplegics are nearly as happy as lottery winners (Brickman and Janoff-Bulman 1978; Ubel et al. 2004). Across generations when GDP and consumption increase in developed nations, happiness hardly increases (Blanchflower and Oswald 2004; Diener and Oishi 2000).

Most happiness research uses bounded labeled scales, such as a 7-point scale ranging from "very unhappy" to "very happy." These scales are susceptible to a serious bias: scale renorming. This bias casts doubt on the accuracy of many findings from the happiness literature. Consider two individuals, one earning \$15,000 a year and living in a country where most others earn only \$10,000 a year, and the other earning \$25,000 a year and living in a country where most others earn \$30,000 a year. When asked to report their happiness with their income on the 7-point scale described above, the \$15,000 earner reports greater happiness than the \$25,000 earner. We refer to this phenomenon as an income-happiness reversal.

What causes this reversal? We submit two explanations. One is genuine relativism. According to this explanation, the \$15,000 earner indeed feels happier than the \$25,000 earner. This may occur if the two individuals compare their income with their compatriots'. The \$15,000 earner finds his income higher than his compatriots' and feels happy, and the \$25,000 earner finds his income lower than his compatriots' and feels unhappy. The other explanation is scale-renorming or specious relativism. According to this explanation, the \$15,000 earner is actually less happy than the \$25,000 earner, but somehow he gives a higher happiness rating. This may occur if the two individuals norm (interpret) the rating scale differently. Each person may interpret the scale as descriptions of relative happiness between themselves and their compatriots. Because the \$15,000 earner earns more than his compatriots and the \$25,000 earner earns less than his compatriots, the \$15,000 earner gives a higher rating than the \$25,000 earner, even though in reality the \$15,000 earner is still less happy than the \$25,000 earner. This reversal is analogous to rating of bald eagle as bigger than a compact car (Kahneman et al. 1999), and rating of the number 9 as greater than the number 221 (Birnbaum 1999).

To recapitulate, genuine relativism is relativism in real feelings and is induced by psychological processes such as social comparison. Specious relativism is relativism in the interpretation of the scale and is an artifact due to scale-renorming. Traditionally-used Likert scales cannot discriminate the two types of relativisms.

To reduce specious relativism yet retain genuine relativism, we propose a modulus-based measurement—the sunny-day method. It is a combination of two psychophysical methods: magnitude estimation (Stevens 1975) and cross-modality matching (Stevens

and Marks 1980; Stevens and Greenbaum 1966), and yet is simpler than either method and can be practically used in large surveys. Specifically, we first ask respondents to consider their degree of happiness with a particular event (the modulus) as 10, and then rate their happiness with the events we are interested in studying (the targets) relative to their happiness with the modulus on an unbounded ratio scale, where 0 indicates no feeling. Because this procedure uses the modulus as a common yardstick and does not allow respondents to make arbitrary interpretations, we expect it to solve the scale-renorming problem.

In three studies, we found that the sunny-day scale is less susceptible to specious relativism than a traditional 7-point semantic differential scale. In one study, for example, respondents were first asked to predict, using either a traditional 7-point scale anchored by "very unhappy" and "very happy" or the sunny-day scale, the happiness of four individuals, each having found some money on the street. The four individuals were described in two separate scenarios:

Scenario 1 (consisting of the following two persons)
Person A found \$5 Person B found \$20

Scenario 2 (consisting of the following two persons)
Person C found \$30 Person D found \$500

The study was of a 2 (traditional scale vs. sunny-day scale) x 2 (with or without social-comparison) between-subject design. In the without-social-comparison condition, respondents were told that in both scenarios, the two money finders (A and B, and C and D) did not know each other and could not compare each other's windfall. Thus, objectively, Person B (who found \$20) could not possibly be happier than Person C (who found \$30). In the with-social-comparison condition, respondents were told that the two money-finders in each scenario knew how much the other found (but they did not know anything about the individuals in the other scenario). Thus, through social comparison, Person B (who found more than Person A and knew it) would naturally be happier than Person C (who found less than Person D and knew it).

In the traditional scale condition, Person B was rated as happier than Person C in both the with- and the without-social comparison conditions. The fact that Person B was rated happier than Person C in the without-social-comparison condition was a manifestation of scale renorming, or specious relativism.

In the sunny-day scale condition, Person B was rated as happier than Person C only in the social-comparison condition, and not in the without-social comparison condition. The findings suggest that the sunny-scale can avoid specious relativism (due to scale renorming), yet retain real relativism (due to social comparison).

What is the implication of this research for existing research that uses traditional semantic differential or Likert scales? On the one hand, readers, including researchers, media and policymakers, should interpret the findings with caution and not rush to conclusions. On the other hand, findings such as disabled people are nearly as happy as healthy people, and Americans today are not happier than Americans decades ago, may well reflect genuine feelings (Diener and Oishi 2000; Frederick and Loewenstein 1999; Kahneman 1999; Ubel et al. 2004; Wilson et al. 2000). However, in order to insure that these findings reflect real feelings, future researchers should consider using a modulus-based measure as a supplement to conventionally-used scales.

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The Transformative Potential of Feminist Critique in Consumer Research

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ABSTRACT

Given the importance of gender in consumer research, one might expect feminist perspectives to be at the forefront of critical engagement with consumer behavior theory. However, in recent years, critical, feminist voices have been barely audible. This paper explores the value of, and insights offered by, feminist theories and feminist activism, and how feminist theory and practice has altered our understanding of gendered consumption. It then argues that postmodern and postfeminist perspectives have diluted feminism's transformative potential, leading to a critical impasse in marketing and consumer research. In conclusion, we suggest that feminist perspectives, notably materialist feminism, may open up fresh new possibilities for critique, and interesting and worthwhile areas for transformative research in consumer behavior.

INTRODUCTION

The value of critical perspectives on theory is uncontested in disciplines across the academy, as such perspectives challenge assumptions, stimulate debate, and bring about changes in current ways of thinking. Given the importance of gender in marketing and consumer research discourse, one might expect feminist perspectives to be at or near the forefront of critical engagement with consumer behavior theory. An upsurge of critical feminist voices during the 1990s, however, has been followed by a lull in recent times. This paper offers some explanation as to why this has happened. The paper begins with a brief review of how insights from feminist theories and feminist activism began to alter our understanding of gendered consumption. It then discusses how postmodern and postfeminist perspectives have diluted feminism as a potentially transformative critique, leading to what we consider is a critical impasse. Finally, we suggest ways in which to move beyond this impasse, and how feminist perspectives, specifically materialist feminism, may open up new possibilities for critique, together with new avenues for transformative research in consumer behavior.

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES IN CONSUMER RESEARCH

Modern marketing has relied on gender to help conceptualize, understand and explain consumers and their behavior. Indeed the gender discourse of the marketplace is well-documented in our discipline. For decades marketers took it for granted that consumers were female (Frederick 1929). However, in spite of its omnipresence in marketing theory, research and practice, the concept of gender is not always well-understood or conceptualized in marketing and consumer behavior.

Consumer research on gender in the 1970s focused primarily on two gender-related topics, namely gender portrayals in advertising, and how gender identity could be used to conceptualize, understand and predict consumer behavior. Most of the advertising studies examined how women were portrayed and whether or not these portrayals altered in line with the changing role of women in society. Kacen and Nelson, however, in their 2002 study of gender portrayals in advertising, found little change in the ways that women have been represented over the decades. Similarly, the other main area of research, gender identity, or the extent to which a person identifies with masculine or feminine personality traits, has

also proved disappointing, with inconclusive results across a wide range of product studies (see Palan 2001).

Some researchers, however, took a more critical view, arguing that such approaches consistently failed to address the complexity of the relationship between gender and consumer behavior. Artz and Venkatesh (1991, p.619), for example, observed that studies of gender issues in marketing and advertising generated 'superficial and self-evident inferences', were devoid of theory, and were preoccupied with the single issue of sex stereotyping. A paradigm shift in the 1980s led to a shift in emphasis, and new theoretical and methodological perspectives began to emerge in consumer research, as anthropologists, sociologists and literary critics joined marketing departments (Belk 1995). These fresh perspectives explored wider consumption issues such as the meanings that consumers attached to products, how products were consumed, and how products were used to create and sustain identity and self-concept. This 'new' consumer research has recently been termed Consumer Culture Theory by Arnould and Thompson (2005). Whilst the term gender has no single and universally agreed meaning, most consumer researchers in the Consumer Culture Theory tradition accept that gender is a socio-cultural category which refers to the ways that men and women are socialized into male and female roles. As such, Consumer Culture Theory problematizes the category of gender, and challenges traditional, ontological tendencies to essentialize men and women.

The paradigm shift in consumer behavior research in the 1980s brought to the fore new perspectives, some of which mirrored the development of feminist theories on gender and research methodologies in other disciplines. Feminist methodologies stress parity between researcher and informant, and researcher involvement in the research process to minimize 'otherness' (Madriz 2000). They also privilege consumers (readers) rather than producers and products (authors and texts), and emphasize the importance of context and the 'lived experience' of informants, rather than 'expert' interpretations of consumer experience (Rinehart 1998; Andrews and Talbot 2000). Above all, feminist research addresses social change and political equality. The concepts of transformation and praxis: 'the struggle to unite theory and practice in action and reflection upon the world in order to transform it for women' (Humm 1995, p. 218), is central to its aims. We now turn to the application of feminist theory in consumer research.

The first papers in the consumer research literature to draw on feminist perspectives were by Stern (1992), Bristor and Fischer (1993), Hirschman (1993), Fischer and Bristor (1994), Joy and Venkatesh (1994) and Peñaloza, (1994). These authors showed how theory and knowledge in marketing and consumer research was gendered in taken-for-granted, unarticulated, unrecognized, and, above all, profound ways. Stern (1992), for example, applied feminist literary theory to the interpretation of advertisements. Fischer and Bristor (1994) deconstructed the rhetoric of marketing relationships. These authors argued that the discourse associated with the marketer/consumer relationship revealed parallels to that between male and female. Specifically, they argued that notions of seduction and patriarchy were woven into that relationship. In a similar vein, Hirschman (1993) examined the ideology expressed in articles published in the 1980 and 1990 volumes of the *Journal of Consumer Research*. She concluded that the dominant ideology

was masculinist, and that a key theme in both volumes was the use of the machine metaphor to characterize human behavior. Joy and Venkatesh (1994) applied a postmodern, feminist perspective to deconstruct the machine metaphor in consumer research, a pervasive metaphor that privileged the mind and cognitive activity (assumed male) over the body and emotions (assumed female). Drawing on feminist epistemology and research approaches, Peñaloza (1994) recommended the use of participatory and dialogic research methods, in order to achieve a greater understanding of consumers, and thus move away from traditional, machine-like, information-processing models. Numerous other studies have also contributed to our knowledge of the gendered nature of marketing and consumer behavior (Venkatesh 1993; Ozanne and Stern 1993; Dobscha 1993; Costa 1994; Woodruffe 1996; Catterall, Maclaran and Stevens 2000).

Despite a proliferation of feminist perspectives on consumer research during the 1990s, there has been little work of this nature in recent times, both in terms of journal publications and conference proceedings, apart from a few exceptions (Stevens, Maclaran and Brown 2003; Stern and Russell 2004; Houston 2004). Furthermore, although Friend and Thompson (2000) demonstrated how one method, feminist memory work, could result in transforming the ways that women viewed and understood their experiences and attitudes in a shopping context, few studies have had an explicit transformatory agenda which is at the heart of feminist research. In the section that follows we explore some of the reasons why we think this may be the case.

THE DEMISE OF CRITIQUE

As part of its critique of elitist assumptions and traditional hierarchical orders, postmodern thinking argued that gender is also one of those universalizing and unhelpful dichotomies that typify modern Western thought (Scott 1992). What is meant by masculinity and femininity are now so indistinct that dividing people on the basis of gender identity is simply unproductive and only serves to reify sex differences (Firat 1994). In a postmodern world of endless possibilities and multiple personas, gender becomes another ludic element and an aspect of identity that can be altered at will.

The terms postmodern feminism and postfeminism are often conflated. Although postfeminism has been influenced by postmodern feminism, the two terms are not synonymous, nor does postfeminism mean the end of feminism. It does, however, represent a significant shift from the activist feminist movements of the 1970s (often referred to as second-wave feminism) to what has sometimes been described as ludic or celebratory feminism. In this respect it contrasts sharply with feminist critiques of consumption during the 1960s and 1970s, which focused on how marketers manipulated the female consumer through advertising images that stereotyped women and contributed to unequal power relationships. Typified by Wolf's (1991) critique of the beauty myth in consumer culture, this critical approach to the marketplace persisted into the 1990s. At this time feminist activists were essentially anti-marketing and anti-consumerism, promoting a natural, authentic self that could be realized through various styles that were both anti-fashion and anti-capitalist (Cole and Hriber 2000). The ethos of Anita Roddick's *The Body Shop*, founded in 1976, with its natural, herbal-based products and ethical policies, was very much in keeping with these feminist perspectives.

The reconciliation of feminism and consumption characterizes the postfeminist imaginary, with the remaking of feminism into desires and identities that can be realized through consumption. This postfeminist celebratory position is epitomized by the Nike culture that began to target women in the late 1980s. Nike's campaigns to women appealed to a more authentic self that could

be realized through exercise. As such they were accorded with upholding feminist values and playing a pivotal role in encouraging women to become more physically active (Scott 1993). Representing sports as empowering to women, Nike constructed the female athlete as resolute, determined and committed (Goldman and Pappson 1998). Yet, this view is received somewhat skeptically by many feminists, because its focus on individual satisfaction stifles collective action (McDonald 2000).

In a similar vein, the issue of gender in social and political processes is diluted by postmodernism, with its emphasis on lifestyles and 'hybrid consumption' for consumers generally, rather than suggesting that any one variable has priority over other variables in an individual's make-up. Hollows (2000) argues that the lifestyle project may be experienced as a complex and troubling one for women; indeed the concept of consumer liberation through multiple choices in the marketplace may merely be experienced as another form of disenfranchisement and confusion (Miller 1995).

Although they acknowledge the postmodern critique of universalizing categories such as male and female, and the postfeminist reconciliation with, and celebration of, consumer culture, many feminists argue that gender is still an important category. But whilst distinctions between male and female gender categories may now be more blurred, the male/female binary remains an important organizing category in our society. Feminists have always campaigned for the proper representation of women, an agenda that postmodernists challenge in their questioning of the very identity of womanhood itself (Lee 2001). Thus, there are many points of agreement between postmodernists, postfeminists and the more traditional, and usually older, feminists, but they disagree on the significance and relevance of maleness versus femaleness in people's everyday lives. To illustrate, when it comes to various quality of life indicators such as health, education and income, women are still disadvantaged in comparison to their male counterparts (Hill and Kanwalroop 1999). Similarly, most jobs are segregated on the basis of gender, with female-dominated occupations still attracting less status and money than those of males (Jarman et al. 1999). This is particularly relevant to marketers, given the increasing 'feminization' of the marketing profession (Maclaran and Catterall 2000).

The decline in political engagement among feminists has occurred right across the academy and not simply in marketing and consumer research. Thus, Segal (2000) argues that the literary paradigms that dominate current feminist thinking have produced rich models for subjectivity and identity, but there also needs to be engagement between feminist theory and feminist activism.

TOWARDS A TRANSFORMATIVE AGENDA

In this respect, one of the most interesting theoretical perspectives to attract attention in recent times is materialist feminism (Jackson 2001). Materialist feminists argue that the so-called 'cultural turn' embraced by postmodernists shifted feminism's emphasis from social structures and inequalities, to issues of culture, language, representation and subjectivity (Jackson 2001). Gender is more than just a cultural distinction between men and women, however; it is sustained through hierarchical social structures that include divisions in labor.

Although this perspective is not new, there has been a resurgence of interest in some of its basic tenets. Materialist feminists refused to abandon the goals of early second wave feminism, and persisted in problematizing the category 'woman' in terms of class, race, sexuality, culture, and so forth (Landry and Maclean 1993). Historical materialism is a key method for analyzing relations between men and women, since it emphasizes the 'social' rather than 'natural'. A key influence here was Delphy's (1975) work *For a Materialist Feminism*, in which she argued that feminism was

above all a social movement, one which underlined that the situation of women was cause for revolt and was not a 'natural' state of affairs, but one which should be challenged and changed, given the 'social' origins of women's disadvantaged situation. From this perspective, patriarchal gendered structures are every bit as material as the capitalist ones, with which Marxist historical materialism is usually associated. Indeed, in sharp contrast to Marxism, patriarchy rather than capitalism is an object of analysis, and the former does not necessarily derive from the latter.

Of particular interest is Jackson's (2001) work on materialist feminism, which foregrounds the social, i.e. social structures, relations and practices. She argues that adopting a materialist stance does not preclude an awareness of differences amongst women. On the contrary, it requires a focus on everyday social inequalities and everyday social practices. Nor does materialism ignore issues of language, cultural representation, and subjectivity, but it does entail locating them in their social and historical contexts. In 1981 Delphy wrote that materialist feminism goes beyond the oppression of women: 'It will not leave untouched any aspect of reality, any domain of knowledge, any aspect of the world' (Landry and Maclean 1993, p. xii). In this vein, then, materialist feminism explores 'other axes of difference' (Landry and Maclean, *op cit*, p. 150) and does not reduce women's oppression to a single cause. Thus, it eschews attempts at totalizing grand theory, and trans-historical universalistic claims.

The situation of low income consumers will be used to illustrate the research potential for materialist feminist analyses in consumer research. Consumers on low incomes are far from a minority group in society; 32.3 million people in the US are classified as officially poor (Hill 2002). It has also been long acknowledged that poor people pay more than their more prosperous counterparts to access even the most basic goods and services they need (Alwitt and Donley 1996). For example, supermarket prices are often higher in poor areas than in more prosperous ones. Poor consumers are also less able to switch to alternative suppliers because of existing debt burdens, and they are unable to take advantage of any savings from direct debit (Curtis 2000). As Bauman (1998) pointed out, the poor, who are limited in their ability to respond to market temptations, have been marginalized from mainstream society, and described as 'unwanted', 'abnormal', non-consumers', and flawed consumers.

Consuming on a low income is a rich topic for consumer research in its own right, but especially now, given the current neo-conservative economic and social policies in the US, Britain and elsewhere. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (1996) in the US is similar to welfare-to-work initiatives elsewhere. These initiatives are based on an assumption that taking people from dependency on welfare or state benefits would augment their financial well-being and, by implication, their social inclusion and ability to participate more fully in the consumer society. As Myers and Lee (2003) point out many who leave the welfare system simply shift from the category of welfare poor to working poor. As in Britain, families may find themselves in even worse material circumstances after they leave the welfare rolls. The huge rise in service industries has provided job opportunities, and whilst there are highly paid, high-skilled service jobs, there are many low-skilled ones that may not provide a living wage (Barrington 2000). A key point here is that when we examine consuming on a low income, we need to contextualize this, and connect such studies to wider social structures, systems and practices. Studies on the poor in consumer research have tended to focus on those in extreme poverty. Clearly, there is a need to broaden our definition of what counts as poor in comparatively affluent service economies. More

emphasis on relative rather than absolute measures of poverty would go some way to achieving this.

As consumer researchers we focus on the relationship between gender and consumption but in our efforts to understand this relationship in culture, we too often ignore important interrelationships with production and reproduction. To illustrate, Hill and Kanwalroop (1999) have drawn our attention to a lack of research on the gendered aspects of consumer disadvantage. Lone parents, mainly mothers, account for a significant percentage of the poverty population, and lone parenthood is the main cause of family poverty (Field 1996). Welfare to work policies and initiatives effectively mean that reproductive work (child bearing, childrearing and childcare) is no longer a valid basis for making welfare claims (Boyer 2003). The underpinning assumption is that reproductive work is not of value, and certainly not within certain forms of 'family' structure. The stigmatization of lone mothers is well-documented; one of the reasons for such stigmatization is the tendency to prioritize paid work. Thus, in addition to coping with the practicalities of working within a restricted family budget, lone mothers have to cope with the negative attitudes and reactions of other members of society. The impact on consumer identities, especially in relation to stigmatization, has yet to be investigated fully, together with the impact on family dynamics. For example, families on low incomes, through various consumption strategies, can mask or disguise their poverty from outsiders, and parents will attempt to hide their restricted finances within the family.

Feminist economists have long argued against the devaluation of reproductive work, given that it sustains, or even makes possible, productive work outside the home. Sivard (1995), for example, suggests that at least a quarter of the value of the world's gross domestic product can be attributed to women's work inside the home. At the same time, there is an increasing overlap between the productive and reproductive economies, the formal and informal economies. The separation of private and public spheres for example, becomes less distinct with home working. The productive economy has become increasingly informalized and more like the reproductive economy. The huge rise in service industries referred to above has been accompanied by increasing casualization of the service workforce. Economic activity outside of regulation, such as proceeds from illegal activity, and unrecorded income, were estimated at a quarter of the world's gross domestic product in 1998 (Peterson 2002). Thus, Peterson (2002, p. 13) argues that such informalization connects the different economies and exposes 'the inappropriateness of drawing rigid distinctions between economic and non-economic activities'. Whilst there are research opportunities to investigate the impact of this increasing informalization on consumption more generally, the blurring of boundaries between production and reproduction also opens up to scrutiny the divide between work, including consumption work, performed in public and in private spaces.

CONCLUSION

Critique from a variety of critical perspectives is important for academics and practitioners alike, in that it offers a space wherein the basic assumptions, theories and practices in marketing and consumer research can be challenged. It can also lead to a rethinking of key issues, and a reframing of the debates in which theory and practice development takes place. During the 1990s feminist perspectives on consumer behavior, especially in the arena of gender, performed an important critical role. However, as postmodernist writers challenged the modernist assumptions in feminist theories, and postfeminists disengaged with feminist activism, critical feminist perspectives seemed to wane. Whilst we do not propose a return

to the early 1970s feminist, anti-marketing and anti-consumerism critique, feminist critique still has much to offer us. This is especially so in relation to marketers' assumptions regarding marginalized consumers. In this paper we have argued that feminist critique can enable us to challenge the current focus on consumption as a liberatory identity project, which, we suggest, neglects important structural interrelationships with production and reproduction in our market economy.

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Steps Towards Transformative Consumer Research Practice: A Taxonomy of Possible Reflexivities

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ABSTRACT

The aim of ACR 2005 has been articulated by the organisers as the promotion and dissemination of consumer research 'for' consumers. This call asks for *transformative* consumer research raising the issue that '*Historically, the organization's research has been impelled by the theoretical and substantive interests of academics*'. It is on this point that this paper acts to transform arguing that a transformative ethic should be enacted though consumer research praxis. To achieve this it presents worked examples of the practice of reflexivity in consumer research developing a taxonomy of 'possible reflexivities', and discusses their possibilities for transformation of the consumer research process

INTRODUCTION

Reflexivity has been identified in the Social Sciences (e.g. Wasserfall, 1993, Kleinsasser, 2000, Mauthner and Doucet, 2003) as a way to address power and control in the research encounter (amongst other issues). Researchers are encouraged to understand themselves through 'thinking about their own thinking' in order to scrutinise pre-understandings and their influence on research and its results (Johnson and Duberley, 2003) and to give analytical attention to the researcher/researched relationship (Fischer and Bristol 1993, Hirschman 1993). In 1993, Wallendorf and Brucks called for consumer researchers to engage more with reflexivity particularly about the researchers' roles during the research. It would seem fair to suggest that these considerations would help to further benefit the aims of 'emancipatory' consumer research (Oleson, 2000, Hirschman, 1993). It is perhaps surprising therefore, that researcher reflexivity *per se* has not received more attention within the consumer research literature to date. One reason for this may be as Mauthner and Doucet (2003) point out, '*While the importance of being reflexive is acknowledged within social science research, the difficulties, practicalities and methods of doing it are rarely addressed. Thus, the implications of current theoretical and philosophical discussions about reflexivity (in) research practice remain under-developed*' (p. 413)

As well as having the potential for assisting the development of consumer research which is more emancipatory in nature, there is another strong argument for paying greater attention to researcher reflexivity within consumer research—the growth of interpretive approaches to consumer research. The notion of researcher reflexivity, of presenting honest and self-searching accounts of the research process, is increasingly being seen as an important and integral part of qualitative research (e.g. Sherry and Schouten, 2002, Kleinsasser, 2000). According to Gergen and Gergen (2000), reflexive researchers seek ways of demonstrating to their audiences their historical situatedness, their personal investments in the research, acknowledging various biases they may bring, revealing "*their surprises and 'undoings' in the process of the research endeavour.*" (p.1027) As Mauthner and Doucet (1998) describe the role of reflexivity in data analysis "*the best we can do then is to trace and document our data analysis processes, and the decisions we make, so that other researchers and interested parties can see for themselves some of what has been lost and what has been gained. ... we need to document these reflexive processes, not just in general terms but in a more concrete ... way in terms of where, how and why*

particular decisions are made at particular stages." (p.138)

As qualitative research has become so much more prominent in consumer research over the last couple of decades, the notion of reflexivity—aligned so closely as it is with qualitative research interests—indicates a clear need to develop the discourses already apparent in consumer research in terms of reflexivity and formalise the conceptualisation and operation of this research approach. Currently, there appears to be a lack of structured debate about what reflexivity is, the research processes around reflexive research are not articulated clearly; as Mauthner and Doucet (2003) point out: "*in practice few researchers give reflexive accounts of data analysis or discuss how reflexivity can be operationalised*" (p.416) Additionally, a plethora of different approaches are evident—in short, as Johnson and Duberley (2003, p.1280) note, the result of this complexity can be "*terminal ambiguity*". The aim, therefore, of this paper is to stimulate essential new discourse around the praxis of transformative consumer research, and move the discussion towards one which examines the many different reflexivities which might be enacted within consumer research. To accomplish this it provides a discussion of 'possible reflexivities' to structure the debate of this element of transformative consumer research practice and to guide the transformative consumer researcher. This discussion is illustrated using worked examples from the writers own research endeavours to demonstrate how these different reflexivities have worked in practice.

REFLEXIVITY IN CONSUMER RESEARCH

Researcher reflexivity has been conceptualised in consumer research discourse as a sub type of introspection (Wallendorf and Brucks 1993). These authors argue that there is much to recommend reflexivity as a research practice as it will '*improve our understanding of the actual research process*' and act as such to develop consumer research theory (Ibid.355). In social sciences this has been characterised by some writers as akin to exposing the '*critical incidents*' in a research project (Fish *et al* 1991) and discussing these openly and honestly as a way for the reader to examine and appraise the decisions that were made during the research journey. However, in addition to these concerns for reflexivity as a route to better knowledge making, reflexivity has also been identified as a way to address the power issues and specifically the instrumentality of the researcher/respondent relationship. Hirschman (1993:551) advocates a more reflexive approach to research, and argues against the use of detached and 'objective' methods in consumer research. She exhorts consumer researchers to '*choose to abandon any method or practice that is premised on power inequalities between researcher and subject*' she argues that research should be designed which recognises respondents as '*equal sentient beings*'. Fischer and Bristol (1993) suggest that engaging in ongoing self reflection in consumer research can be used to develop a more collaborative, open and sensitive approach to research and act as a foil to the authority of the consumer researcher in the research encounter.

It was while conducting our own research and immersing ourselves in the possibilities of reflexivity that we began to recognise that reflexivity was not a simple or straightforward endeavour, but one which emerged even in our own research projects as different entities. A close reading of the literature around reflexivity, and

reflection on our own research led us to think about reflexivity in terms of 'ontology' and 'power'. In terms of ontology, we reflected upon reflexivity as it has been seen as a route to better knowledge and enhanced theory building through reflection on the process of research. This to us suggested questions and challenges arising pertaining to the 'reality' of the research process, not just in terms of what 'really' happened but the model of reality implied in different reflexive approaches. In terms of power, this pertains to reflexivity as a route to addressing the power imbalances inherent in any research encounter, whether that be conceptualised in terms of an overt remit for an emancipatory research politics, or as a way to direct the researcher encounter towards one with less of a dominating and instrumental dynamic. Here we reflected upon the shifts in the researcher/respondent power dynamic which occurred at different parts of our own research. It was these twin bulwarks of reflexivity, *ontology* and *power* that became the cornerstones of our discussion. To illustrate the discussion, two research stories are given as worked examples.

TALES FROM A TRANSFORMATIVE FIELD 1: *****S STORY

My research can be termed '*feminist*' from my self-identification as a feminist and from the inclusion (but not exclusivity) of methods drawn from feminist scholarship. It embodies feminism as a *perspective* (Reinharz, 1992) rather than a political stance and embraces many of the issues raised by a number of writers (e.g. Bristor and Fischer, 1993) concerning consumer research in terms of acknowledging individual differences, for example, and opting for research which is not explicitly aligned to marketer interests (e.g. Olander, 1993). However, the literature does not offer a particular framework to show what feminist research should be like (Maynard, 1994), rather feminist researchers (e.g. Fonow and Cook, 1991, Skeggs, 1994) examine the research process from a viewpoint of the different elements feminist scholarship has to offer. A great deal is written, however, on the nature of the interview in feminist research (e.g. Reinharz, 1992), largely stemming from Oakley's seminal 1981 paper "*Interviewing women; a contradiction in terms*" in which she challenges the traditional conventions of interviewing and the role of the interviewer, especially the characteristics of "*proper*" (p.38) interviews, such as objectivity, detachment, hierarchy and science and where she asserts that personal involvement is "*the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives.*" (p.58)

I was influenced by the notion of the researcher as "*bricoleur*" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998), incorporating the idea that research is a process shaped by the individual history of the researcher and the individual characteristics of all the people in the research setting. The qualitative researcher "*refuses to be limited*" (Janesick, 2000, p.381), rather, the '*researcher-as-bricoleur*' uses the tools of his or her methodological trade to provide solutions to problems (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998); "*the choice of which tools to use, which research practices to employ, is not set in advance.*" (p.3). According to Denzin and Lincoln, the '*bricoleur*' develops diverse skills from interviewing to observing and interpreting, engages in intensive self-reflection and also explores the many interpretive paradigms that can be brought to any particular problem. As Denzin and Lincoln (1998, p.8) note: "*Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied and the situational constraints that shape inquiry.*" In my research, I draw from a number of areas to develop a methodological approach which can best capture the individual's point of view and secure rich descriptions. Additionally, individual factors such as the researcher's (*my*)

personality (Punch, 1998), (*my*) personal history (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998), (*my*) personal interest (Morse, 1998) and (*my*) personal desire to examine consumption independently of marketing management implications (Holbrook, 1987) from the consumer's perspective (Hirschman, 1991), were of primary concern to me in my endeavours; hence they represent my first steps on the way to becoming a reflexive researcher. At the outset, I planned to adhere to the best tenets of interpretive research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) adopting the existential phenomenological interview as the main tool for engaging with lived experience (Thomson et al., 1989). However, from a personal experience perspective, I soon found myself confronting certain challenges arising from the interview process. Instead of ignoring these difficulties or '*brushing them under the carpet*' in the writing up process, I undertook self-reflexive reporting of the interview process (Reinharz, 1992) to present a critical assessment, from my perspective, of the design decisions and changes which took place.

One of these challenges was the sense of difficulty in the "*bracketing*" which Thompson et al (1989) hold is necessary for attaining an understanding of respondents' lived experiences (p.140). Hudson and Ozanne (1988) recognise this difficulty as a criticism of interpretivist approaches; "*it is questionable whether researchers can really bracket their biases and socio-cultural backgrounds*". (p.516) Thompson, Locander and Pollio do make the assertion, however, that bracketing is not intended to imply a neutral view as researchers must always see and interpret the world from some perspective. Hirschman (1992) did not feel that the issue of bracketing was a problem in her study of drug addicts, even though she admitted at the time to being a recovering drug addict (p.161). However, her description of what bracketing consists of is perhaps slightly more straightforward: "*phenomenology brackets the external world to include only those aspects that are present in the consumers' consciousness*" (p.161). Certainly, within her description of the research methodology, Hirschman made no secret of her personal status; she identified herself as a recovering addict as well as researcher and noted that she believed some of the participants' "*willingness to serve as informants was based largely on their knowledge of my own addictive history*". (p.161) However, I sensed a real problem in this regard which stemmed from direct experience of, and involvement with, the subject of the study, unlike, for example, Eccles (2000) who notes that during her study of addicted shoppers, "*the fact that the researcher had experience as a woman and as a researcher, but none as an addicted consumer prevented the imposition of preconceived notions*". (p.143, emphasis added) While Sue Eccles is not, by her own admission, addicted to shopping, I have a feeling that there is no-one in the world better qualified than me to undertake research into the particular area of consumer behaviour which has been the subject of my research for many years now—frankly, what I don't know about it *from personal history and experience* isn't worth knowing.

It would be hard to state for certain, therefore, that bracketing was successful, especially when Arnould and Fischer's (1994) definition of the sort of knowledge which would be classed as "*[pre-]understanding or pre-judgement*" (and thus which should be bracketed) is considered: "*The [pre-]understanding of consumer researchers is found in two inter-related traditions—experience as a consumer and experience as a researcher*". (p.57) However, from the perspective of philosophical hermeneutics, according to Arnould and Fischer's discussion (1994), researchers should not try to put aside [pre-]understanding, rather researchers should capitalise on it; "*Philosophical hermeneutics stresses that [pre-]understanding enables rather than constrains the interpreter*". (p.57) This viewpoint, when taken into account vis-à-vis the explication of existential phenom-

enology as put forward by Thompson et al (1989) perhaps illustrates the two oppositional dimensions of the researchers' role in the interview and the interpretive process. Some writers have criticised the lack of reflexivity in interpreting unstructured interviews: "*common platitudes proclaim that the data speak for themselves, that the researcher is neutral, unbiased, invisible*" (Fontana and Frey, 2000, p.661) and this view negates the value of the researcher and the "*strong arguments for strongly reflexive accounts*" (Oleson, 2000, p.229) about the researcher's own part in the research. Indeed, as Fontana and Frey (2000) note, while traditional interview techniques have determinedly aimed to maintain neutrality and achieve objectivity, feminists are rebelling against this stance and seeking to use the interview in a more participatory way. Hirschman and Holbrook (1986) suggest that in humanistic enquiry researcher understanding arises from direct personal experience and the researcher serves as measuring instrument; there is no possibility of objective truth; "*the researcher must place faith instead in his or her own sensitivity and empathic insightfulness when exposed to the thoughts, beliefs, values and realities constructed by others*" (p.242)

For me, the interview experience raised issues which led to further reflection and critical review, especially concerning the role of the researcher (i.e. my own role) in the research process and issues such as self-disclosure (Reinharz, 1992). At this stage, these questions can probably be best described as reflecting conflict between, on the one hand, my desire to maintain rigour by adhering to a prescribed methodological protocol (i.e. existential phenomenology at this point) yet simultaneously, on the other hand, to start to be more critical; to engage in critical analysis of alternative approaches and to examine issues relating to my role in the research, particularly as a woman and as a feminist. This reflected my growing awareness of, and engagement with, the critical debate surrounding marketing and consumer research discussed previously as well as an increasing sense of the role of self as a researcher, as a woman and as a feminist. It is a dilemma recognised and questioned by feminist researchers who identify problems with "*how we shift across the edges of our own personal lived experiences, our research explorations of others' private lives and our transformation of these into the format of public knowledge.*" (Edwards and Ribbens, 1998, p.203)

As stated, it was principally the notion of '*bracketing*' which started to give rise to doubts in my mind as to the use of the existential phenomenological interview approach. As Schwandt (1998) states: "*Whereas the individual-as-citizen legitimately has a practical (in a classic sense), pragmatic, interested attitude, the individual-turned-social-scientist brackets out that attitude and adopts the posture of objective, disinterested, empirical theorist.*" (p.248) Because of this distancing of oneself as inquirer, Schwandt argues that interpretivists cannot engage in critical evaluation of the social reality they want to portray. Contrast this with feminist scholarship which emphasises identification, trust and empathy, which brings out a relationship between researcher and researched based on cooperation and collaboration (Punch, 1998). This describes much more aptly the situation I found was arising in the interviews and which, I felt, made a positive contribution to the successful outcome of those interviews in terms of generating rich, deeply personal accounts of the consumption experience. Acknowledging this was probably the starting point for my engagement with feminist research praxis. Oakley advocated a new model of feminist interviewing that strove for intimacy and included self disclosure. Other key aspects of feminist interviewing relate to the issue of hierarchy and equality between the researcher and the researched (Oakley, 1981, Oleson, 2000); the notion of the interviewee being actively involved in constructing data about their lives, rather than passively manipulated (Graham, 1983); interviewee-guided interviews (Sandelowski and Pollock, 1986) where

the interview becomes an *interviewee*-guided investigation of a lived experience that asks almost no prepared questions; self disclosure where interviews are modelled on a '*true dialogue*' rather than an '*interrogation*', where participants become '*co-researchers*' (Bristow and Esper, 1988). Another important issue in feminist scholarship is that of '*voice*'; of allowing the different and multiple voices within the research (including the researcher's) to be heard and displayed equally, rather than subordinated or manipulated by the '*scientific*' researcher, of trying to understand and interpret the participants' stories without imposing meanings (DeVault, 1990). Thus, interviews were conducted in ways which embraced the above issues wherever appropriate. This does not mean, however, that the existential phenomenological approach was rejected completely; the thinking behind this approach remained influential throughout, particularly at the hermeneutic level within the iterative interpretation process to identify the interpretive themes (Thompson et al, 1990). I no longer tried to be as invisible as possible (Fontana and Frey, 2000) and made no attempt to retain a quasi-objective role through detachment, bracketing or any alternative techniques; instead emphasis was placed in the interview on exploring the participant's experience of the specific aspect of consumer behaviour under study through the medium of shared knowledge; a dialogue which acknowledged my own personal experience of the phenomenon and which attempted, as far as possible, to build empathy and trust between the researcher and the researched.

In a sense, this illustration represents my own '*autobiography*' of the interview stage of the research process which provides a "*practical tool to bring the process of constructing research to the surface.*" (Birch, 1998, p.174) This also responds to Mauthner and Doucet's (1998) call for acknowledgement of the three '*voices*' within research; the researcher's '*voice*', the '*voices*' of the individuals interviewed and the '*voices*' represented in existing theories or frameworks, which should be incorporated into the structure of the research.

TALES FROM A TRANSFORMATIVE FIELD 2:

*****S STORY

I too self identify as a feminist researcher, while understanding that there is no definitive guide to the nature of feminist research (Fonow and Cook 1991). Feminist research, rather than being a prescriptive guide to the researcher, presents a series of challenges to the researcher. Indeed, for me, feminist research is much more about a series of question marks that 'hang over' the research process which must be addressed by the researcher and the choices made and dilemmas struggled over clearly articulated within the research text (Griffiths 1995, Ramazanoglu and Holland 2000). One of the most enduring challenges and dilemmas for feminist researchers has been the concern to be reflexive in the research encounter, that is, to reflect on the process of research and to engage with the issues of power, control and instrumentality in the researcher/respondent relationship. It seems sensible to assume that the form of reflexivity that emerges from any specific research encounter is configured through the nature of that encounter both ontologically and in terms of the aims and objectives (the politics) of the project. Thus discussion of researcher reflexivity in terms of '*possible reflexivities*' seems more realistic. This story therefore outlines the forms of reflexivity which emerged in my own recent research project, described as a consequence of the nature of the research both ontologically and politically.

My research project concerns anthropological study of a professional context, focusing on organisational and identity work with what might be called an '*elite*' respondent group (Moyser and Wagstaffe 1987). The theoretical approach used was Actor Network Theory (ANT). ANT is an interdisciplinary approach to the social

sciences and technology studies that evolved from the work of Michel Callon (1991) and Bruno Latour (1992) at the Ecole des Mines in Paris. ANT has not gained significant purchase in consumer or marketing research as an approach as yet, but has achieved much credibility as a research approach in organisational studies (Cooper 1992, Cooper and Law 1995, Law 1994), health studies (Callon and Rabeharisoa 1998, 1999, Cussins 1998, Singleton 2000), the arts (Hennion 1989, 1996, Gomant and Hennion 1999), medical technology (Mol 1998, Dugdale 1999, Prout 1996) and engineering (Suchman 2000) to name but a few. ANT is rooted in semiotics and poststructuralist thought and can broadly be characterised as a research approach based on a post humanist ontology (Jones 1996). This foundational ontology is predicated upon a rejection of both natural realism and constructivism (or relativism), which the key protagonists call instead 'social realism'. Latour (1992), argues that both social realism and natural realism actually reinforce modernist categories like subject/object, micro/macro and agency/structure, thus replaying the arguments about these dualisms which have dogged sociology for centuries. As a result, the power of these analyses was becoming lost in endless epistemological debate. As a researcher I had found the contemporary renderings of these debates in marketing an insufficient basis for addressing these dualisms, which are also of concern to feminist theorists, and as such saw ANT as a possible way to do research which got past these stultifying debates and allowed me to engage with, particularly, the subject/object dualism. As Jones (1996:291) argues, this radical post humanist approach attempts to move beyond these debates through a 'deliberate rejection of scientific realism (the belief that nature alone determines the ways in which scientific representations are developed and refined) and social realism (the idea that questions of scientific fact are never answered definitively by nature, but are decided instead by human interactions)'. In 'We have never been modern', Latour (1993) justifies this rejection by arguing that social constructionism and the scientific realist approaches they purport to critique follow the same basic ontological logic. This is because they rest on the assumption of an ontological 'gap' between the 'real world' and 'the social'. To illustrate this he argues that, scientific realists when asked the question of whether you can close the gap between the social and the natural, say that the gap can be closed through good scientific methodology. On the other hand, social constructionist approaches would argue that the gap cannot be closed because science is just another language game. Latour argues that in effect they are both realist positions, the social constructionist is arguing for social realism, the 'real' is determined by the social. The ontological position of ANT proceeds from the answer that there is no gap, what is deemed to be 'the social' or 'the real' are co emergent effects of heterogeneous relations. This means that 'because society is one of the categories that actor network analyses render transparent, societal explanations-interests, norms, class position-are no longer useful answers, but instead become part of the question' (Frickel 1996:29). This reconfigures the type of questions that might be asked, in that they are framed in terms of 'how things are as they are', how they are 'held in place' as effects. As Law argues, 'Far from being a theory of the social or even worse an explanation of what makes society exert pressure on actors, it always was, and this from its inception, a crude method to learn from the actors without imposing on them an a priori definition of their world-building capacities.' (Law et al 1999: 20). In understanding what to study in this ontological approach, the metaphor of the 'actor-network' was developed (Callon 1986, Latour 1988) as one which is intentionally oxymoronic and in tension (Law 1999). That is, it does not simply map onto the dualisms 'agency' and 'structure' but attempts to guide the researcher in theorising a de centred, post social and post humanist account. In this formula-

tion, the object of research becomes 'heterogeneous networks' (Law 1987), 'empirically identifiable configurations of human and non human forces seen in relation to one another' (Frickel 1996:31) that is, networks of entities, human, non human, conceptual and material that are defined in terms of each other in a 'material relationality' (Law 1999). The process of 'heterogeneous engineering' constructs those entities in terms that their 'stability and form' is seen as 'the function of heterogeneous (social, technical and natural) elements as they are shaped and assimilated into a network' (Law 1987:113). Therefore, these entities, both human and non human are seen as effects of the actor network(s), and the human, or any other actor was not to be privileged or considered 'essential' or prior.

Crucial to this discussion of researcher reflexivity is that ANT is based on no stable theory of the actor; in other words, it assumes the radical indeterminacy of the actor. For example, neither the actor's size nor its psychological make-up nor the motivations behind its actions are predetermined. This means that 'agency' is found, not in terms of the prior goals and plans of the 'independent thinking subject' but in terms of the relational networks within which they are embedded. As Fuller (1994: 746) argues, ANT, 'instead of treating agency as an ontological primitive out of which societies are constructed (it) treats agency as a theoretical construct carved out of an already transpiring social order'. The 'ontological primitive' view sees the agent as already formed and essentially prior, moving according to its own volition unless constrained by other forces. ANT on the other hand sees agency as not beginning with this kind of 'agent' but with a social space through which 'agents' emerge. Agency is therefore seen as the property of associations rather than emanating from the 'choices' of bodies seen as 'ontologically primitive'. Action, and thus responsibility, becomes distributed among a series of relations. As Callon and Law (1995: 485) put it, 'it's the relations . . . that are important. Relations which perform. Perform agency' This ontological foundation poses very specific problems for the would be reflexive researcher. Reflexivity is a problematic issue for any project which has at heart a post humanist ontology because the idea of reflexivity, at base, is grounded in the assumption that the reflections on the process by a thinking, independent subject can give a better account of the research (Haraway 1997). In terms of this research, this would inevitably lead to critiques that it reproduces a dominating logic that I can stand outside this process and comment on it, a logic that I am not 'allowing' my respondents from within this ontological approach (i.e. I am a sentient subject everyone else is an effect). Moreover, it assumes a stable and coherent 'project-ness' (Law 1994) that I can capture as a whole, reflect upon and represent. This significantly refigures what reflexivity can mean within a post humanist approach because ways must be found to operate research to subvert the simplistic logic of the researcher using reflexivity in a technical sense, to reflect upon their interaction with object of study such that the subject-object binary is reproduced.

The best way I found to deal with this issue was to step back and to think about it in terms of what or who am 'I' during the research process. Using the narrative given above I can describe this in comparison to the 'I' that is emerging as an effect in that research story. In the previous story, the research has a politics of emancipation, which has a specific configuring effect on the researchers

¹There are many realisms. Jones (1996) posits that realism generally denotes belief in the existence of a 'real world' beyond human language and cognition. Common forms of scientific of correspondence realism further stipulate that logically ordered statements about the real world can more or less accurately represent the external realities to which they refer

subjectivity. Here no such politics can be claimed for my work because as just another effect of the research process, the politics of my position as researcher becomes one which feminist theorist Judith Butler calls 'a reiterative or rearticulatory practice, immanent to power, and not a relation of external opposition to power' (Butler 1993:35). ANT diffuses 'responsibility' among a network, thus subverting the 'us and them' logic of research as such describing the research dynamic in terms of a researcher/respondent relationship becomes meaningless. This is because ANT analysis is based on engagement with a set of negotiations which describes the progressive constitution of a network in which both human and non-human actors assume shifting and multiple identities according to prevailing strategies of interaction. This way of doing research has interesting effects on my relationship *vis a vis* the others who have taken part in the research, because taken as an 'effect', I am articulated within the research as implicated, produced and co-emergent. I am not performing a location for myself that resist the norms of the 'field' as performed by this research, or is located as outside those norms. As Butler argues (1993:15) that the subject 'who would resist such norms, is itself enabled, if not produced by such norms'. This position means that my relationship with the others that participated in the research is flattened, that I am a performative effect within the same conditions of possibility as the respondents.

In terms of what might be called reflexivity, 'I am being produced by the research as a story that constructs me within the conditions of possibility and project specific exigencies, as what I am allowed to become, not a 'reflexive subject'. For me ANT emerged as an idealist approach, which in practice grated against the genre of scientific research we all have to work within. This proved tricky to work around in cases where reflexivity might be most evident. For example, at moments in the research where I felt the pressure to make a 'methodological choice' which I would then be expected to 'reflect upon' this was obviously done overtly. For example I had to make 'decisions' in my methodology about sample size and sample frame. However, instead of articulating this in terms of 'choice' my narrative resembled one where I reflected on the 'researcher-as-effect' and 'respondent-as-effect' that was emerging through the research at that time in terms of the field of possibilities enacted by the multiple networks of the specific research project within which I was operating.

Of course, it could be argued that would be disingenuous of me to make such a claim, I am writing the thesis, I have 'captured' the words of the respondents in my tapes and field notes and, despite the admission that I am inevitably folded into the same conditions as my respondents I retain some kind of power to produce this work, and myself, in certain ways rather than other ways. I would argue that this type of approach because it explicitly places me as an effect emerging with and through the research, although it may never 'equalise' the power relationship within the research it gives me a well articulated analytical position within the research from which to at least interrogate that position and destabilise my own authority as within the research.

Illustrating how ANT has addressed this concern for reflexivity, Latour (2003:36) has reminded researchers using this approach in a recent paper that, 'the network is not 'a thing in the world' but a path traced by the researcher'. This is where a more specific form of 'reflexivity' comes in, where to be reflexive 'does not signal an increase in mastery and consciousness, but only a heightened awareness that mastery is impossible and control over actions is now seen as a complete modernist fiction'. (Latour 2003:36). During my research, and especially the writing up stages, I presented 'my self' as an uncertain and emergent effect, multiple and shifting. The 'researcher-as-effect' in the research as a result of the

multiple and complex actor networks that are inevitably implied in any funded research project became an explicit and major part of the research. In these confrontations I have articulated the possible ways of coming to matter as an 'author' that 'I' could have emerged as, as an effect of the research. This means that 'I' and the other effects in the research, emerge in the thesis as 'becoming subject' to it, fragile, processual achieved effects performed as different and multiple and that 'could have been otherwise'. In this research approach, the idea of different voices of participants is not valid, the focus and topic of the research is the emergence, through negotiations and confrontations, of the various non human and human effects that emerge *as a consequence of the research process*, with no prior essence implied, and which are seen in this context in terms of their material semiotic fragility, multiplicity and tenuousness.

DISCUSSION: CONCEPTUALISING REFLEXIVITY WITHIN A TRANSFORMATIVE AGENDA

As has already been explained, during our discussions of reflexivity in the research process, it became clear to us that different forms of reflexivity were in fact being deployed. In fact, the overweening issues for both of us was the shifting nature of reflexivity itself during both of our research processes. As has already been addressed there was an emerging dynamic in our reflections between power, ontology and reflexivity. Different kinds of reflexivity were implied by the different ways reality emerged in our research, and different kinds of power relationship were being enacted at specific points through our own reflexive approaches.

This rendered the theorising of reflexivity in our own projects highly problematic. Analysing and close reading of our own work suggested a taxonomy of four possible reflexivities, based on the two dimensions of power and ontology, Objectivist, Perspectival, Experiential, and Multiplex (Figure 1).

These should not be seen as mutually exclusive, both of our worked examples contained elements of each, and this is the point we are making. There is no claim in this paper that any one of these reflexivities are superior to the others, only that they are appropriate to the different contexts that large qualitative research projects inevitably throw up, and as such they denote shifts in the ontological/political nature of the researcher/respondent relationship at different times in any one research project. There is also no suggestion that this framework is exhaustive or prescriptive, it is merely presented as a starting point for the stimulation of necessary dialogue.

Objectivist reflexivity refers to the practice of commenting upon the technical choices that were made on the research journey in terms of, for example, method choice, decisions over analytical categories etc. This form of reflexivity is deemed objectivist because it is aimed primarily at giving better accounts of the research process to produce better knowledge. In objectivist reflexivity there is an assumption of both a fairly stable and ontologically singular research project and researcher who reflects on this project and the choices and possibilities open to them. Despite our political commitments against objectivism, this form of reflexivity was evident in both of our research projects. At stages throughout the research, particularly the methodology, we gave commentaries upon our choices based on objectivist measures of research. Both of us feel that this is inevitable given the genre within which we are working, where metanarratives of truth and objectivism are dominant and the researcher has to show a degree of rigour in terms of the choices made and how they relate to the idea of better science. As can be seen in our examples, objectivist reflexivity has problems for the researcher who is trying to deal with issues of power in the

FIGURE 1
 Framework of possible reflexivities

		Nature of the research encounter	
		More researcher controlled	Less researcher controlled
Ontology	Singular reality	Objectivist Reflexivity	Experiential Reflexivity
	Multiple reality	Perspectival Reflexivity	Multiplex Reflexivity

research context. Whatever the ontological approach, reflecting on methodological choices, however this is done, reinforces the authority of the researcher and reiterates their status as thinking sentient subjects. In both of our examples it can be seen that the shifting nature of the researcher/respondent power dynamic is something that we both have had to struggle with and manage as best we could through employing different kinds of reflexivity as necessary and facing the implications and consequences of that as an important part of the research process.

Experiential reflexivity concerns complex research situations where researcher and respondent are engaged in sharing of experiences. This type of reflexivity is evident in the first worked example. Emphasis is on co-creation of meaning through intimate research in which experiences are shared and no attempt is made to 'bracket' the researchers own lived experience. The researcher reflects upon their own experiences and those of their respondents to build a picture of, and to understand, the phenomenon under study. The issue raised here concerns how to ensure that the experience of those being researched does not become subsumed within the researchers own frameworks and lived experience. Experiential reflexivity therefore becomes a task of interrogating the researchers own research practice to ensure that this does not happen.

Perspectival reflexivity is so named because it demonstrates an appreciation of the different perspectives of the different subjects involved in a specific research encounter, and/or recognises that different groups are likely to view different topics through very different lenses, and sensitivity to this is reflected in the research design. The researcher reflects on these different perspectives or views them as different 'lenses' through which the researcher might view the research 'object'. This can be evident in interpretive research where researcher gives various perspectives on the research object as different stories from different perspectives, or as in the worked example given first, as a sensitivity to the different voices that make up the research encounter. Perspectival reflexivity rests upon the ontological assumption that there is a fairly stable research object which can be viewed differently depending upon the perspective of the viewer. This can emerge as different 'voices' or indeed the different 'stories' of reflexivity that are being presented here. Reflexivity in this case emerged as a requirement to ensure that the researcher reflected upon the likely implicit boundary work being done in terms of this research object.

Multiplex reflexivity is evident only in the second worked example. Multiplex reflexivity differs from Perspectival in that the

object of research is not taken as essential, with different perspectives or lenses deployed to view it differently. This type of reflexivity focuses on how the researcher and the researched are constructed as such through the research process as multiple, shifting and tenuous entities specific to that project. Unlike experiential reflexivity no prior or shared experience is sought, reflection in on how the entities that emerge take shape and this is seen only in terms of the multiple actor networks of the research itself. This type of reflexivity is evident in story two.

CONCLUSION

We would have liked to have analysed in much more depth the four categories of reflexivity, and to provide further examples for our struggles with this issue. Indeed, this is another of the problems of reflexive consumer research: restrictive word count. However, we have presented this thus far as a starting point. We begin and end our paper with the specific call for papers from the ACR 2005 organisers, as it is one we identify with strongly as transformative consumer researchers. In the call, the mission of this conference is stated as one which focuses upon making a 'positive difference in the lives of consumers, both present and future generations, through the chosen focus and conduct of specific research'. The organisers emphasise their hopes of stimulating a 'fresh dialogue on the opportunities, challenges, and future of Transformative Consumer Research, and to showcase promising and path-creating examples of TCR as well'. Following the ethos of this call, this paper is designed not as a definitive statement on reflexivity in consumer research or a desiccated or normative framework which prescribes approaches that the consumer behaviour researcher should follow, but instead as a starting point for fresh dialogue around these issues. The politics of this paper are transformative but true transformation requires collaborative discussion and a sense of moving forwards together. We sincerely hope that this paper is therefore taken in the spirit with which it was written, as a dialogue opening starting point for these very prescient discussions of transformation in the process and praxis of consumer research.

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Remembering Prices: Numeric Cognition, Language, and Price Recall

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role of language on price recall. Three experiments show that the linguistic coding of prices can influence the accuracy of individuals' mental calculations and subsequent price recall. We trace the root of this effect to the length (i.e., the number of syllables) of the number names to be processed. Based on prior research, we theorize that when several prices are presented together, individuals encode them phonologically. They rehearse subvocally the number names of the individual prices as they read them and perform calculations. This process is constrained by the capacity of working memory. Thus, when individuals encode the numbers in a language that requires fewer syllables to rehearse them, total price recall will be more accurate than if they encode the numbers in a language that requires more syllables. Similarly, if we consider a single language, when individuals process numbers with shorter names, their subsequent recall will be more accurate than when they process numbers with longer names.

To date, research studying language differences in information processing has explored issues like presentation modality (Tavassoli and Han 2001; 2002), language-specific markers (Schmitt and Zhang 1998), or differences in information load across the languages known by bilinguals (Luna and Peracchio 2001). This paper investigates a new area in which language impacts information processing: number cognition. This is an exceedingly important area of consumer behavior since consumers engage in number processing any time they make a purchase. In particular, we study how number processing influences memory for multi-dimensional prices, which are prices that consist of more than one number (e.g., "\$729 dish washer, plus \$45 installation fee"), or prices of multiple items (e.g., \$20 beer and \$13 potato chips in one shopping trip). Both multi-dimensional prices and prices of multiple items will be referred to as "multi-prices." We focus on multi-prices in this research because consumers are frequently exposed to them and because their processing involves the calculation of a total price, so the linguistic and numeric effects we investigate are particularly applicable to them. Thus, number names with more syllables (e.g., "seven" vs. "six") are likely to overtax working memory, which can make the calculation of total prices more difficult. This, in turn, may lead to lower price recall accuracy.

Two major contributions emerge from this research. First, we highlight the important role of numeric cognition in research on price perception. Previous pricing research suggests that price recall is influenced by various factors such as required effort to accurately process price information, consumers' choice of a processing strategy, and price knowledge (Estelami and Lehmann 2001; Estelami 2003; Monroe and Lee 1999; Morwitz, Greenleaf, and Johnson 1998). However, as Monroe and Lee (1999) point out, little research on price recall has been conducted based on numeric cognition. Our approach is based on current theories of linguistic processing and mental arithmetic, so we provide new insights to pricing research. Second, and more generally, we extend the notion of linguistic influences on cognition to number processing. Although recent research has examined how language influences other areas of cognitive processing (e.g., Schmitt and Zhang 1998), the influence of language on number cognition is still unexplored in spite of the importance of number processing for pricing and promotion. We investigate how language affects the accuracy of

mental calculations and provide evidence that the effects we find take place during encoding of prices, not retrieval.

The paper begins with a brief review of the literature on mental arithmetic and language. Study 1 shows that there are differences in the recall accuracy of the total price of two multi-prices, depending on the language in which the prices are processed. When respondents process the prices in a "short" language (a language that requires fewer syllables to encode a number phonologically) versus in a "long" language, they display higher accuracy. Studies 1 and 2 attribute this result to encoding effects. In other words, number-length is shown to influence price recall accuracy when the numbers are initially read. Study 3 validates the effect of number name length on price recall in a single-language setting and finds the effect regardless of the magnitude of the prices.

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The Principle Matters: Antecedents and Consequences of Procedural Justice in the Context of Pricing

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Fairness seems to matter to consumers a great deal. It is an important source of satisfaction with purchases (e.g. Darke and Dahl 2003; Oliver and Swan 1989) and consumers seem to react quite negatively to perceived unfairness (Kahneman, Knetsch and Thaler 1986). Within marketing, much of the research on fairness has focused on prices. Thaler (1985) first asserted that consumers derive utility from the fairness of a price (transaction utility) and argued this is judged by a comparison of the actual price to some reference price. Such reference prices appear to be influenced by a variety of factors including past prices, prices in comparable stores, perceptions of the cost of the product to the seller, etc. (e.g. Bolton, Warlop and Alba 2003). Recent work has broadened the perspective on price fairness to include judgments based on social comparisons between different customers' inputs and outcomes (Darke and Dahl 2003; Xia, Monroe, and Cox 2004), consistent with equity theory (Adams 1965). Overall, the existing research on price fairness fits into the broad framework of *distributive justice* (Deutsch 1985), which assumes that judgments of fairness are based on the allocation of material outcomes.

The current investigation builds on this framework by examining the role of *procedural justice* in a pricing context. We propose and test a model that includes both procedural justice and existing theories of distributive justice as unique predictors of fairness. Across two experiments, we demonstrate that judgments of procedural justice are distinct from distributive justice by showing that they have different antecedents and independently predict overall judgments of fairness and satisfaction. It is shown that perceptions of procedural justice stem from the violation of implicit prescriptive norms that dictate socially appropriate ways in which marketers should treat consumers. In particular, we identify two different procedural norms, norms of consistency and openness, and show that violation of these norms leads to perceptions of procedural injustice, which lowers perceptions of general fairness.

Experiment 1 showed that procedural and distributive forms of justice were distinct sources of fairness in pricing, and that both were important predictors of purchase satisfaction. This was demonstrated by independently manipulating elements of a purchase situation that were predicted to affect procedural and distributive justice. Procedural justice was shown to stem from the violation of a norm of consistency. In contrast, distributive justice was manipulated by varying the perceived relevance of the inputs used to determine consumers' outcomes, consistent with predictions from equity theory. As expected, both procedural and distributive justice contributed to general perceptions of fairness and satisfaction with the purchase.

In the experiment participants read a scenario that explained they bought a stereo for \$199. However, they later discovered that another customer had purchased the same stereo for \$159 because they qualified for a discount based on the stores' pricing policy. Violation of the consistency norm was manipulated by having the salesperson ask whether the participant actually qualified for the discount in one case and not ask in another case. Importantly, participants never qualified for the discount anyway, meaning the violation was independent of their outcome. This was crossed with a second manipulation designed to influence perceptions of distributive justice according to equity theory. Two different pricing

policies were used that specified different inputs that would entitle customers to the discount. The first policy entitled loyal customers to a discount. This input was chosen because it was predicted to be relevant to the outcome price (Darke and Dahl 2003; Huppertz, Arenson, and Evans 1978). The second pricing policy was designed to be considered less relevant, by granting a discount only to students of a particular university. As predicted, both the norm violation and relevance of the input had a significant impact on general perceptions of fairness and satisfaction. However, the effect of the norm violation was mediated by perceptions of procedural justice, whereas the effect of the pricing policy was mediated by perceptions of distributive justice.

Experiment 2 provided a conceptual replication of the first experiment using a different prescriptive norm. It was hypothesized that a norm of openness also exists in marketing interactions, which dictates sellers should provide consumers with the information that is relevant to their purchase. This norm was examined in the context of an upcoming sale, where the norm would dictate that sellers should inform customers that prices will shortly be reduced. In order to examine the influence of the violation of the norm independent of material outcomes we constructed a scenario where, in one instance, customers were unable to wait for the upcoming sale. This meant they could not obtain the sale price whether or not they were told about it. In this case, it was shown that violation of the openness norm reduced general perceptions of fairness and satisfaction because the violation lowered perceptions of procedural justice. In the other instance, customers were able to wait for the sale, which meant that violation of the openness norm also impacted their price outcome. In these circumstances, the violation reduced perceptions of fairness and satisfaction, but this was caused by reductions in both perceptions of distributive and procedural justice. Importantly, participants found out about the sale price whether or not the openness norm was violated, which meant that the reference price did not vary and therefore these differences could not be explained by differences in transaction utility.

Overall, these studies expand on our knowledge of the factors that contribute to perceptions of fairness and satisfaction in a pricing context. Consumers care about the principles that govern marketing interactions and not just the material aspects of the interaction. This suggests that marketers should observe certain prescriptive norms in their interactions with consumers, even when no material consequences are involved.

The Presence of Reference Price: How Value Can Appear Convergent to Buyers and Sellers

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that the endowment effect—the tendency of minimum selling price to exceed maximum buying price for a particular object—might be minimized when a reference price appears. The findings from 418 participants in two experiments support our hypothesis: the endowment effect would be smaller when the reference price is available. The importance of reference price is thus highlighted.

INTRODUCTION

Economists are often concerned about the estimated “value” or welfare measures on various goods or services, and attempt to derive empirical estimation of objective measures. The assessment of objective values refers to “people are required to estimate the least price they are willing to accept (WTA) to sell and the ceiling price they are willing to pay (WTP).” Most economists argue that the gap between WTA and WTP should converge for most commodities. However, experimental research showed that the values of WTA and WTP might be remarkably different even for the same object. Specifically, research on the valuation of objects by laboratory experiments indicated that people desire a higher WTA for an owned object than WTP for a not-owned-yet object (Kahneman, Knetsch, and Thaler 1990; Knetsch and Sinden 1984; Thaler 1980). The gap between the buying price and the selling price for an object is perfectly rooted in the status of ownership and is termed as “the endowment effect” (Thaler 1980; Kahneman et al. 1990).

The concept of the term “endowment effect,” first mentioned by Kahneman et al. (1990), has proven robust in studies employing laboratory experiments (Kahneman, et al. 1990), economics style market experiments (Franciosi, Kujal, Michelitsch, Smith, and Deng 1996), and field studies (e.g., Johnson, Hershey, Meszaros, and Kunreuther 1993). These studies have shown that people tend to demand a higher selling price for commodity that they own than they would be willing to pay in order to acquire as a buyer.

Explanations of the endowment effect generally rely on psychophysical notions of reference dependence and loss aversion, as postulated in prospect theory (Kahneman and Tversky 1979; Tversky and Kahneman 1974) and subsequent research on mental accounting (Thaler 1980). According to prospect theory, states below the reference point are negatively coded as losses and states above the reference point are positively coded as gains. The loss aversion postulate further states that losses loom larger than the corresponding gains: $-V(x) > V(x)$. In other words, the pain of giving up an endowment will exceed the pleasure of acquiring it. This should be observed as a disparity in selling and buying price for the same good, with the former exceeding the latter (Mandel 2002). Similarly, loss aversion may account for why people are reluctant to exchange lottery tickets, even when a small bonus is offered for doing so (Bar-Hillel and Neter 1996). Explanations of support loss aversion have shown that endowment effects are more likely to be observed when prospective gains and losses are difficult to integrate, either because of high uncertainty about future exchange prices (van Dijk and van Knippenberg 1998) or reduced comparability of consumer goods (Chapman 1998). Strahilevitz and Loewenstein (1998) also used loss aversion to explain the ways

in which perception of subjective valuation depends on time of possession for the object. An individual’s selling price for a current possession will increase as a function of how long the person has owned the object.

The endowment effect also appears to be moderated by regulatory focus: participants were reluctant to exchange an endowed object when they focused on prevention goals rather than they focused on promotion goals (Lieberman, Idson, Camacho, and Higgins 1999). Mandel (2002) found that the endowment effect was observed when participants imagined another individual wanting to buy from or sell to them rather than they imagined wanting to buy from or sell to another individual. Additionally, some works emphasized the importance of affective response (i.e. positive and negative feeling evaluations). Loewenstein and Issacharoff (1994) found that the manner in which people obtained an object affected their valuation of the objects. Specifically, individuals who received goods based on exemplary performance valued the goods more than they received the goods by chance or based on poor performance. These findings suggested that an affective role based on associating positive affect with the item was responsible. Forgas and Ciarrochi (2001) found that people with positive emotions enhanced and those with negative emotions decreased subjective cognitive value regardless of both owner and non-owner for general consumer’s commodity.

This research focused on the relationship of reference price to the impact of endowment effects. The magnitude of the endowment effect might be influenced by reference price. Previous research on perceptual valuation has shown that perception of valuation is likely to be influenced by both cues relating to the subjective value of the item and the relevant reference price (e.g., the market price for the product) (Monroe 2003; Green, Jacobowitz, and Kahneman 1998). It is reasonable that both seller and buyer’s perceptions of value are influenced by reference price and indirectly moderate endowment effects.

MODEL OF REFERENCE PRICE AND ANCHORING EFFECT

The role of reference price in consumer price perception and evaluation has been underscored by numerous studies (Heath, Chatterjee, and France 1995; Herr 1989; Mayhew and Winer 1992; Urbany and Dickson 1991). Reference price can be defined as “an internal price to which consumers compare observed prices” (Winer 1989). In other words, consumers possess a reference price, which is based either on their previous experiences (Winer 1986; Lattin and Bucklin 1989), on an external cue such as the advertised price (Biswas and Bliar 1991), or contextual effects (Rajendran and Tellis 1994; Hardie, Johnson, and Fader 1993). Empirical findings in the literature support the notion that consumers behave as if they had a reference price that factors into their decision process (Kalyanarm and Winer 1995). These findings indicate an increase in the predictive power of choice models that incorporate reference price rather than to price-only models (Winer 1989; Lattin and Bucklin 1989; Kalwani, Yim, Rinne, and Sugita 1990; Mayhew and Winer 1992). Although there is a general consensus in the consumer literature that reference price has a significant impact on product evaluation and purchase decision, there has been less studies

regarding to the manner in which consumers decide on the lowest price they are willing to accept for an item (Carmon and Ariely 2000; Kahneman et al. 1990).

The anchoring effect is often used to explain the effect of reference price on product evaluation. Tversky and Kahneman (1974) described anchoring as a process in which “people make estimates by starting from an initial value that is adjusted to yield a final answer...” In a typical demonstration, participants were asked to estimate a certain value. They were given an arbitrary value (20% or 80%) and are then asked to provide their best estimate. The usual finding is that these estimates are significantly influenced by the anchor (Green et al. 1998; Jacowitz and Kahneman 1995). Consistent with this idea of anchoring, Jacowitz and Kahneman (1995) also suggest that judges who are first asked if a target value is higher or lower than a given anchor adjust their estimates in the appropriate direction until reaching an acceptable value. We used the concept of anchor to explain reference price effect on consumer’s WTP and WTA (or endowment effect).

Theoretically, perception of valuation is influenced both by cues relating to the subjective value of the item and the relevant reference price (e.g., the market price for the product). However, that most products come in several varieties with different features are associated with numerous brands and counties of origin. They also are sold at a variety of stores. Once consumers decide to purchase a product, they still need to decide on a specific item and, correspondingly, the price they are willing to pay. Consumers must determine what combination of item characteristics and price offers the best solution for their values. This can be a challenging task, because preference and values are often ambiguous and unstable (Bettman, Luce, and Payne 1998; Simonson 1993). Thus, the buyer’s valuation of an item is expected to be particularly susceptible to reference price.

In contrast, sellers who have already decided to trade can base their asking price on the estimated market price. Suppose that a consumer has an unwanted item (e.g. a second CD player received as a gift) deciding to sell. In this situation, the personal value of the item to the seller becomes less relevant and the selling price is expected to be determined primarily by an external cue such as reference price. When reference price is provided by the retailer or the advertiser, a person who wants to sell a product will anchor and will be inclined to accept the price.

The magnitude of the endowment effect might be influenced by reference price. Specifically, when market reference price appears, owners may be more anchored into reference price to sell and potential buyers may be more anchored and inclined to buy. To see how inferred reference price might influence the endowment effect, one considers the “wine problem” that Frisch (1993) (see also Thaler 1980) used to test the endowment effect:

1. *Back in the 1950s you purchased a case of good wine for \$5 a bottle. Today, a wine merchant offers to purchase it from you. How much would you be willing to sell it for?*
2. *You have just heard that a wine merchant has a case of good wine dated from the 1950s. He purchased the wine for \$5 a bottle. He now wants to sell it. How much would you be willing to pay per bottle?*

Consistent with the endowment effect prediction, Frisch (1993) found that the mean price was significantly greater for participants when they imagined themselves as sellers (scenario 1) than as buyers (scenario 2). However, if the information of “market price is \$12 for same commodity now” is added to both scenarios 1 and 2, seller and buyer will anchor and adjust subjective perceptible value to the price. Jacowitz and Kahneman (1995) described

anchoring as a process in which “people make estimates by starting from an initial value that is adjusted to yield a final answer...”. When both seller and buyer anchor the reference market price, their subjective value will be adjusted to approach the price and the endowment effect—the discrepancy in buying and selling price for the same commodity— will be decreased. Thus, we predict that

H1: The endowment effect will be small when reference price is available.

STUDY 1

In order to examine our hypothesis that ownership and the presence of preference price interact to influence subjective valuation, an experiment was conducted in which two additional experimental conditions were added to a tiny modified version of the wine problem. Scenarios A and B correspond to scenarios 1 and 2, respectively:

- A. *A decade ago, you purchased a case of good wine for \$ 5 per bottle. Today, you are interested in selling the case to a wine merchant. How much would you be willing to sell each bottle?*
- B. *A decade ago, a wine merchant purchased a case of good wine for \$ 5 per bottle. You are interested in buying the case. How much would you be willing to pay for each bottle?*

In contrast to scenarios A and B in which reference price was explicitly present in market information in the following two scenarios:

- C. *A decade ago, you purchased a case of good wine for \$ 5 per bottle. Today, a wine merchant offers to purchase it from you. You got information from the Internet that there is a market price with \$ 12 for same commodity. How much would you be willing to sell each bottle for?*
- D. *A decade ago, a wine merchant purchased a case of good wine for \$5 per bottle. He is now interested in selling the case. You got information from Internet that there is a market price of \$ 12 for the same commodity. How much would you be willing to pay per bottle?*

As in scenario A, the case of wine is endowed to the participant in scenario C. However, unlike that in scenario A, the presence of market reference price is showed by the participant C. Similarly, presence of market reference price is inverse between scenarios B and D

Method

The experiment was conducted by a 2 (ownership: owner vs. non-owner) x 2 (reference price: presence vs. absence) between-subjects design. One hundred and sixty undergraduate students (88 females and 72 males), who participated in this experiment as part of the course requirement in marketing management class, were randomly and equally assigned to one of four different experimental conditions.

Procedure

Participants were given a 1-page questionnaire in which they were asked to consider a case of wine problem. The case varied in terms of who was described.

After reading the scenario, participants were asked to indicate the amounts for which they thought the owner was willing to sell the bottle of wine and the non-owner was willing to buy the bottle of

wine. For example, in the owner conditions, participants were asked to indicate the minimum amount for which they would be willing to sell the bottle of wine and they were asked to indicate the maximum amount they thought the wine merchant would be willing to pay to buy the bottle of wine from them.

Results and discussion

A two-way factorial ANOVA was employed to test the effect of reference price on the perceived value for the case of wine. The statistics $F(1, 156)=88.49, p<0.01$ showed significant main effects of ownership: people who own the case of wine have a significantly higher price (\$ 10.01) than the non-owners do (\$ 7.96). This finding is consistent with prior evidence for the endowment effect (Thaler, 1980). More importantly, as we expected, a significant interaction was found between the endowment effect and reference price, $F(1, 156)=16.12, p<0.01$. A significantly higher price for the case of wine was perceived by the owners (\$8.97) than by the non-owners (NT\$6.95) in the absence of reference price, $t(78)=6.15, p<0.0001$. However, statistics also proved to be an irrelevant factor between “those who owned the case of wine but wanted to sell it” (\$ 10.15) and “those who did not own the case of wine but wanted to buy one” (\$9.87) in the condition of presence of reference price, $t(78)=0.96, p>0.1$, these analysis supports our H1.

These statistics strongly support our assumption that the endowment effect occurs only in the absence of reference price rather than in the presence of reference price.

Experiment 1 supported our hypothesis that the reference price as a moderator decreased one’s perceived value of an owned object and the endowment effect did not occur in the presence of reference price. However, although the results of Experiment 1 supported our hypothesis, we found the above value effects on choice even we used a bisecting task to control for the impact of reference price. Thus, a stronger test of our hypothesis would require simultaneously manipulating the degree to which prospective buyers and seller value a target commodity about market reference price is provided. Experiment 2 was designed to allow a direct comparison of range versus value effects.

STUDY 2

The objectives of Experiment 2 were dual: Firstly, Experiment 2 was designed to simultaneously manipulate various market reference prices on the part of prospective buyer and seller, thus permitting more rigorous tests of our hypothesis. Secondly, the problem was changed in an attempt to test the robustness of predicted effects.

Method

Design. Two hundred and fifty eight participants (142 females and 116 males) were involved in Experiment 2 as part of the course requirement. They were randomly and equally assigned to one of six grids of a 2 (ownership: owner vs. non-owner) x 3 (Reference price: low, high, no information) between-subjects design. The factor of reference price was designed into three levels: low, high, and no information. No information is the control condition in which neither the owner nor the non-owner knew the reference price. High or low reference price implies that the transaction price in the market is relatively higher or lower than the initial purchase price.

Procedure

Participants were given a 1-page questionnaire in which they were asked to consider a hypothetical CD purchase. The case varied in terms of who was described as the recent purchaser of the CD

(either the participant or a person named Lee). For example, in the low-price-owner condition, participants read one of the following:

A year ago, you bought a classical musical CD for \$ 10. After listening to it, you really liked this CD. Lee, who hasn't bought the CD yet, also listens to and likes it. Now, he wants to purchase it from you. You got information from Internet that there is a market price of \$8 for same commodity (in the high-price was conducted in \$12) for same commodity. How much would you be willing to sell the CD for?

Others read the baseline version (no information condition):

A year ago, you bought a classical musical CD for \$ 10. After listening to it, you really liked this CD. Lee, who hasn't bought the CD yet, also listens to and likes it. Now, he wants to purchase it from you. How much would you be willing to sell the CD for?

Conversely, the non-owner condition describes Lee as having recently purchased the CD and the participant as having listened to it.

After reading the scenario, participants were asked to indicate the amounts for which they thought the owner was willing to sell the CD and that the non-owner was willing to buy the CD. For example, in the owner conditions, participants were asked to indicate the minimum amount for which they would be willing to sell the CD to Lee and they were asked to indicate the maximum amount they thought Lee would be willing to pay to buy the CD from them. Last, in order to understand whether participants were induced by the different reference price situation, participants were asked to respond to the question: “do you agree that market transaction price is higher than initial purchased price by you for the CD?” The scales were described with end point 1= “extremely disagreement” to 7= “extremely agreement.”

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

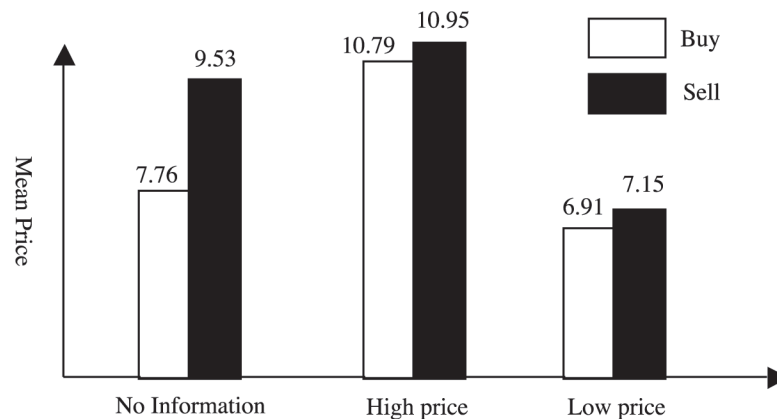
Manipulation checks

In this experiment, the manipulation of market reference price was operationalized by varying the description of scenarios. To assess the validity of this operational definition, we examined whether participants’ mean ratings of perceptive market price varied as a direct function of the reference price manipulations. As expected, mean perceptive market price for the CD differed significantly as a function of varying reference price, $F(2, 255)=619.2, p<0.0001$. In Scheefe test, the high price condition (6.05) was a significantly higher perceptive market price than low price condition (2.06) and no information condition (3.94). On information condition, it was also a significantly higher perceptive market price than low price condition. These results indicate a significant variation in the perceptive reference price of market transaction under the three experimental conditions, showing that the manipulation was effective.

Effect of reference price

A two-way ANOVA was administered to evaluate the impacts of reference price (low, high, no information) and ownership status (owners vs. non-owners) on the perceived value for hypothetical CD. It found that the ownership status ($F(1, 252)=21.8, p<0.001$) had a significant main effect on the estimated value of the CD, indicating that people perceived a significantly higher value on an owned the CD (\$9.21) than on a not-owned-yet one (\$8.48). This

FIGURE 1
Mean price as a function of reference price and owner in Experiment 2



result conceptually replicated previous evidence for the endowment effect (Bar-Hillel and Netter 1996; Thaler 1980) and was consistent with Experiment 1.

Moreover, as we predicted, a significant interaction was identified between ownership status and reference price states, $F(2,252)=20.12$, $p<0.001$. The mean selling and buying prices are indicated in Figure 1. As the figure shows, endowment effects were observed only when the reference price disappears. In that condition, mean selling price (\$9.53) significantly exceeded mean selling price (\$7.76), paired $t(84)=6.34$, $SE=0.29$, $p<0.001$. However, there is no significant difference between selling price (\$10.95) and buying price (\$10.79) when reference price was condition, $t(84)=0.73$, $SE=0.22$, $p>0.5$. There was also no significant difference between selling price (\$7.15) and buying price (\$6.91) when reference price was low condition, $t(84)=0.99$, $SE=0.186$, $p>0.5$. We examined a two-way(Owner \rightarrow reference price states[absence vs. high]) ANOVA, showing that there is a significant interaction effect between owner states and reference price, $F(1,168)=20.27$, $p<.05$. We also examined a two-way(Owner \rightarrow reference price states[absence vs. low]) ANOVA, showing that there is a significant interaction effect between owner states and reference price, $F(1,168)=33.91$, $p<0.0001$. Only when we tested the relationship of owner and reference price (low vs. high), there was no interaction effect found, $F(1,168)=1.44$, $p>0.1$. These results also indicated that the impact of reference price on endowment effect was stable, seemingly because the effect of reference price will be accompanied by differences in reference price (high or low).

CONCLUSION

All other things being equal, sellers tend to pursue a higher selling price for an owned object than they would be willing to pay as buyers (e.g. Kahneman, Knetsch, and Thaler 1990). However, as demonstrated in this article, the presence of reference price can affect the magnitude of the endowment effect. The endowment effect only occurs when reference price is absent, and is absent when reference price is present. Hence, the presence of reference price can be classified as a moderator in the endowment effect.

Alternative explanation

In this study, the anchoring effect is often used to explain the influence of reference price upon product evaluation and percep-

tion of value and its effects on endowment effect. However, the anchoring effect is not the only explanation of the effect of reference price. Signaling theory is usually applied in explaining various marketing programs, which are based on information economics and the premise that two parties to a transaction frequently possess asymmetrical information (Kirmani and Rao, 2000; Spence, 1974). Selling firms often possess important information that consumer does not, such as product quality and the dispersion of actual market price. When lacking important information, consumers must gather additional information or make inferences regarding the nature of the unknown or missing information. Reference price serves as important signal information to help consumers overcome this information asymmetry. Thus, the presence of reference price as signal helps consumers to understand a product's perceptive value. A seller who wants to sell a product for more than its market price will not find a willing buyer in this situation. Thus, the seller is constrained to accept the reference price (market price). In contrast, for the buyer, appearance of reference price implies that the value of the product approaches the price and other buyers with maximum willingness to pay money also approximately are the price in the market. Thus, the presence of signal of reference price convinces buyers that the value of product is worth this one.

Future research

This research has explored reference price effect on endowment effect in a laboratory setting. However, it is not clear how many reference price categories consumers use in evaluating product value and endowment effects (Kalyanarm and Winer, 1995). Winer (1989) has argued that there may be as many as eight types of reference prices. Consumers may use multiple reference prices in a single judgment. Providing an understanding of the effects of various reference price types is an interesting avenue for future research.

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Price Skimming Paradoxes

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

A common pricing strategy employed by managers in new and growing markets is price skimming—setting prices high at introduction and dropping them over time. As product life cycles become shorter and the number of new products and services increase every year, managerial use of price skimming appears to be increasing. Likewise, as prices drop at ever increasing rates for a range of products and services, consumer awareness of price skimming also appears to be increasing.

The managerial attractiveness of price skimming is straightforward: by sequentially lowering price over time, capturing incremental customers with every price drop, price skimming allows a firm to charge each customer their reservation price (e.g., Besanko and Winston 1990). A central assumption of price skimming is because each consumer pays a price at or below his or her reservation price, each consumer is satisfied with his or her purchase.

However, beyond the purchase decision, there is scant research on consumers' responses to price skimming. Instead, investigations concern firm profit maximization and variables impacting profit maximization, such as diffusion rates, competition and production learning curves (e.g., Robinson and Lakhani 1975; Irwin and Klenow 1994). Thus, although price skimming is widely used by managers and investigated in the economics and strategy literatures, it has received little attention in consumer research.

This research investigates the relationship between price skimming and post-purchase consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions. Prior research has found pricing information, even when revealed *after purchase and consumption*, affects customer satisfaction levels (Voss, Parasuraman, and Grewal 1998; Varki and Colgate 2001; Fornell et al. 1996). Additionally, empirical studies suggest customers' perceptions of pricing fairness are a significant predictor of customer satisfaction levels (Xia, Monroe, and Cox 2004), which are positively related to positive word-of-mouth, repurchase intent and customer life-time-value (Szymanski and Henard 2001; Anderson, Fornell, and Mazvancheryl 2004). In this research I explore whether and under what conditions consumers perceive price skimming as fair and how those perceptions affect post-purchase attitudes, behavioral intentions and customer life-time-value.

Consumer behavior research relies primarily on equity theory to explain differences in fairness perceptions (e.g., Xia, Monroe, and Cox 2004). According to equity theory, people compare their inputs and outputs to referent others in similar exchange situations to determine whether an exchange is fair (e.g., Huppertz, Arenson, and Evans 1978). In contrast to the consumer behavior literature, organizational behavior conceptualizations of social justice delineate between distributive and procedural justice (Tyler 1997). Distributive justice ascertains fairness based on inputs and outputs of comparative others, consistent with equity theory. Procedural justice focuses on the *process* mediating inputs and outputs to ascertain fairness. Although related, empirical studies support distributive and procedural justice as distinct constructs (Cohen-Charash and Spector 2001). These distinctions suggest consumers ascertain fairness based on whether prices and pricing policies differ among customers for the same product or service.

I conduct four experimental studies investigating under what conditions consumers perceive price skimming as fair or unfair and how pricing policies for existing customers may moderate or

reverse fairness perceptions. The first study investigates the relationship between price-skimming strategies and consumer attitudes, given new customers are paying lower prices than existing customers. I find price skimming for relational services is associated with significantly lower perceptions of fairness, satisfaction and behavioral intentions, than products and discrete services with similar price points and changes over identical time periods. Analysis of free form responses suggests price skimming for relational services is perceived as distributively unfair.

Study two investigates the moderating effect of four existing customer pricing policies for relational services: (1) no adjustment (same as study one); (2) lower price if the customer extends agreement; (3) lower price at customer's request; and (4) most-favored customer pricing, where all existing customers automatically receive the same lower price offered new customers (e.g., Besanko and Lyon 1993). I find policies with identical inputs and outputs are associated with similar satisfaction levels, but significantly different perceptions of fairness, likelihood to repurchase and positive word-of-mouth intentions. These results support the notion that consumers react differently to distributively and procedurally just pricing policies.

Study three compares price skimming by a service provider versus the provider's competitor. Significant differences in participant attitudes suggest social justice concerns differ between intrafirm and interfirm price skimming.

Although social justice concerns explain the moderating effects of existing customer policies, moderating effects can also be explained by simple mental accounting: consumers receiving a lower price realize a gain, leading to more positive attitudes and behavioral intentions (e.g., Thaler 1985). Study four explores these competing explanations by investigating the moderating impact of most-favored customer policies on price skimming for products, discrete services and relational services. If perceptions of social justice are responsible for differences, most-favored customer policies should only affect consumer attitudes when price skimming is perceived as socially unjust. The results of study four show a significant reversal for relational services, but not for products or discrete services, supporting a social justice explanation.

Finally, using wireless telephony industry metrics, I illustrate how some firms may be realizing suboptimal revenues and profits by employing price-skimming strategies, paradoxically, thought to maximize revenues and profits. This *managerial paradox of price skimming* is only apparent when considering consumer perceptions of fairness, satisfaction, likelihood to repurchase and positive word-of-mouth intent. Furthermore, I suggest a *consumer welfare paradox of price skimming*: most-favored customer pricing policies may be jointly optimal for consumers and firms in markets where consumers perceive price skimming as distributively or procedurally unfair.

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Overvaluation Bias in the Valuation and Utilization of Novel Technological Attributes

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This research examines the relationship between consumers' valuation of new product attributes and their subsequent utilization of those attributes. Although the literature on consumer response to product innovations is large, this issue has not been investigated empirically. We report the results from three laboratory experiments that provide strong evidence for an overvaluation bias: consumers often reveal a high willingness-to-pay for new product attributes that far exceeds the incremental benefit they can reasonably expect or actual obtain because consumers are averse to incurring substantial learning cost to take full advantage of the new attributes once they have them in their possession. In this research we examine the situation where the functionalities of the new and old attributes are independent of each and no combined usage is allowed.

Background

Two theories of dynamic inconsistency suggest that consumers may exhibit this overvaluation bias. The affective forecasting research has documented the impact bias in a variety of contexts. It says that actual affective reaction to an event is typically less intense and of shorter duration than people expect in prospect. Since acquiring a new gadget is often a positive experience, people in prospect are likely to exaggerate the level of excitement they will experience as an owner, which results in a higher level of valuation of the new product than what their subsequent experience can justify. This overly optimistic expectation, once disconfirmed by actual experience, is likely lead to low usage.

The reference point shift theory provides a different explanation. It argues that valuation and usage decisions have different reference points because usage decisions receive immediate and unambiguous feedbacks, which induces greater myopia and risk aversion. This subtle effect of reference point change is hard to anticipate, leading to inconsistency between valuation and utilization behaviors.

Empirical Investigation

Three experiments were conducted where participants played a novel computer game. A total of nearly three hundred undergraduate business students participated in the studies and received monetary reward based on their performance in the last fifteen games (money rounds).

In study 1, participants first trained on one type of controls (basic version) for fifteen games (training rounds) and then were offered the opportunity to buy a new game (combo version) that had new set of controls whose performance was unknown, in addition to the existing controls. Participants' WTP for the new game were measured via BDM procedure. Depending on their WTP, they continued to play the new game or the existing one for another fifteen games (money rounds). Study 1 manipulated the availability of the new game to test whether WTPs for the new game were excessive in light of their subsequent usage and performance. Study 2 followed the same procedure and collected explicit forecasts prior to WTP measurement to test the two competing explanations. Study 3 examined the effect of direct experience with the new attribute on overvaluation bias. It reversed sequence of games that participants

played (combo version followed by basic version) and elicited WTA for trading away the controls they used less frequently.

Results

Across the three studies, the results provide converging evidence for the hypothesized overvaluation bias. Specifically, participants indicated a high level of WTP ($M=384$ for study 1 and $M=349$ for study 2), but their subsequent usage of the new control was rather low, compared to what might be implied by their WTP. Though their subsequent performance improved, their improvement fell short of the level that was achieved by those participants who did not have the opportunity for acquiring the new game (difference in improvement: $M=-100$ for study 1 and $M=-458$ for study 2). Thus, it appears that their WTP far exceeded the incremental value of the new attribute (i.e., difference in improvement).

The forecasts results from study 2 did not find support for the impact bias explanation. Specifically, forecasts of future performance with the existing and new games were not overly optimistic, nor were forecasts of future utilization of the new controls in an initial set of games. This is contrary to the predictions of the impact bias explanation, and may indicate some indirect support for the reference point shift explanation.

Study 3 found that participants demanded excessive compensation for trading down to a simplified set of controls ($M=455$), even when they had never used the controls to be traded away in fifteen games. A variation replicated the procedure of study 2 but allowed two free trials with the new game before WTP measurement. The results showed a similar level of WTP, but even lower level of usage rate of the new controls after they were acquired.

Precommitment Bias in the Evaluation of a Single Option: The Importance of Evaluative Disposition

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

A growing body of evidence has raised challenges to normative models of preferential choice. An important example is the phenomenon of precommitment bias, whereby information is selectively interpreted to favor options that are tentatively preferred, even in the absence of prior beliefs or preferences regarding the options (e.g., Russo, Medvec, and Meloy 1996). Even for knowledgeable consumers (Carlson and Pearo 2004), the systematic distortion of product information can have a powerful influence on final decisions. Therefore, increased understanding of the phenomenon is an important step towards the improvement of consumer decision making.

Explanations of precommitment bias have emphasized its role in the separation of alternatives (Svenson 1992; Montgomery 1994), and empirical demonstrations have been mostly restricted to settings involving multiple options. However, consumer decisions commonly involve the evaluation of a single option, and there has been growing academic interest in this type of decision (Hsee and Leclerc 1998; Posavac et al. 2004). Investigators have uncovered a range of cognitive and motivational factors that are unique to singular evaluation, and it is not obvious that the precommitment bias observed in prior research will extend to a single-option setting. In fact, theoretical accounts relying on a separation goal are largely inapplicable to situations of singular evaluation.

We suggest that even in contexts with a single focal option, information will be systematically distorted as it is acquired, leading to corresponding effects on judgment and choice. In doing so, we draw from cognitive consistency theories and contemporary arguments for the importance of coherence in predecisional processing (Heider 1946; Holyoak and Simon 1999). We propose that a tentative assessment of the option's attractiveness, an *evaluative disposition*, becomes a crucial element in the pursuit of cognitive coherence. Even among individuals planning to reserve judgment, early information will lead to an initial evaluative disposition, which will in turn influence the interpretation of subsequent information. Specifically, in order to maintain coherence, new information will be distorted to be compatible with the initial disposition. The search for coherence will thereby cause systematic bias in both 1) evaluations of the attributes themselves and 2) the final outcome of the decision.

In three empirical studies of preference formation, we investigated the role of an initial evaluative disposition in biasing the interpretation of information. The studies employed diverse stimuli and procedures but shared a common design. Participants evaluated single options in the context of either a binary choice (e.g., 'buy/don't buy') or of a judgment (e.g., willingness-to-pay). Information about the option was presented one piece at a time, and attribute ratings were assessed as an indicator of information distortion.

In Study 1, participants were provided with attribute information about a consumer product. In order to create an initial disposition, the order of information was varied so that either a positive or negative attribute came first in the sequence. As expected, partici-

pants whose first attribute was positive rated subsequent attributes more positively than participants whose first attribute was negative. A similar order effect was obtained on a binary measure of purchase intention. Study 2 utilized an impression formation task and incorporated both choice and judgment conditions. As part of a role-playing scenario, participants evaluated candidates for a scholarship application. Unlike Study 1, attribute order was not manipulated. The predicted effect of disposition was again observed, as participants distorted their attribute-level evaluations towards the direction of their initial leaning. The magnitude of the bias did not differ across the choice and judgment groups. Study 3 examined a purely judgmental task that would be difficult to reframe in binary terms. After evaluating probability and value information, participants provided their willingness-to-pay for a lottery ticket. Results showed the expected effect of information order on willingness-to-pay, and attribute ratings revealed a tendency for value information (but not probability information) to be distorted.

Together, these studies provide initial evidence that precommitment bias will occur even in the evaluation of a single option. They supplement existing anchoring-and-adjustment models of judgment (e.g., Hogarth and Einhorn 1992) by illustrating how adjustment can operate via the encoding of new information. The results support our contention that the primary culprit is the development of an evaluative disposition early in the choice process. Citing recent research, we propose that distortion may be reduced among individuals who enter the process expecting either: 1) a particular judgment or choice to be obvious, or 2) high attribute correlation. The unwitting pursuit of coherence presents a powerful obstacle to consumer decision making, and by exploring these issues, researchers might improve even the most consequential decisions.

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The Illusory Truth Effect: Exploring Implicit and Explicit Memory Influences on Consumer Judgments

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumers are continually inundated with marketing information. Much of this information is processed at low involvement levels, with incidental-type learning. There is also emerging evidence that unconscious processing exerts influences on motivations, judgments, and behaviors (e.g., Cooper and Cooper 2002; Dijksterhuis 2004; Strahan, Spencer, and Zanna, 2002).

The goal of this research was to further our understanding of how consumers form judgments, both explicitly and implicitly, regarding the truth of marketing claims, given the illusory truth effect. The illusory truth effect is a repetition-based memory effect, where people consistently rate repeated statements as more true than non-repeated statements, primarily because of perceived familiarity of the statements (Hawkins and Hoch 1992). Two experiments examined the influence of repeated marketing claims, the combined influences of processing capacity and exclusion instructions (i.e., telling people that a statement being judged is actually false) as potential moderators (experiment 1), and unconscious influences on judged validity (experiment 2), which to our knowledge has not been examined previously. It was hypothesized that when repetition of claims increased from 0 to 1 to 3 exposures (experiment 1), and from 0 to 4 subliminal exposures (experiment 2), the judged truth of the statements would significantly increase.

Beyond the focal hypothesis, for experiment 1, it was hypothesized that divided attention (vs. full attention) would result in higher ratings of judged truth of claims as repetition increased. It was also hypothesized that an exclusion instruction would result in higher truth ratings of product claims as repetition of the claims decreased.

A 3 (product claim repetition of 0, vs. 1 vs. 3 exposures) X 2 (divided attention vs. full attention) X 2 (exclusion instruction vs. no exclusion instruction) mixed design was employed. The study was administered via computer and truth ratings and response latencies were collected. Analysis of variance of mean truth ratings showed significant main effects and a repetition x exclusion interaction, indicating that the illusory truth effect extends to a marketing message environment and that the exclusion instructions moderated the effect, resulting in higher truth ratings as repetition of claims decreased from 3 to 1 to 0. Analysis of variance of response latencies revealed main effects, 2-way, and 3-way interactions for all three variables of interest. Although there were no specific hypothesized effects for response times, results were surprising. As the ability to judge validity was made easier because of familiarity due to repetition or exclusion instructions, response times became faster which logically supports the truth effect explanation. But under distraction, response times also became faster. One explanation may be that subjects became more involved, or simply concentrated on the distraction task to the exclusion of the truth task, resulting in faster response times and attenuating repetition effects.

Experiment 2 examined potential repetition effects of product claims, resulting from unconscious processing of stimuli. It was hypothesized that subliminal (vs. supraliminal) exposure to product information would result in an enhancement of the illusory truth effect. A 2 (product claim repetition of 0 vs. 4) X 2 (subliminal vs. supraliminal exposure) mixed design was used. The subliminal manipulation was administered via a lexical decision task, adapted from Strahan et al. (2002).

Analysis of mean truth ratings as a function of repetition and exposure showed main effects and a significant repetition x exposure interaction. Under supraliminal conditions, mean truth ratings were significantly higher for 4 (vs. 0) repetitions, as expected, which replicated the results from experiment 1. Surprisingly, a reverse effect emerged in subliminal conditions, with mean truth ratings significantly lower for 4 (vs. 0) repetitions. The unexpected results found in the subliminal conditions suggest that other mechanisms may be at work when information is processed implicitly. We suggest that a form of "implicit correction" may be occurring, whereby the unconscious is able to recognize that familiarity via repetition does not equal truth.

The results of both experiments show that the robustness of the illusory truth effect replicates to an explicit marketing message environment and that as repetition increases, the judged validity of product claims increases. Further, it appears that providing exclusion information moderates the effect. While results of the subliminal conditions ran contrary to predictions, we propose that there is some support for the notion that the unconscious mind operates differently from the conscious mind, and what may be occurring is a type of "implicit correction." Extant research surrounding unconscious processing suggests that the unconscious mind is extremely adept at taking care of a person (e.g., Dijksterhuis 2004; Fernandez-Duque and Thornton 2002; Strahan et al. 2002), painting a picture of a highly efficient and powerful unconscious, and our findings support this conclusion. Of course, we recognize that an implicit correction explanation is speculation, and that alternate possibilities exist. Additional work is needed before any conclusions can be drawn.

In general, this research has important practical implications for marketers who use the commonly employed techniques of repetition of product claims to build brand recognition. Further, the results of experiment 2 may have important implications for the practical and ethical use of subliminal marketing messages and for messages where the goal is "incidental" or mere exposure.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY
Affect and Its Effects on Compensatory Consumption

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LONG ABSTRACTS

“The Effect of Moods on Comfort Food Consumption”

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What are comfort foods? The popular press depicts comfort foods as various forms of junk food, with very little nutritive value. However, this may not always be the case. Taste related studies show that most taste preferences are developed throughout the life cycle. Developmental studies also show conditioned responses to comfort foods through early exposure, prenatal exposure, and genetic differences that may result in unconventional preferences for comfort foods. Using a national survey and two lab experiments, a framework is developed for examining the phenomenon of comfort foods. The graphic description of influential factors on comfort foods depicts physiological and psychological links to taste and preference development, the antecedents of comfort foods. Examination of how these tastes and preferences translate into comfort food choices due to mood states has not yet been extensively explored. The need for the consumption of food can be attributed to physiological functions and psychological reasons. Physiological factors of food needs consist of the body's natural response to derive pleasure from certain foods. Psychological factors, consisting of social contexts, conditioned responses, and mood specific responses, affect the consumption of food. The stimulation to eat results from a combination of the brain's arousal of hunger to satiate the body's energy and nutritive imbalance and of sensory stimulation (Le Magnen 1986) to satiate cravings.

A national survey of 1005 participants were used in determining mood effects on the consumption tendency towards comfort foods. The findings indicate that comfort foods are made up of both nutritive and less-nutritive foods. The scenario-based recall study suggested that positive mood states encouraged the consumption of healthful comfort foods while negative mood states encourage less-nutritive comfort food consumption. In two follow-up studies in the lab, positive or negative moods were induced through scenario development, and participants were presented with advertisements for products that were relatively healthy or relatively unhealthy. This included cookies (vs. rice cakes), candy bars (vs. apples), and so forth. Measures of attitude and consumption intentions were consistent with the basic notion that those in negative moods were more likely to generate favorable attitudes and consumption intentions for the unhealthy foods than the healthier ones. This study makes three contributions to the discussion of mood and food. First, contrary to common wisdom, it shows that people use both nutritive as well as less nutritive foods to provide themselves comfort. Second, contrary to clinical research, it shows that people may be more prone to consume comfort foods both when in bad moods and in good moods. Third, consistent with hedonic contingency theory, it shows that preferences for foods vary with one's mood. Those in positive moods prefer more nutritive foods, and those in negative moods prefer less nutritive foods.

Although it was beyond the scope of this research to specifically examine the underlying mechanism by which people come to prefer certain comfort foods more than others in different moods,

the results of two experiments offer an explanation as to why such differences occur. While this research provides some interesting and important theoretical and practical implications, there are numerous issues yet to be explored in understanding the taxonomy of comfort foods and the preference structures related to them. These studies add three important findings to the growing literature that investigates the importance and impact of how eating habits develop. These findings can hopefully serve as a springboard for future investigations of how physiological and psychological factors influence comfort food preferences and how these preferences then impact subsequent dieting and food consumption habits.

“Emotion Effects on Compensatory Consumption”

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For some time now, researchers have been paying closer attention to the influence of affect on consumption and have hinted at a possible relationship between the two. For example, Woodruffe (1997) examines ‘compensatory consumption’ in women’s shopping behavior. Her findings suggest that shopping offers a means of compensation (reward) for some women when they are in a negative affective state. Her study makes two important points. First, she suggests that compensatory consumption is a regular activity and is not restricted to clinically ill or under-privileged groups of consumers. Second, she suggests that this might be a way for people to ‘repair’ negative emotional states.

More recently, research has shown that when individuals experience sadness, one of the ways they try to repair their affective state is by consuming tasty, fatty food products that are hedonically rewarding to the individual (Garg, Wansink and Inman 2005). Research has also established that sad individuals tend to pay more to obtain a new object (e.g., water bottle) than do individuals in a neutral state (Lerner et al. 2004). Also, they choose to take the object over money to a greater extent than do neutral individuals (choice price). However, this process is not completely conscious for most individuals. Thus, the objective of this study is to take an in-depth look at compensatory consumption and examine how people use it to cope with their affective state. Specifically, this research examines the influence of two discrete emotions, sadness, and neutral, on two outcome measures—amount of food consumed and choice price for an object—and whether the influence of sadness on choice price is moderated when participants have the opportunity of consuming food product earlier on (Study 1) and whether the influence of sadness is consumption domain specific such as across eating food vs. acquiring a new object (Study 2).

Study 1 examines the role of sadness and neutral emotions on two variables in the consumption domain. One, is the amount of food consumed (e.g., Garg et al. 2005) and the second, is the choice price for an object (e.g., Lerner et al. 2004). Garg et al. (2005) found that sad (vs. happy) individuals consume more butter popcorn (a hedonic product) and they suggest that this is done in order to repair their mood. Study 1 predicts that when participants are given an opportunity to consume a hedonic product before they provide their choice price for a product (say, water bottle), this will influence their choice price. A 2 (popcorn: present, absent) x 2 (emotion: sad, neutral) between-subjects design was implemented to test the hypotheses of the study. Interestingly, the results indicate that whereas neutral individual’s choice price goes down after consum-

ing a hedonic product, sad individual's choice price actually goes up. This suggests that whereas neutral individuals are insensitive to activity differences in compensatory consumption (eating vs. buying a product), sad individuals' need to compensate for that feeling of loss (Lazarus 1991) becomes more salient in the other domain (acquiring a new product) after they have an opportunity to satisfy it in the first domain (eating in this case).

Study 2 thus, examines the mechanism driving the influence of sadness on compensatory consumption. Specifically, it tries to ascertain whether the results obtained in study 1 are due to sadness being domain specific or whether it is due to sad individuals just having a higher threshold for compensatory consumption. To test this hypothesis, a 3 (sad with emotion repair task, sad with emotion amplification task, neutral) cell design was implemented. Everyone was also offered popcorn and diet soda/ water to consume. The prediction is that if the results are being driven by sad individuals' higher threshold for compensation, then subjects in the 'sad with emotion repair' condition should show a drop in their choice prices as they are offered two opportunities to compensate—food consumption and emotion repair task—before their choice price is elicited. However, if sadness is domain specific then we should see similar choice prices across the two sadness conditions and these choice prices should be higher than those in the neutral condition, replicating the results from Study 1.

Overall, these studies will provide valuable insights about consumption behavior and the influence of affect on the same. Given the rising concern with obesity and other consumption related problems (e.g., compulsive shopping), the implications of this research should be of interest to academics, policy regulators, managers as well as consumers. Further, this research would shed some light on the underlying mechanism by comparing and contrasting different theoretical frameworks to suggest the one that can better explain the results.

“Feeling Ashamed or Guilty? The Emotions and Consequences of Violating Consumption Norms”

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Shame and guilt are negative self-conscious emotions that have remained relatively unexplored in consumer research. Understanding shame and guilt has practical significance as their evocation may motivate, de-motivate, or serve as responses to consumption. For instance, shame and guilt may be evoked in response to consumption practices viewed as normatively inappropriate (e.g., compulsive shopping, consumption of pornography, over-eating) as well as from the failure to consume products and services viewed as normatively appropriate (e.g. exercise, low calorie foods, gift giving, failure to tip or buy a product from a doting salesperson). In sum, these emotions arise as a result of the violation of a consumption norm. Further, from a motivational standpoint, some products and services (e.g., therapy, exercise, cosmetic surgery, and gifts) are consumed so as to reduce shame or guilt. Others are avoided (e.g., visits to doctors) because they induce shame or guilt. The study of shame and guilt also has theoretical significance. While prior research has largely focused on contrasting affective states of different valence (Arkes, Herren, and Isen 1988; Wright and Bower 1992), studying the potential differential effects of emotions of the same valence is particularly relevant for emotions such as shame and guilt, which are often referred to inconsistently or used interchangeably.

The objectives of this research are three-fold. The authors first introduce and conceptually distinguish the two self-conscious emotions of shame and guilt in the consumption domain. Second,

they examine the differential impact of shame and guilt on consumers' behavioral motivations and demonstrate the moderating role of an individual difference variable—consumers' implicit theories about the fixedness / malleability of personality (study 1). Finally, they demonstrate that the priming of shame and guilt impacts consumers' encoding and retrieval of new information regarding the violation of a consumption norm, their expectations of the behavioral response to this violation, and the perceived likelihood of repeating the violation of the consumption norm in the future (study 2).

Defining Shame and Guilt. Shame and guilt are often confused and used interchangeably (Tangney and Dearing 2002), perhaps because they are both self-conscious and moral emotions of self-condemnation. Though similar, some research in psychology suggests that shame and guilt are distinct. Shame involves a focus on and evaluation of one's self, whereas guilt concerns a focus on and evaluation of one's behavior (Lindsay-Hartz 1984; Tangney 1992; Tangney et al. 1996). Notably, while shame and guilt differ in perceived causal locus, they may be precipitated by the same causes. For instance, the same behavior (eating chocolate mousse/ forgetting a birthday gift) may evoke shame in one consumer (I am selfish/a glutton) and guilt in another (I shouldn't have broken my diet/let my busy schedule get the better of me). What matters is not the initiating cause but rather consumers' interpretation (i.e., appraisal) of it. Based on their differing appraisals, the authors define shame and guilt as follows: Shame is an emotion evoked from a perceived transgression of the self in evaluating a consumption episode involving oneself. Guilt is an emotion evoked from a perceived transgression of behavior in evaluating a consumption episode involving oneself.

Study 1. The study (N=199) used a 2 x 2 x 2 between-subjects design manipulating the evoked emotion (shame vs. guilt), the context in which the incident occurred (consumption vs. non-consumption), and measuring consumers' implicit theories about the malleability of personality (fixed vs. malleable). Measures included ratings of the intensity of various emotions and different motivations arising from the emotion-evoking incident. Results showed that (1) shame and guilt are recent and frequent emotions in consumption contexts; (2) shame inspires the motivation to distance oneself from the shame-inducing situation whereas (3) guilt inspires the motivation to repair the situation that gave rise to the feelings of guilt; and (4) consumers' implicit theories about the fixedness / malleability of personality moderate the effect of experienced shame or guilt on consumers' behavioral motivations.

Study 2. Respondents (N=60) provided a detailed written account of a personal shame (or guilt) experience, listed a set of counterfactuals about how the situation might have been different. They then read a narrative in which an undergraduate senior describes two episodes in which an individual engaged in a violation of a consumption norm. Following a two-minute distractor task, participants were asked to write down as much of the narrative as they could recall. Other measures included respondents' expectations of behavioral responses of the characters in the narratives, and the perceived likelihood of these characters repeating similar consumption behaviors in the future. Results showed that (1) priming shame made consumers process and recall new information about a violation of a consumption norm with an emphasis on traits or personality whereas (2) priming guilt shifted the emphasis to behaviors; and (3) consumers primed with shame report a greater expectation of the likelihood of repeating the consumption behavior than those primed with guilt. The authors discuss the theoretical contributions of this research, and the practical implications to consumer behavior, self-regulation, and advertising.

The Price of 'Free'-dom: Consumer Sensitivity to Promotions with Negative Contextual Influences

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Free offers are a frequent form of promotion used across a wide range of products (e.g., free lipstick with the purchase of cosmetics), a bundled offering (e.g., buy a computer and get a free printer) or free delivery/shipping. Despite the prevalence of such offers, little research has examined how consumers react to free promotions. Prospect theory (Kahneman and Tversky 1979) suggests that decisions are typically framed with respect to a reference point and inconsistencies in decision-making result from changes to such frames. Therefore, consumers may not react in the same way to a free promotional offer as they do to another monetarily equivalent promotion. Research has shown that monetary promotions like discounts are more readily processed with price as the focus and tend to be integrated with price, while free promotions are more likely to be processed independent of price because their monetary value is often not explicit or is non-focal even when available (Thaler 1985, Nunes and Park 2003). In this paper, we examine some strategic benefits that free promotions may offer over other types of promotions on account of such differential processing. We suggest that this differential processing makes the free promotion salient, which in turn affects consumers' reactions to a promotion in the face of negative quality information.

Through a series of three experiments we first establish the basic effect that while purchase intentions of consumers who see a monetary discount are sensitive to negative information on quality, purchase intentions of consumers who see free promotions are not. We next show that this invariance of free promotions to negative quality information appears to be on account of the salience of the free promotion and that it can be reversed by making other decision factors more salient.

Our first study establishes the basic effect that free price offers are relatively invariant to negative quality information compared to equivalent price discounts. Participants in this study read a scenario about a senior in their university who is preparing to take the GMAT exam and comes across a used GMAT textbook that he is looking to buy for extra practice. Participants are either told that the quality of used books at that bookstore is usually good (positive quality information) or is variable and he is uncertain about the quality of the book (negative quality information). Participants either saw a book costing \$23 with a discount of 2.99 (shipping and handling costs \$2.99) or a book costing \$25 where shipping is free. We find that while those who saw a discount had significantly lower purchase intentions when the quality of the book was uncertain than when quality of the book was good, those who saw a free shipping offer did not have significantly different purchase intentions across the two quality conditions. Hence, we find support for the basic free effect that we hypothesize.

In the next study we test the process that we hypothesize by using a similar purchase scenario as in study 1. We expect that the free promotion is more salient than the discount because it is likely processed independent of price. If this is so, we should be able to impair its salience when participants consider other aspects of the decision. We do this by manipulating the order of measurement of purchase intentions and reasons to buy the book. When we measure purchase intent first and reasons to buy next we replicate the basic free effect from study 1. However when we measure reasons to buy

first and purchase intent next we find that much like for discounts, purchase intentions of those in the free shipping condition drop significantly in the negative quality condition (vs. the positive quality condition). Thus, by having participants focus on different aspects of the decision, we are able to reduce the salience of the free promotion thereby mitigating its invariance to negative quality information.

Finally in study 3, we replicate our results in a different product context and use a different method to blunt the salience of the free promotion. Here participants read a scenario where they are considering the purchase of a wireless mouse. They are told about a CNN program featuring the company that makes the wireless mouse. The company is said to be either outsourcing their manufacturing to countries like India and China and therefore their product quality is variable and uncertain (low quality) or that the company is resisting such cost cutting moves, manufacturing locally and therefore their quality is excellent (high quality). Participants either saw a mouse costing \$33.99 with a discount of \$5.99 (shipping=\$5.99) or saw a price of \$39.99 with free shipping. Finally we had them list either two reasons to buy the product or 6 reasons to buy the product. We expected those who did the easy task of listing two reasons infer that they really needed this product. Conversely those who did the difficult task of listing six reasons were expected to infer that they didn't really need the product and question the purchase thereby impairing the salience of the free offer. As expected in the two reasons condition, the free offer was again invariant to negative quality information, however in the six reasons condition intentions dropped in the low quality condition.

In summary we find support for our thesis that differential processing of free promotions and monetary discounts results in differences in consumers' reactions to negative contextual influences. We conclude by discussing some theoretical and practical implications of our research.

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Influence of Price of Coupons on Redemption Rates

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the effect of having consumers pay for a coupon booklet on its subsequent usage. The literature on sunk costs predicts that consumers who pay for a coupon booklet and thereby incur a sunk cost will be more likely to invest the effort to redeem the coupon(s). In a series of four studies, it was found that putting a price on a coupon booklet increased the extent of coupon usage and this effect was driven by self-justification concerns of the consumer.

The Role of Consumer Inferences About Price Discounts in Influencing Switching Behavior

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Past research in the area of price discounts oriented sales promotions has generated a rich, but diverse and mixed body of literature. Furthermore, recent research suggests that consumers are likely to generate a variety of inferences in response to promotional offers, ranging from economic to hedonic and informational (Chandon, Wansink and Laurent 2000; Raghurir, Inman and Grande 2004). Persuasion outcomes (or switching) occur as a result of the consumer inferences generated.

Our research provides a new perspective for classifying and understanding the impact of these inferences on switching behavior. Specifically, based on past research in the area of persuasion knowledge model (Friestad and Wright 1994) and consumer inferring (e.g., Ahluwalia, Burnkrant and Unnava 2000; Schwarz 2004) we focus on two types of consumer inferences: those that focus on the benefits/costs to the consumer; and those that deal with persuasion strategies, tactics and motivation of the marketer. We propose that the former type of inferences (consumer focused) are easier to generate and more likely to spontaneously occur when elaboration likelihood is relatively low. The latter types of inferences are metacognitive in nature, which are more effortful to generate, and thereby, expected to dominate when the consumer's elaboration likelihood is relatively high. Further, we argue that compatibility between type of inference generated and other informational inputs (e.g., consumer's goal) will determine the likelihood of switching. We present empirical evidence from one experiment that supports our central thesis.

The experiment used a 2 (strength of preference: high, low) X 2 (perceived risk in the product category: high, low) X 2 (size of inducement: high, low) between subject design. Four control groups (one for each combination of preference strength and perceived risk) in which subjects were not offered any economic inducement were also run. Two hundred fifty-two undergraduate students participated in the study.

Our results provide very interesting insights regarding how consumers' response to competitor inducements varies depending upon their preference strength for the incumbent brand and perceived risk in the product category. Our data suggest that depending upon these factors, consumers might make positive or negative inferences relating to the same sized discount. Our research adds to the emerging stream of research in consumer behavior which suggests that consumers inferences may be more important than pure economic benefits, in determining the effectiveness of discounts (e.g., Raghurir, Inman and Grande 2004).

The findings demonstrate that any discount in a high-risk product category is likely to be ineffective in wooing consumers who have formed strong preferences. In contrast, large discounts tend to be extremely effective for the low preference strength consumers or "switchers" in the high risk categories. It is important to note that even the "strong" preference groups in our study represented relatively "weak" preferences compared to the marketplace where consumers are likely to have past experience as well as more information and interaction with their preferred brands. Therefore, our results suggest that in high risk product categories, discounts are only likely to motivate "switchers". And that too, only large discounts, since our data demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the small discounts in this condition.

With regards to the low risk conditions, it appears that discounts (only large ones) are likely to be effective in inducing some of the consumers who prefer a competitive brand to switch. More importantly, even when consumers don't switch in response to the discount, the process of being exposed to it in itself is likely to reduce the strength of their preference for their chosen brand. In essence, large discounts are likely to leave these consumers more vulnerable to switching in response to future inducements. Price discounts, however, don't seem to be as effective for the "switcher" segment in the low risk condition (as compared to the "high risk" condition). Importantly, the low preference strength consumers who are able to resist these discounts are not rendered any more likely to switch in the future.

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How Small is Zero Price? The True Value of Free Products

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The main finding of the paper is that people “overreact” to free products, in a sense that in order to get a free product, people are eager to forgo an option that they “should” find preferable. We create two choice situations for our participants; in one they reveal their preferences about two products, in the other one of the products becomes free, and participants (as it turns out) act inconsistently with their preferences revealed in the first situations, overreacting to the free product. In particular, in a typical zero price experiment subjects in one condition are offered a choice between a piece of more attractive candy for a reasonable positive price (e.g. a Lindt truffle for 14¢) and a piece of less attractive candy for a price close to zero (e.g. a Hershey kiss for 1¢); subjects also have an option of choosing neither. In the other condition both prices are reduced by a constant such that the smaller price becomes zero (Lindt now costs 13¢, and Hershey is free).

The standard theoretical model where the option with the highest benefit cost difference is chosen, argues as follows. The difference between the net benefits of the two product options has not changed (because prices went down by the same amount), thus consumers should not switch from one product to the other; and because prices went down some consumers may switch from buying nothing to buying something. Thus the standard model predicts that the proportions of the subjects choosing *each* of the two chocolates should weakly increase when prices are equally reduced. In contrast, our experiments show that whereas the proportion of participants choosing the cheaper chocolate increases, the proportion of participants choosing the more attractive chocolate *decreases*. We call the combination of the increase in the demand for the low-value good and the decrease in demand for the high-value good “the zero price effect.” The effect tells us that becoming free makes a product not only cost less, but consumers act as if being free also adds intrinsic value to the product, thus making them switch from the high-value to the low-value good.

In a series of experiments we tried to find out an explanation for the effect. We started by checking some economic explanations, such as “the transaction cost explanation” (people are lazy to search for change and this adds value to the free option), and semi-economic explanations (“people do not subtract costs from benefits, but divide benefits by costs and thus a free option has an infinite value”). Experiment 1 rejected these explanations and we turned our attention to possible psychological explanations.

The first psychological explanation was that the effect might be due to the difficulty of mapping consumption utility into money (Ariely et al., 2003; Hsee et al., 2003; Nunes & Park, 2003). If people do not know exactly how much they value each of the chocolates they might be attracted to a free chocolate because it guarantees a positive net benefit to them. We tested this idea by using commensurate goods and currency (e.g. trading chocolate for chocolate), and thus reducing the mapping difficulty. Experiment 2 showed that eliminating mapping difficulty did not eliminate the zero price effect, and thus mapping difficulty was not an explanation for it.

We next tested the possibility that the zero price effect was due to a change in norms when dealing with transactions not involving money. Gneezy & Rustichini (2000) and Heyman & Ariely (2004) suggest that people treat free options as having additional social meaning, and we hypothesized that that this additional meaning

could be increasing the value of the free option. We tested this prediction by comparing consumers’ reaction to zero and negative price. The idea is that the negative price does not have a downside just like zero price, but unlike zero price, negative price mentions money, and thus has no social aspect. Experiment 3 showed that negative prices enjoyed the same “overreaction” as zero price, and thus the social aspect of the zero price could not be the explanation for the phenomenon.

Our last set of experiments was motivated by the findings of Diederich (2003), Houston & Doan (1996), Iyengar & Lepper (2000), Luce (1998), and Tversky & Shafir (1992). These findings suggest that people are averse to trade-offs, and we hypothesized that because of the fact that free options involved fewer trade-offs (consumer does not have to trade-off price versus value), might be bolstering their value for consumers.

In Experiment 4 we showed that a free Hershey induced a much higher positive affect than a Hershey for 1¢, a Lindt truffle for 13¢, or a Lindt truffle for 14¢. Although this might not be surprising, the fact that the latter three options did not differ in the induced affect suggested that no cost-benefit calculations translated into affect, but rather, the “trade-off free” option was the most positively affective.

In Experiments 5 and 6 we crossed our cost/free conditions with a different manipulation. In experiment 5 for some of the participants we bundled the chocolates with fruit (apple of pear) costing \$1-\$1.5. This manipulation was aimed at making the “free option” not “trade-off free”. In the conditions with bundles the zero price effect disappeared suggesting that people jump at “trade-off free” options, and not the merely free ones. Finally in Experiment 6 we forced some of the participants to work through all the trade-offs needed to do the choice. For these participants we found no zero price effect. Thus, once all trade-offs become sunk cost, consumers are not attracted to the easy option any more, and choose according to their “true” or “rational” preferences.

We conclude that cost benefit decisions might be more complex than simply subtracting costs from benefits. People are averse to trade-offs, and may value an option more if it implies fewer trade-offs than other options with the same benefit-cost difference. We attribute the zero price effect to the trade-off aversion mechanism.

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ROUNDTABLE

Exploring the Co-Evolution of Possession Constellations, Self, and Identity

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The intersection of possession constellations (Solomon and Assael 1987), self, and identity provides a common thread linking seemingly diverse topics in consumer research. Representative topics include: self-extension (Belk 1988), possession attachment (Ball and Tasaki 1992; Kleine, Kleine, and Allen 1995; Wallendorf and Arnould 1988), possession value (Richins 1994), authenticity (Grayson and Martinec 2004); identity salience effects (Reed 2004), identity schemas (Kleine, Kleine, and Kernan 1993), Diderot effects (McCracken 1988), possession collections (Baker and Martin 2000); brand communities (McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001), disposition (Lastovicka and Fernandez 2004; McAlexander 1991; Price, Arnould, and Curasi 2000), involuntary possession loss (Sayre 1994), and anti-constellations (Hogg and Mitchell 1997). At a macro level, this intersection provides the organizing construct through which everyday consumption can be understood. Assembling scholars interested in different facets of the possession constellation-self-identity link can stimulate further research on the topic.

The roundtable session's objective was to bring together scholars spanning disciplinary and methodological boundaries to stimulate interest in research at the intersection of possessions and self-identity. Twenty-eight scholars, representing the full spectrum of theoretical perspectives and disciplinary backgrounds participated.

The roundtable's agenda was to explore: (1) persisting mysteries and gaps in knowledge about how possession constellations, self, and identity co-evolve; (2) obstacles to research progress in this area including conceptual, methodological, and substantive issues; and (3) opportunities and potential new directions for research.

Topics discussed included:

- the malleability of self
- differing conceptions of identity
- possessions as indicators of, or assisting to alleviate identity conflict
- how possessions simultaneously determine and reflect identity
- how an item one no longer possesses may continue to affect and be part of an identity
- methodological considerations related to priming identities in experimental settings
- product anti-constellations
- role of possessions in navigating family identities
- cultural differences in opportunities for self-expression
- faith as a possession
- the dangers of confounding the proliferation or inventory of possessions with the importance of possessions to individuals or society
- whether the identity-related role of possessions varies cross-culturally
- the importance of mundane or "invisible" possessions; how objects of low involvement are essential for identity cultivation and enactment
- effects of possession loss on identity
- that little is known about how intentionally removing a possession impacts routine or identity

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Negative Mood and Risk Taking Tendency: The Effect of Attachment Style

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Introduction

While the effects of mood and affect on consumer decision making has received much attention among consumer researchers, the effects of mood on social evaluative judgments in general, and risk taking tendency in particular, remain understudied in marketing. Findings from research in social psychology have indicated mixed results. Most research seems to support the prediction that positive mood leads to increased risk taking tendency while negative mood gives rise to increased risk aversion (Isen and Geva 1987, Isen and Patrick 1983, Mittal and Ross 1998, Nygren, Isen, Taylor, and Dulin 1996). Nevertheless, other studies (Arkes, Herren, and Isen 1988, Isen, Nygren, and Ashby 1988, Johnson and Tversky 1983) also found that people in positive mood also tend to be more conservative and self-protective in choice tasks where there is a focus on loss or where there is a reasonable possibility that a real and meaningful loss may occur.

In this study we look at mood regulation strategies as an influential factor of risk taking tendency. A key factor in mood regulation is people's *attachment style*—the systematic pattern of relational expectations, emotions, and behaviors resulting from the internalization of a particular history of attachment experiences (Fraley and Shaver, 2000).

Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980) explains the propensity of people to form lasting affectional bonds with other people and to regulate inner distress. Early experiences between a child and his or her primary caregiver lay the foundation for functioning in subsequent relationships. Early work on attachment style in infancy (Ainsworth et al. 1978) identified three types of attachment styles: secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent attachment. However, more recent studies have revealed that attachment styles are more appropriately conceptualized as regions in a two-dimension space: *avoidance* (the extent to which a person distrusts relationship partners' goodwill and strives to maintain autonomy and emotional distance from partners), and *anxiety* (the extent to which a person worries that a partner will not be available in times of need) (Mikulincer, Dolev, and Shaver, 2004). Previous research has shown that these two dimensions are orthogonal. High scores on avoidance indicates a person's reliance on deactivating strategies in dealing with stress (inhibition of proximity seeking, attempting to handle stressors by themselves). High scores on the anxiety dimension reflects hyperacting strategies (energetic attempts to attain greater proximity, support, and love combined with a lack of confidence that it will be provided). People scoring low on both dimensions hold internalized representations of comforting attachment figures which leads to continuing sense of attachment security, positive self-regard (Mikulincer, Dolev, and Shaver, 2004).

In this study, we predicted that low avoidance people's risk taking tendency would not be influenced by negative mood due to their sense of attachment security and positive self-regard. We also predicted that highly avoidant people's tendency to detract from emotional figures and engage in self-protective activities will cause them to be more risk taking to correct their negative mood state without having to reach out for help. Meanwhile, people with high anxiety scores are already overwhelmed with constant worries and fears of separation and therefore the negative mood state would not result in a significant change in their risk taking tendency.

Methodology

123 undergraduate students participated in a 2x2x2 between-subject experiment to investigate how mood state (negative, neutral) and attachment style (avoidance: high, low; anxiety: high, low) influences subjects' risk taking tendency. Negative mood was induced by asking subjects to recall and describe in details their saddest day, while in the neutral mood condition subjects were asked to describe their television viewing habits. Subjects were then asked to indicate their choice of a risky decision presented in both gain and loss frames.

Major findings

Findings supported our hypotheses. There was a significant interaction effect between mood and avoidance attachment. In both gain and loss frames, subjects scoring high on the avoidance dimension showed a significant increase in risk taking tendency under negative mood. For low avoidance subjects, negative mood did not result in a significant change in their risk taking tendency in the gain frame, but a significant decrease in the loss frame. One possible explanation for the stronger effect in the loss frame was that people tend to be more risk seeking when the choice is presented in a loss frame and more risk averse in a gain frame (the well-known Asian Disease dilemma, Tversky and Kahneman 1981). High anxiety people did not show any significant changes in their risky behaviors under negative mood in either frame.

General Discussion

These findings contribute to existing theory in several ways. To our knowledge, this research is the first in the marketing literature that investigates the effects of negative mood and attachment style on consumers' risk taking tendency. It sheds some light on the current mixed results in the literature. Whether negative mood encourages risk taking (the *mood maintenance* hypothesis) or risk aversion (the *affect-as-information* hypothesis) seems to be influenced by subjects' attachment style. For low avoidance subjects, the large network of emotional figures and the positive mental model of self tend to dampen the effect of negative mood. For anxious subjects, their constant worries and fears of attachment separation seems to diminish the effect of negative mood on their risk taking tendency. Meanwhile high avoidant subjects tend to engage in self-protective activities and by choosing more risky options, they hope to escape from the current negative mood state without having to reach out for help.

One limitation of this study is the use of convenience samples of American undergraduate students who are normally not overly affluent. Does this factor affect their choice of the risky or safe option in a risky situation involving money? In this study we investigated individuals' risk taking tendency in a financial risky choice context. In order to maximize the external validity of the findings, future research should examine risk taking tendency under negative mood in other risky consumption situations that involve social, physical, performance, and psychological risks.

In this study, we investigated the effect of mood, which by definition, refers to transient feeling states particular to specific times and situations and are subjectively perceived by individuals (Gardner 1985). Future research should investigate the moderating effects of attachment styles under strong affective states such as disgust, fear, depression.

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"When the Going Gets Tough, the Tough Go Shopping": An Examination of Self-Gifting Behavior

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What motivates the purchase of treats and small indulgences for the self? Do we buy self-gifts when we have something to celebrate or, alternatively, when the "going" is getting tough? Much of the published work has focused on the celebratory side of self-gifts (Mick 1991; Mick and DeMoss 1990a, 1990b). Achievements that are internally attributed are celebrated with indulgent consumption (Mick and Faure 1998), particularly those requiring higher effort (Kivetz and Simonson 2002a; Stevens, Maclaran and Brown 2003). The literature also suggests that self-gifts are premeditated (Mick and DeMoss 1990a). However, the classic saying above suggests that self-gifting may be impulsive and motivated by something darker.

The current work focuses on the use of self-gifts as a mechanism not only for celebration, but also for mood management. Consider the colloquial examples of "comfort-food" and "pick-me-up" bouquets of flowers. In particular, we examine the impact of individual differences in self-esteem, mood, loneliness, and regulatory orientation as moderators of self-gifting behavior, and explore the underlying motivations and needs that are satisfied by self-gifts in both celebratory and mood-repair roles.

Two studies were conducted to explore the different motivations of individuals who buy self-gifts for celebration versus consolation and to explore the impulsive nature of self-gifts. Individual differences in self-esteem (Study 1), loneliness (Study 2), regulatory orientation (Study 2) and mood (Studies 1 and 2) were also measured.

Study 1

Study 1 was conducted with 46 undergraduate students. Participants were asked to think back to their most recent self-gift experience and to explain the motivations and the meanings attached to it. In particular, we asked participants to indicate what gift they had purchased and the occasion that had motivated it. Self-esteem measures were taken.

Results. Both celebration and mood-repair were reported as reasons for past purchases (98%). The last purchase was approximately evenly divided between mood-repair (46%) and celebratory motives (54%). As such, both motivations for self-gifting are prevalent.

What items were purchased? First, we note that the items purchased for mood-repair and celebration did not differ ($\chi(5)=5.22, p>.30$). As such, any difference in motivation was not reflected in the type of product purchased but rather in the meanings participants attached to them. In their last self-gifting experience, participants in both conditions reported having bought clothing (48%), food/beverages (26%), entertainment products (e.g., DVD/CDs) (9%), items for personal enjoyment (e.g., plants) (7%), and hobby products (7%).

The meanings that were assigned to these purchases differed based on motivation for the purchase. Namely, self-gifts purchased for mood-repair were described as less functional ($F(1,44)=4.624, p<.05$) and less durable ($F(1,44)=5.256, p<.05$). For celebration, the gifts reflected self-purpose ($F(1,44)=5.078, p<.05$), individual uniqueness ($F(1,44)=5.087, p<.05$), and one's heritage ($F(1,44)=4.396, p<.05$). Contrary to our expectations, consumers who were higher (lower) in self-esteem did not differ in either their motivations ($F(1,44)=-.385, p>0.50$) or the meanings attached to the self-gift (all $p>.10$). Mood, however, did. In general, an elevated mood led to an exaggeration of the average meaning attached to the self-gift, regardless of motivation.

Study 2

In order to increase the validity of our findings and examine the impulsivity of self-gifting behavior, we conducted a field study with 195 individuals at a shopping mall. They were surveyed both as they entered the mall and right before they left. Prior to shopping, they made a list of planned purchases. We collected measures of mood, loneliness, and regulatory orientation at that time. At the end of the visit, they provided a list of what they had bought.

Results. Of the 195 participants, 89 (46%) purchased an item as a self-gift, with mood repair twice as prevalent (69%) as celebration (31%) ($z=3.08, p<.01$). These results reveal that self-gifting is more frequently motivated by mood-repair than self-celebration when the measure is collected at the point of purchase rather than through a retrospective report of the last self-gift purchased. Contrary to the pre-meditated nature of self-gifts described by Mick and DeMoss (1990a), we found that among impulse purchases, 72% were self-treats. Impulsive self-gifting was prevalent.

As expected, the moods of individuals who purchased treats for mood-repair (celebration) were worse (better) ($F(1,62)=4.88, p<.05$). Loneliness was unrelated to motivation ($F(1,62)=0.61, p>.40$). Finally, individuals who purchased treats for mood-repair were lower in promotion focus than those who bought treats for celebration ($F(1,62)=4.43, p<.05$).

The meanings attached to the items were consistent with the findings in Study 1. Self-treats for mood repair were considered less durable ($F(1,60)=7.60, p<.01$) and less indulgent ($F(1,60)=2.70, p<.10$). We examined the impacts of mood and motivation on the meanings and found few differences. A promotion focus, however, led to treats that represented an ideal self ($F(1,60)=3.40, p<.07$).

Discussion

The findings of the two studies suggest that self-gifting behavior is not solely driven by celebratory motives. The mood repair motivation accounted for one-half to two-thirds of all self-gifts. We also found evidence of substantial impulsivity in self-gifting behavior. If the majority of self-treats are purchased for mood repair and purchased impulsively, this may lead individuals to spend beyond their means, deepening their emotional angst, and creating negative impacts on well-being. Future research is currently underway to examine the links between self-gifting, impulsive purchases, and post-purchase regret. What will you be doing when the going gets tough ...?

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Coping with Individual-Group Incongruity

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Introduction

It has long been recognized in social psychology and consumer research that decisions are context dependent and that groups have influence on the judgment and behavior of individuals. Most of the previous studies have focused on the influence of reference groups on product and brand decisions (Bearden and Etzel 1982; Childer and Rao 1992), and consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence (Netemeyer, Bearden and Teel 1992). More recent findings have suggested that mere anticipation of an approaching group discussion causes people to tailor their responses in a strategic manner and influence their product attitudes (Schlosser and Shavitt 1999, 2002). In such situations, consumers may experience stress due to anticipated group influence. While consumer research has implicitly explored a subset of coping behaviors, for example, revision and concession (Aribarg, Arora, and Bodur 2002), previous investigations have not systematically considered coping as a set of stress responses involved in consumer decision process under group influence.

Coping is defined as the process of managing internal or external demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of a person (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). Previous research has shown that cognitive and emotional appraisals interrelate to predict consumers' choice of specific coping strategies. Additionally, Tetlock, Skitka, and Boettger (1989) argue that attitude change in anticipation of social interaction often result from cognitive process rather than being an automatic heuristic shift. Additionally, there is a high possibility that individuals have to cope with negative emotions generated by exposure to group feedback with is different from their own evaluations. Thus, it seems likely that both cognitions and emotions operate together to drive coping responses to social influence. This is especially likely to occur when consumers face controversial issues (e.g. products with favorable functional attributes but unfavorable norms or vice versa), which is common but understudied in the domain of consumer research.

In summary, the purpose of this study is to identify conditions under which individuals change their attitude toward a product and engage in coping strategies upon exposure to group feedback. Tetlock et al. (1989) proposed a social contingency model of judgment and choice. The model assumes that when people know the view of the audience to whom they are accountable and unconstrained by past commitments, they tend to respond to the pressures by shifting their public positions toward the audience and adopt the salient, socially acceptable position. This argument leads to our prediction of a main effect for subjects to report more positive evaluation upon positive group feedback and to report more negative evaluation upon negative group feedback. We argue that when there is an incongruity between individual response and group feedback, consumers experience stress and anxiety and therefore engage in coping strategies.

Method

We employed a 2 (positive vs. negative individual response) x 2 (positive vs. negative group feedback) between subjects design and manipulated the incongruity between initial individual evaluation and group feedback. The experiment was conducted in a behavioral technology lab on the computer-based interface of MediaLab software. A total of 161 undergraduate business students (87 males and 74 females) participated in the study to partially fulfill a course requirement. Each participant completed the procedures individually in his or her own cubicle individually.

On arrival, participants completed a consent form and were randomly assigned to the four conditions. First, they received a review about a fictitious study guide for business students with positive and negative information. The study guide was chosen as the product material because it is highly relevant to students. Questions were then asked about their attitudes about the study guide. To reduce the likelihood that participants would perceive a connection between the initial evaluation and later questions, a filler task was provided during which participants were told to answer some unrelated questions. Afterwards, either positive or negative group feedback was provided according to the four conditions. Participants were again asked about their evaluation of the study guide. Participants were told that there would be a group discussion during which they could share their thoughts and opinion with other students. They could choose either to participate or not to participate the group discussion. They were asked questions measuring stress, coping, susceptibility, need for cognition, memory of their evaluation and confidence.

Preliminary Findings and Discussion

Data were analyzed using ANOVA with participants overall shift, stress and coping as the dependent variables. The shift measure was calculated by subtracting the initial evaluation from the later evaluation after exposure to group feedback. As predicted, when there is a high degree of individual-group incongruity, participants shift from their initial evaluation toward group feedback. Accordingly, they experience anxiety and engage in coping strategies.

Consumer coping behavior under group influence is an important issue and has profound implications in producing consumer well being. Our research examined how coping strategies may help individuals respond to individual-group evaluation incongruity. Further research involves identifying factors that may mediate and moderate this effect.

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Alleviating Mommy's Guilt: Emotional Expression and Guilt Appeals in Advertising

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Extended Abstract

Guilt results from "essentially private recognition that one has violated a personal standard" (Kugler and Jones 1992); Its anticipation influences people's behaviors (Baumeister, Stillwell, and Heatherton 1994). Guilt appeals have been studied in marketing (Ghingold, 1980; Pinto & Priest, 1991; Ruth & Faber, 1988a, 1988b). Though not as their main focus, numerous studies implicitly assume the influence of guilt behind impulsive buying (Rook 1987), overspending (Pirisi 1995), pre-commitment to reward programs (Kivetz and Simonson 2002), compulsive consumption behavior (O'Guinn and Faber 1989), and donating to charities (Strahilevitz and Myers 1998). More specifically, some examined advertising campaigns that attempt to arouse guilt (Wheatley & Oshikawa, 1970; Huhmann and Brotherton, 1997); others investigated consumer reactions to advertisements containing guilt appeals (Ghingold, 1980).

Guilt is intrapersonal, mainly arising from transgressions of personal values or societal norms (e.g., McGraw 1987), but also interpersonal, arising from inequities in social comparisons (e.g., Baumeister et al., 1994; Walster, Berscheid, and Walster 1976). Consistent with this main distinction, self-reported guilt in consumption contexts is categorized into guilt arising from either actions or inactions related to a) others in close and distant relationships, b) societal standards, and c) oneself (Dahl, Honea, and Manchanda 2003).

One group of those who are affected by the experience of such guilt is mothers. Their guilt involves all three categories of the consumption guilt, not just one. It entails the children who are in an extremely close relationship to themselves. The society idealizes the Madonna, the symbol of the perfect mother as the perfect standard which every mother should strive to equal. Every mother, moreover, has her own goals and ideas of being a mother, which influences her own self-esteem. Divorced mother (Boney 2002), working mothers (Elvin-Nowak 1999), and mothers of handicapped children (Natale and Barron 1994) all suffer from the inherent maternal guilt they experience.

Especially, working mothers are influenced by guilt appeals in advertising. Coupled with this inherent "it goes with the territory" kind of maternal guilt, there is the potentially manipulative survival tendency of the babies, not to mention their helplessness and dependency. Even infants under a year of age possess ability to use the mere information about an adult's direction of gaze and emotional expression to predict action (Phillips, Wellman, and Spelke 2002). Given this, it becomes more difficult for the working mothers to manage their negative emotions. Since the baby must spend most of the daytime with caretakers, it may only be natural for these mothers to feel compelled to compensate for their absence in other ways. One particular kind of ways is shopping for their children (e.g., to buy the very best for the children). The advertising effects of guilt appeals on working mothers have been studied (Coulter and Pinto 1995), using print stimuli of every day products (bread and dental floss, but not with products directly related to the baby); their results indicated that moderate guilt appeals elicited most felt guilt in the working mothers. However, there have not been any moderators that may alleviate the guilt in them.

The purpose of this research is to introduce one such moderator, drawn from the emotional disclosure literature in clinical psychology. Since early 1990's there has been much research on why talking or writing about emotional events can influence mental and physical health (e.g., Pennebaker 1990; 1995; Pennebaker and Seagal 1999). Expressing one's emotions regarding traumatic or stressful events in life leads to both psychologically and physically healthier state. Specifically, writing about emotional experiences produces improvements in immune function, drops in physician visits for illness, and better performance at school and work (e.g., Esterling, Antoni, Fletcher, Margulies, and Schneiderman 1994; Pennebaker 1993; Spera, Buhrfeind, and Pennebaker 1994). Consistent with this stream of research, I hypothesize that writing about their maternal guilt related to their career choice for the working mothers can strengthen their ability to resist the guilt appeals in advertising.

Proposed studies involve a sample of employed mothers of infants under a year of age, and a stimuli set of baby products that are used by infants, in addition to everyday products. Planned design for the first study is 2 (writing about maternal guilt vs. control group of not writing) X 3 (level of guilt appeals: low, medium, and high) X (baby products vs. everyday products). I hypothesize that for the controls for everyday products, the previous research results will be replicated, such that moderate guilt level is most effective in inducing purchase; but for those who write about their maternal guilt, the effect will show a different pattern. Their guilt will be more resolved and will not be as influenced by the guilt appeals in advertising. This effect will appear across different domains, but in different magnitude, such that it will be significantly greater for the baby products but not for the non-baby products, since the maternal guilt is specifically targeted to the baby-related domain.

Subsequent studies will examine various practical ways that may serve a similar role to that shown by emotional expression. The second study will examine whether showing a sponsor or a spokesperson who expresses her maternal guilt in advertising will show equivalent effects to emotional expression, though vicariously; and whether this effect will show a similar pattern in baby-related domain

(e.g., to invest in the best educational video for your baby) versus non-baby-related domains (e.g., recycling to save the planet Earth). Third study will examine whether specific advertising appeals that solicit such written emotional expression of maternal guilt will change the initial effect; whether the entity of solicitation matters; and whether these effects carry over to non-baby related domains.

Considering that mothers constitute a major proportion of consumers that make purchases especially in baby-related domains, these studies will provide the marketers with managerial implications to utilize the guilt appeals specifically targeting them.

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Positive versus Negative Affect Asymmetry and Comfort Food Consumption

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In the present study, we examine the effect on comfort food consumption of variables previously linked to the asymmetry between positive and negative affect. Specifically, we consider consumers' gender, age, and cultural background as well as features of food product categories (e.g., sugar and fat contents) as moderators of emotional antecedents and consequences of comfort food consumption.

Men and women vary considerably in terms of how they experience, express and regulate emotions. Women tend to rely more on negative emotions in decision-making and behaviours; men tend to distract themselves from negative emotional experiences. We propose that men's comfort-seeking consumption is more likely to be triggered by and then lead to enhanced positive affects, whereas women's comfort-seeking consumption is expected to be driven by negative affects. With age, one learns to better regulate one's emotions, developing both the ability and the tendency to constrain emotional experiences with a focus on heightening positive affect. In addition, research has also shown that as age increases so does the relative dominance of positive affect in decision-making. Thus, it is expected that for older adults positive emotions should be a more prevalent antecedent of comfort-seeking consumption than negative emotions.

Culture may also be related to affect asymmetry. For instance, the French cultural stereotype includes a longstanding association to hedonism as a general philosophy of life guiding individual decisions and behaviors. In contrast, the Anglo-Saxon philosophy of life includes stronger dispositions and associations to functionality and restraint. Therefore, we expect that comfort food consumption in

French-cultured individuals will be motivated by the maintenance/enhancement of positive emotions, and for English participants, comfort food consumption is more likely to be related to the alleviation of negative emotions. Finally, the type of food eaten to provide emotional comfort is another factor likely to be tied to affect asymmetry. For instance, sweet and high-fat foods (SHF), like ice cream, cookies or chocolate, have been linked to the experience of negative affect. Thus, we expect that the consumption of SHF foods is more likely to be triggered by negative affects than is the case for non-sweet high-fat foods (NSHF) or for foods of low energy density (LED) regardless of their dominant nutrient.

A survey was administered via the World Wide Web and was promoted in electronic and mass media in the city of Montreal, a multicultural Canadian city with a predominance of French- and English-cultured citizens. In total, 277 participants (196 women; 81 men) completed the survey. The age distribution was as follows: 117 young adults (age 18-24), 136 adults (25-54) and 21 older adults (55 and more). The language primarily spoken at home was taken as a proxy for cultural background: 121 participants primarily spoke French, 129 primarily spoke English at home, and the remaining 27 primarily spoke another language. Participants did not receive any incentive for this study. Participants first provided background information (age, height, weight, etc.), identified their favorite comfort food and were then asked to think back to instances when they ate their favorite comfort food, taking time to form a vivid and complete recollection. Next, using 7-point scales ("not at all" to "very intensely") participants indicated the degree to which they typically felt a set of positive (happy, joyful, calm and relaxed, $\alpha=.81$) and negative affects (depressed, anxious, sad, nostalgic, upset, and lonely, $\alpha=.88$) prior to eating their favorite comfort food. Finally, to explore the effects of the proposed factors on the emotional consequences of comfort food consumption, we also asked participants to indicate the degree to which they typically experience the same positive and negative affects after eating their favorite comfort food. The difference between the pre- and post-consumption reports was used to assess change in affect. Guilt was added to the post-consumption list since it is distinct from general negative affects and was shown to arise from comfort food consumption.

Favorite comfort foods cited by participants were assigned to one of three categories: 1) sweet high fat (SHF) foods, which totalled 101 mentions (36.5%) and included primarily chocolate, ice cream and baked goods; 2) non-sweet high-fat (NSHF) foods with 69 mentions (24.9 %) including meats and meat products, pizza and salted snacks; 3) lower energy density foods (LED) with 93 mentions (33.6%) including soups, pasta dishes, fruits and vegetables. Fourteen favorite comfort foods could not be coded into these categories or were incomprehensible (e.g., foreign language vernacular or abbreviation).

Consistent with expectations, results indicate that men's comfort food consumption was preceded by more intense positive emotions than women (Men=4.18, Women=3.69, $p<.001$). On the other hand, women's consumption tended to be triggered by more intense negative affect (Women= 3.03, Men= 2.9) but this difference did not reach significance. Consumption of comfort foods alleviated women's negative emotions but also produced more intense feelings of guilt than men (Men=2.00, Women=2.69, $p<.05$). Positive affect was a particularly powerful trigger of comfort food consumption for older participants (younger= 3.65, older=4.36, $p<.05$) and for French-cultured participants (French=4.06, English=3.66, $p<.05$). Younger participants and English-culture participants reported more intense negative emotions prior to consuming comfort foods. Foods high in sugar and fat content were more efficient in alleviating negative affects whereas low- to medium energy density foods were more efficient in increasing positive emotions.

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Anger in Ultimatum Bargaining: Emotional Outcomes Lead to Irrational Decisions

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Consumers evaluate most retail prices in terms of utility/value of the good, but they may also infer fairness from these offers. When buying a car, for instance, consumers may judge the price as fair or unfair, and accept the offer (purchase) or not (do not purchase). This mechanism is similar to ultimatum bargaining, where perceptions of fairness influence offer evaluation. It is argued that emotions such as anger are a consequence of the fairness appraisal and it is possible to influence bargaining behavior by altering the perceived source of the emotion, holding fairness perceptions constant.

In ultimatum bargaining, a proposer controls an amount of money (say \$10) and must offer some fraction (say \$3) to the responder. Both players know the amount being divided and the rules of the game. If the responder accepts the offer, s/he receives \$3, and the proposer receives \$7. If the responder rejects the offer, both people receive nothing (Camerer and Thaler 1995).

Rationally, the respondent should never reject an offer, since even \$.01 has more utility than zero. However, previous research has shown that ultimatum offers are sometimes rejected (Straub and Murnighan 1995), and variables such as fairness (Kahneman, Knetsch, and Thaler, 1986) and anger (Güth 1995) play a critical role. Pillutla and Murnighan (1996) proposed that respondents react to small offers by perceiving them as unfair and attributing responsibility to offerers. Accordingly, people are willing to sacrifice their own outcome to punish a player who had offered an unequal division to another player (Kahneman et al. 1986).

Anger has been found to correspond to appraisal of a negative event caused by another person and involving *unfairness* (Frijda, Kuipers, and ter Schure 1989). One behavioral consequence of anger is that the angry individual will probably try to hurt the agent as a punitive revenge or as retribution (Darley and Pittman 2003). Nevertheless, the punitive behavior will be directed towards the cause of the feeling (e.g. Younger and Doob 1978).

Transferring this to ultimatum bargaining, as people perceive an offer as unfair, they feel anger towards the agent and tend to reject the offer; however, when people misattribute the cause of anger, the rate of rejection tends to decrease. We tested these ideas in two experiments.

In study 1 we manipulated size of offer to test if a low offer leads to higher levels of anger and to what extent the anger felt decreases the probability of acceptance of an offer. Subjects read the description of ultimatum games and learned that participants in their session were randomly selected as respondents. We randomly assigned \$2 and \$4 offers-out of a total amount of \$10-to 155 students from a major west coast university. After they marked their response to the “proposer’s offer” they answered questions about the offer. Then, respondents proceeded to the “next study dealing with scale development”, which included emotion scales, individual difference variable of anger proneness, and background questions.

Participants showed higher levels of felt anger when they were offered \$2 than when they were offered \$4 ($M_2=2.22$; $M_4=1.74$; $F(1,145)=8.63$; $p<.01$). Anger proneness also showed significant effect ($F(1,145)=8.57$; $p<.01$). A logistic regression showed the \$2 offer was more likely to get rejected as a function of anger. Mediation analysis showed rejection was mediated by anger: in the first model, offer had a significant impact on rejection ($p<.01$); when anger is added to this model, anger is significant ($p<.01$), but offer no longer is ($p>.05$). Anger proneness was not significant in the regression ($p>.1$), showing that the individual difference variable does not influence offer rejection.

The goal of study 2 was to examine outcomes when people misattribute the cause of anger. It was a 2 (control, misattribution of anger) x 3 (offer: \$1, \$3, \$5) between-subjects experiment ($n=120$ students). Misattribution of anger was manipulated through an “independent” task called “life event inventory study” that consisted in asking participants to describe three/four “ordinary and mundane” events of their lives which they do not give much thought to nor have strong feelings about. In the control condition, participants started the “game” study right after this task. In the misattribution condition, they were told “in a similar study participants reported experiencing varying degrees of anger because of this assignment.” Fairness was manipulated through the “proposer-responder game”. The procedure was similar to experiment 1, and participants were asked to accept or reject the offer randomly assigned to them: \$1, \$3, or \$5 out of \$10. Finally, they responded to questions about their feelings and opinions.

In the control condition, 25% of the participants accepted the \$1 offer, 36.36% accepted the \$3 offer, and 100% accepted the \$5 offer. A chi-square test ($p<.01$) revealed that significantly higher proportions of participants accepted the “unfair” offers in the misattribution condition: 50% of the participants accepted the \$1 offer and 63.16% accepted the \$3 offer. The \$5 offer was accepted by 95.24% of the participants. A logistic regression showed that the effect of misattribution was significant ($p<.05$) and the effect of offer was significant ($p<.01$). When anger was included (“to what extent were you angry with the offer?”) as a covariate, the effect of misattribution was not significant ($p>.05$), offer was significant ($p<.01$), and anger was significant ($p<.01$).

Experiment 1 shows anger resulting from the perception of (un)fairness of the offer and increasing the rejection of the offer. Experiment 2 suggests that when people misattribute the cause of anger they tend to “discount” its effect, decreasing the rejection rate of the “unfair” offer. The results have implications for the management of cooperative and competitive behavior in conflict situations such as bargaining.

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I Want It Even Though I Do Not Like It: Preference for Familiar but Less Liked Music

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Many radio stations play the same songs over and over again, with little willingness to add new songs to the playlist, despite voiced criticism. Station managers argue that they are simply giving the listeners what they want to hear. We investigate this radio paradigm to understand what is driving this discrepancy between voiced preference and actual choice.

Presenting 24 songs from 12 artists (one familiar and one unfamiliar), and 22 famous actors to participants, we show that people do indeed choose to listen to songs, and see actors in movies, based on two factors: their preference (or “liking”) and their familiarity with the song or actor. Interestingly, we find that the effect of familiarity on choice remains significant when we control for the effects of preference on choice. That is, participants sometimes chose a song they liked less than the other option, just because the chosen song was familiar.

In a second study we control for liking across songs based on pretests and show that participants choose playlists of songs that they are familiar with despite lower preferences for these songs. Our last study tested whether the results could be explained by anticipated regret and/or social perceptions (or “coolness,” which may drive people to indicate they do not like familiar songs even though they do actually like them). Using personal computers where participants actually listened to their choices on individual headphones, participants made choices first and then indicated familiarity and liking, as well as how much they may regret their choice and how “cool” they thought each song was. Though regret did affect choice, indicating the presence of some uncertainty about the options, we find that familiarity significantly predicts choice when controlling for the effects of liking, regret, and coolness.

When do Moods Influence Consumer Preferences?: Moderators of Mood Congruency

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The mood congruency effect refers to the tendency for those in positive moods to make more favorable judgments than those in negative moods. Although mood congruency has been documented in the domain of consumer judgment, past research is equivocal regarding the conditions under which such mood congruency effects emerge. While some authors have documented mood congruency effects in consumer judgments (Curren and Harich 1994; Isen, Shalke, Clark, and Karp 1978), other researchers have not (Adaval 2001). In addition, several moderators of the mood congruency effect have been proposed, such as relevance of the product (Curren and Harich, 1994), consumer motivation (Pham 1998), ability to attribute the source of one’s moods accurately (Gorn, Goldberg, and Basu 1993; Pham 1998), and desirability of the brand (Barone and Miniard 2002).

One such moderator is the ability to focus on one’s mood states. Although some research suggests that those who focus on their moods are better able to avoid or correct for mood congruency (e.g., McFarland, White, and Newth 2003), other research suggests that those who focus on their moods are more likely to demonstrate mood congruency (e.g., Forgas and Ciarrochi 2001). We suspect that the different judgment tasks used in these two studies may be responsible for the discrepant results. The evaluation task used by Forgas and Ciarrochi (2001) involved evaluations of actual and potential possessions, whereas the evaluation task used by McFarland and colleagues involved making evaluations of another person. It seems plausible that people may consider it more appropriate to allow their moods to influence consumer judgments than interpersonal evaluations.

We attempt to resolve this discrepancy and suggest that the influence of mood-focus on the mood congruency effect will be moderated by *perceived appropriateness* of using moods to guide judgments. For example, Gasper & Clore (2000) found that the future predictions of participants high in mood attention were more affected by their current mood than those of participants low in mood attention. Importantly, the mood congruency bias revealed among persons high in mood attention was eliminated only when they were actively encouraged to view their moods as irrelevant to the judgment task. Thus, our key prediction is that mood congruency in consumer judgment will be most pronounced when individuals both acknowledge their moods and consider it appropriate to allow moods to influence their judgments.

In study 1, we utilized a 2(Mood: positive vs. negative) X 2(Focus: focused vs. not focused) X 2 (Appropriateness: moods appropriate vs. cognitions appropriate) between subjects design. We manipulated mood by having participants recall either a negative or positive event (e.g., McFarland et al., 2002)¹. Participants were either focused on their moods (i.e., they rated their moods before making consumer judgments) or distracted from their moods (i.e., they completed a distraction task before making judgments). Perceived appropriateness was manipulated by having participants read either that using moods to inform consumer judgments is a good strategy or that using cognitions to inform consumer judgments is a good strategy. The consumer judgment task involved rating two products that pretested as being equally perceived as “think” and “feel” products: a camera and a backpack. Participants viewed photographs of both products and rated them in on 9-point likert scales ranging from dislike very much to like very much, unfavorable to favorable, negative to positive, and bad to good. A product evaluation index was created by averaging across these measures ($\alpha=.86$). The interaction between mood, focus, and perceived appropriateness was statistically significant $F(1, 186)=6.77, p < .02$. In particular, participants demonstrated mood congruency only when they were focused on their moods and perceived moods to be appropriate ($M_{\text{positive}}=6.07$ and $M_{\text{negative}}=5.19, t(186)=2.54, p < .02$).

¹manipulation checks in study 1 and 2 were successful.

Study 2 utilized product type to manipulate perceived appropriateness. In study 2 mood and focus were manipulated as in study 1. To manipulate perceived appropriateness, we selected products that differed in terms of whether people believed that moods or cognitions were most useful for evaluating them. In a pretest we asked participants a) whether it was more appropriate to use “emotions” or “thoughts” to evaluate each product and b) whether their own evaluation of the product was more based on “feelings” or more “logical/objective” information. We identified two “think” products (a pen and *Newsweek* magazine) and two “feel” products (a chocolate bar and *People* magazine). The pen and chocolate bar, as well as the two magazines were matched on stated price in order to control for the effects of differential price perceptions. Participants were presented with photos of each product (with think and feel products counterbalanced) and then asked to complete the same evaluations as in study 1. The 3-way interaction between mood, focus, and product type (as a repeated measure) was significant, $F(1, 90)=10.13, p<.005$. Once again, mood congruency only emerged when participants were focused on their mood states and when using moods to inform judgments was appropriate (i.e., when evaluating feel products; $M_{\text{positive}}=6.49$ and $M_{\text{negative}}=5.68, t(90)=2.09, p<.05$). Significant mood congruency effects were not exhibited in any other conditions.

The preceding studies reveal an important nuance regarding the influence of moods on consumer judgment. When it is considered appropriate to allow moods to influence judgments, those focused on their moods are more likely than those not focused on their moods to rely on their feelings when making judgments. We also provide evidence that, for certain products, it may be perceived as appropriate to use moods to inform judgments, whereas for other products it may be deemed inappropriate to use moods to inform judgments. In addition, advertisers may want to encourage consumers to perceive it to be appropriate to use positive moods when evaluating their own products, or to perceive it to be appropriate to use negative moods when evaluating a competitor’s product.

How Affect Influences Choice: An Investigation of the Comparison Processes

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Extended Abstract

Research has shown that consumers’ affective experience can influence their evaluations of products (e.g., Adaval 2001; Pham 1998). While we know that affect can influence consumers’ absolute judgments of products, we are less clear about how it can influence consumers’ comparisons and choices among products. Consider a consumer who is choosing among a number of options, and assume that s/he receives information on each of these options one by one. Would affect influence evaluations of all these options in a similar way and to a similar extent, and hence have no *net* effect on choice? Alternatively, would affect influence evaluations of only one of the options, and lead to changes of his/her choice? If this is the case, which particular one will be influenced? Our research suggests that this would depend on the point of time (during the comparative judgment process) at which consumers start evaluating the options in the choice set.

In one case, consumers may begin their evaluations on receiving information on the first option. In this instance, affect is likely to influence evaluations of this first option, but not the ones that are encountered subsequently. This is due to two reasons. First, consumers are likely to form an initial impression of a product spontaneously based on their affect when they encounter the product (Pham, Cohen, Pracejus, and Hughes 2001; Yeung and Wyer 2004). Consequently, affect can influence their impressions of this option. Second, according to previous findings on affect attribution (see Pham 2004 for a review), once individuals have attributed their affect to one source (the first option), they are less likely to attribute this affect to other sources (the second and the third options). Based on these arguments, we propose that consumers’ affect is likely to have a positive impact on their liking of the first option that they encounter, and hence a positive impact on the choice share of this option.

In a second case, consumers may not start evaluating the options until after they have received information on all the options in a choice set. In this instance, their affect will be attributed to the last option instead of the preceding ones. As such, it will have a positive impact on their liking and choices of the last option.

We further suggest that the point of time at which consumers start evaluating the options would change as a function of choice set characteristics. In choosing among options that do not have any differentiating features but only differ in global aesthetic aspects, consumers tend to form a spontaneous impression of each option upon receiving information on the options, and hence the first option being evaluated would be the first option that they encounter (Yeung and Wyer 2004). However, in choosing among options that have certain differentiating feature(s), consumers may feel a need to delay their judgments until they have seen information on all the options, and hence the first option being evaluated would be the last option that they encounter (Houston, Sherman, and Baker 1989; Mantel and Kardes 1999). In either case, we predict that affect will have a positive impact on their liking of the first option being evaluated, and hence a positive impact on the choice share of this option. More specifically, consumers in a happy mood would be more likely to choose this option than those in an unhappy mood. Three experiments were conducted to test these predictions.

Experiment 1. We examined the influence of affect on choices between two options which did not have any differentiating features but only differed in global aesthetic aspects. We induced participants’ mood by asking them to write a piece of happy or unhappy personal experience. Then they moved on to the second (ostensibly unrelated) task where they saw pictures of two mango-flavored desserts sequentially. After that, participants indicated their choices between the options and also their absolute judgments of the options. Consistent with our predictions, the choice share of the first option was higher when participants were in a positive mood than when they were in a negative mood (68.97% vs. 38.46%; $p<.05$). The data on absolute judgments of the two options confirmed that participants had a higher evaluation of the first option when they were happy than when they were unhappy ($p<.05$); whereas the two groups did not differ in their evaluations of the second option ($p>.50$).

However, one might argue that, as dessert tends to elicit positive affective reactions, participants’ negative extraneous affect might not be perceived as a genuine affective response to the dessert and hence should not have an effect on choices of desserts. Instead, the low

choice share of the first option under the negative mood condition could be due to the high choice share of the second option, which, in turn, was driven by a recency effect. This alternative explanation is addressed in experiment 2.

Experiment 2. We investigated a three-option choice context in order to disentangle between the mood effect explanation and the recency effect explanation. If the change of choice share was due to an effect of mood, this change would be reflected in the choice share of the first option. However, if the change of choice share was due to a recency effect, it would be reflected in the choice share of the third (i.e., last) option. The results lend support to the mood effect explanation. That is, participants in a positive mood were more likely to choose the first option than those in a negative mood. Choices of the last option did not differ across the two mood conditions. Moreover, the absolute judgments data show that the two groups differed in their evaluations of the first option, but not in their evaluations of the ones that they encountered subsequently.

Experiment 3. In experiments 1 and 2, the first option that participants encountered was presumably the starting point of comparative judgments. To further investigate the mechanism through which affect influences choice, we manipulated the time at which participants started to evaluate the options in experiment 3. The procedure of experiment 3 was essentially the same as experiment 2. However, we delayed the starting point of comparative judgments by asking participants to choose among desserts that differ in flavor (which is presumably a differentiating feature for desserts). We predict that affect would influence choices of this last option in much the same way as it influenced choices of the first option in experiments 1 and 2. We found a marginally significant relationship between mood and choice ($p=.067$). Consistent with our predictions, participants in a positive mood evaluated the last option significantly higher than those in a negative mood and were more likely to choose the last option (46.3% vs. 26.9%; $p<.05$).

In combination, experiments 1-3 suggest that, the point at which consumers' affect is incorporated into a comparison process depends on the starting point of the process. In any case, affect is incorporated into the first evaluation people make, regardless of whether this evaluation is made with reference to the first option or the last option from a choice set.

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How Do Consumer Targets Perceive and Respond to Brand Agents in Persuasion Attempts?

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Many advances of the persuasion knowledge model have focused upon people in selling functions as agents in a persuasion episode. A major facet that remains under researched is our understanding of brands as agents. This paper addresses this gap by examining consumer beliefs about brands as agents of persuasion. Depth interview data show how target perceptions of agents can be more complex and their responses less resistant than previous conceptualizations. Consumer targets can perceive brand agents as representing, offering, reaching out, getting the word, and making do; and they can respond by defending, congratulating, choosing, and getting suckered.

How do consumer targets perceive and respond to brand agents in persuasion attempts?

In their seminal article, Friestad and Wright (1994) began to explore the nature of consumers' taken for granted understandings of how persuasion agents attempt to influence them in the marketplace. Although they recognized that agents were not necessarily people in selling functions, many advances since have been situated in such settings [e.g., a salesclerk making a sale (Campbell and Kirmani 2000), a retailer convincing customers "to spend more money very soon" (Brown and Krishna 2004, 532)]. Recently, Kirmani and Campbell (2004) consolidated and extended our understanding consumers' understandings of salespeople as persuasion agents. A major facet of persuasion knowledge that remains under researched, however, is our understanding of brands as persuasion agents.

This paper begins to address this gap by examining consumers' perceptions of how brands attempt to persuade and how they themselves respond to these attempts. This is important because unless we do so, we risk overlooking differences in consumers' beliefs about how brands as compared with salespeople attempt to persuade. As well, this paper contributes larger conversations about how persuasion knowledge is an invariable resource (Friestad and Wright 1994; Kirmani and Campbell 2004) and how consumer responses to brand actions vary as a function of their relationship with the brand (Aaker, Fournier, and Brasel 2004; Aggarwal 2004).

Method

Depth interviews on the general topic of brands were conducted with five participants (Jack, Jill, Joe, Jon, and Jay), and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were first coded individually, and after grouping observations and identifying themes, the process of comparison and refinements was repeated until a coherent account of the data was achieved (Charmaz 2000; Strauss and Corbin 1998).

Findings

Brands as agents

Five dimensions emerge in participants' perceptions of brands as agents: 1) agents represent, 2) agents offer, 3) agents reach out, 4) agents get the word, and 5) agents make do. It is worth noting that not all brands are discussed along these dimensions. For example, brands described as "imitators" and "least luxurious" are rarely talked about along these dimensions.

In seeing agents as representing, participants drop names and reference stereotypes. For example, on Diesel, Joe exclaims "GINO, you know, Italian, STM [local catholic school], '98 civic lowered with rims and beads, spiky hair perfect to the twist!" As well, participants see agents as offering them symbolic connotations that might otherwise be inaccessible. For example, Jill notes how Club Monaco helps portray her as having class and cosmopolitanism, and how without it, she would risk looking like a "little hoochie" or "country". Participants talk about agents as "reaching out" for them, and they express belief that agents get the word and teach them about styles and about "what gets hot". For example, Joe talks excitedly about how Tommy Hilfiger "180 degrees reversed their marketing" to reach him as a youth, and Jill explains how Club Monaco "looks at all the runway shows, everything and whatever's hip at the time" and then gets this out to "the younger generation". Lastly, participants see agents as making do with what already exists in "the system, the way society works", and speak easily of branded placements in movies and video games. Jay remarks how "they do that all the time...if you watch your favorite sitcom, again the guy wears certain clothes, sits on certain furniture, whatever, like all that's been placed there."

Consumers as targets

Four dimensions are identified in participants' perceptions of themselves as targets: 1) targets defend, 2) targets congratulate, 3) targets choose, and 4) targets get suckered. Again, it is worth noting that not all brands are discussed along these dimensions, instead these are often brands that participants like.

Although participants often talk about brand agents as "sneaky", they are quick to defend when asked to elaborate. For example, on criticisms and Hugo Boss, Jack concludes "problem is that's the nature of the game...they're in the market where everybody else is doing it, so if they don't do it, they'll get left in the dust", and adds "you shouldn't need to have certain clothing to have more confidence, but the reality of the situation is...it gives you that nice, warm feeling inside." Sometimes, agents are congratulated for being "sly" in persuasion attempts. In talking about Rocawear in music videos, Jay commends "a music video's more subversive right...it's clever right, an effective way to reach your target." As well, participants often stress *their* choice by emphasizing product specifics and contrasting with others. For example, Joe repeatedly contrasts himself from others who are "into" his music: "I would say that 98% of people who like hip hop don't like Guess", and even when he retraces Guess back to a hip hop song, he is very adamant: "Honestly to tell you the truth why I bought Guess, because I heard it on a [Nas] song...[So might others?] No, not really, Guess is not very popular in that sense, where

like Puff Daddy wears that or like, this guy wears that.” Lastly, participants talk about themselves as being taken in by agent attempts at persuasion, terms such as “sucker” and “slave” come up repeatedly in interviews. For example, on Ecco, Jon notes how he “hopped on the bandwagon” and later, in talking about the prevalence of branded placements, he remarks “Oh clearly I’m a slave. [What do you mean?] Just cuz’ I am, know what I mean, you see a poster, a commercial, a radio show, you say ‘I want to buy that’. I don’t know why.”

Closing

This paper shows how consumer target perceptions of brands as agents can be more complex and their responses less resistant than previous conceptualizations. Targets can perceive agents as representing, offering, reaching out, getting the word, and making do; and they can respond by defending, congratulating, choosing, and getting suckered. A sensible next step is to probe conditions that cultivate such beliefs.

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Attributional Processes in the Case of Product Failures—The Role of the Corporate Brand as Buffer

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A coherent brand architecture is to enhance impact, clarity, synergy, and leverage among a firm’s brands (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). Within this context, the organizing structure between the corporate brand and the product brands is of considerable interest for marketing and corporate management alike. Extending the ideas of what good brand architecture should do, we argue that a superordinate corporate brand can serve a buffer function by protecting its subordinate brands in case of a negative occurrence.

Attributional theorists argue that individuals attempt to develop a realistic understanding of the causes of events, such as why a product has failed (Folkes, 1984). Accordingly, people are inclined to find reasons why something negative has happened and who is responsible for the damage. We suggest that the brand architecture influences consumers’ judgment of responsibility (Weiner, 1995) by indicating the level of influence one brand has over another. The closer the endorsement by the corporate brand for the product brand, the closer the perceived influence of the former over the latter. A strong endorsement also indicates that the company guides the decisions and actions of the endorsed product brand, making the former partly responsible for the latter’s actions if things go wrong. Consequently, the corporate brand takes some of the blame for mishaps and thereby attenuates the negative effects for the product brand.

H1: A strong (weak) endorsement of the product brand by the corporate brand leads to less (more) perceived responsibility of the product brand in case of a failure.

The deferred responsibility to the endorsing corporate entity prevents damage to the attitude toward the product brand. Judgment of responsibility serves as the mediating variable for the effect of brand endorsement on brand attitudes.

H2: A strong (weak) endorsement of the product brand by the corporate brand results in a less (more) negative attitude towards the product brand in case of a failure.

H3: The effect of brand endorsement on product brand attitude is mediated by a consumer’s judgment of responsibility. .

We conducted two experiments to test our hypotheses. In study 1 we manipulated the endorsement of a product brand (strong vs weak endorsement) by a superordinate corporate brand to find support for hypothesis 1. In study 2 we tested hypotheses 2 and 3 by means of a 2 (brand endorsement: strong vs weak) x 2 (information valence: neutral vs negative) factorial design.

Results

The results of our first study which was conducted among 39 student subjects indicated that the strength of the corporate brand endorsement moderated the perceived responsibility in case of a product failure. Responsibility was judged on a scale from -5 (product brand completely responsible) to 5 (corporation completely responsible). The responsibility of the corporation for a failure by the product brand was judged significantly greater when the corporate endorser was prominently displayed in an advertisement than when it was hidden in the corner of the ad ($\text{mean}_{\text{endostrong}}=0.25$, $\text{mean}_{\text{endoweak}}=-1.88$; $F=4.1$, $p<.05$). Further support came from the manipulation of the brand name similarity. The corporation was perceived more responsible when the corporate brand and product brand names were similar than when the brand names were different ($\text{mean}_{\text{endostrong}}=-1.37$, $\text{mean}_{\text{endoweak}}=-3.59$; $F=6.3$, $p<.02$).

In study 2 we presented 77 student subjects with an advertisement of a product brand for sporting goods and a fictitious news article. The advertisement served as the main manipulation of brand endorsement by either prominently displaying the corporate brand endorser or by hiding it in the corner of the ad. The news article reported either on flaws in products (broken zippers and faulty shock absorbers) or on a neutral event (brand presents its new collection) thereby manipulating the valence of the information. In the strong endorsement condition the corporate name was reinforced in the news article but not in the weak endorsement condition.

In support of hypothesis 2, we found a significant 2-way interaction of information valence and endorsement strength on the attitude toward the product brand ($F=14.8$, $p<.001$). The attitude toward the product brand was negatively affected by the failure story when the corporate brand endorsement was weak ($\text{mean}_{\text{negative}}=2.8$, $\text{mean}_{\text{neutral}}=4.07$). In the strong endorsement condition the corporate brand seemed to have worked as a buffer by taking on the responsibility for the failure ($\text{mean}_{\text{negative}}=4.18$, $\text{mean}_{\text{neutral}}=4.10$). Also, the product brand was perceived less responsible for the failure when the corporate endorsement was strong than when it was weak thereby replicating the findings from study 1 ($\text{mean}_{\text{endostrong}}=0.22$, $\text{mean}_{\text{endoweak}}=-3.32$; $F=31.0$, $p<.001$).

Mediational analyses (Baron & Kenny, 1986) suggest that judgment of responsibility served as a mediator of attitude towards the product brand. Brand endorsement was a significant predictor of brand attitude ($p<.001$) and brand endorsement predicted judgment of responsibility ($p<.001$). Regressing both, the potential mediator and the independent variable, on attitude, the impact of brand endorsement was attenuated (from $p<.001$ to $p<.10$).

Our findings extend the previous research on the role of superordinate brands. They raise new questions on how to incorporate the buffer role into the theoretical models of the effects of brand architecture and provide practical implications. Strengthening the corporate brand as is currently en vogue in marketing may provide an unforeseen benefit when it comes to coping with product failure.

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Protection Motivation Theory—An Additive or a Multiplicative Model?

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Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) Variables

According to PMT, four factors influence the persuasiveness of health communications: vulnerability, severity, efficacy (response and self), and costs. Vulnerability refers to one's subjective perception of the risk of contracting a condition or leaving a condition untreated. Severity refers to feelings concerning the seriousness of the condition. Response efficacy refers to the person's belief that the recommended behaviors are effective in reducing or eliminating the danger. Self-efficacy refers to the person's belief that he or she has the ability to perform the recommended behaviors. Finally, costs represent the sum of all barriers to engaging in the recommended behavior.

Variables' Importance

All PMT variables were found to have an impact on persuasion, though not equally so. Indeed, the results of a meta-analytic review (Milne, Sheeran, and Orbell, 2000) show that costs and self-efficacy have the highest impact on persuasion measures.

Interactions Effects

Literature shows significant two-way interaction effects suggesting that costs influence the effect of self and response efficacy on persuasion measures, whereas self-efficacy and response-efficacy influence the effect of perceived vulnerability. Further, vulnerability was found to modify the effect of severity, whereas severity was shown to influence the effect of response efficacy.

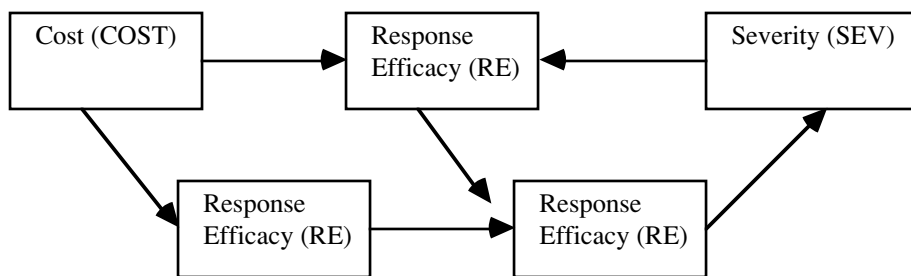
Additive versus Multiplicative

There is disagreement among researchers as to whether the combined effect of PMT variables on persuasion follows a multiplicative model or an additive one. A multiplicative model assumes that no protection motivation would be aroused if the value of any of the components would be zero and expects a significant interaction effect among all variables. An additive relationship assumes that even when one of the predictor variables is 0, the persuasion could be different than zero and the combination of high levels of the variables produces the highest persuasion scores.

TABLE 1
Individual Associations of PMT Variables with Persuasion Measures (Milne, Sheeran, and Orbell, 2000).

Variable	Intention	Concurrent Behavior	Subsequent Behavior
Vulnerability	.16	.13	.12
Severity	.10	.10	ns
Response Efficacy	.29	.17	ns
Self-efficacy	.33	.36	.22
Costs	-.34	-.32	-.25

FIGURE 1
Proposed Relationships Between PMT Variables



Proposed Combinatorial Rules and Empirical Evidence

Rogers (1975) predicted that perceived vulnerability, severity, and response efficacy combine multiplicatively to influence intentions. He expected significant main effects for each variable, and two-way and three-way interaction effects among these three variables. Few studies provided support for this model (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

A second model proposed by Rogers (1983) posited an additive relationship within each appraisal process and second-order interaction effects between the threat and coping variables. This model has also failed to find empirical support (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

Weinstein (1993) proposed a weighted additive model, implying that the PMT variables are not equal in importance. Although this model has not been empirically tested, it makes a valid attempt to mathematically describe the relationships among the PMT variables. However, this model does not account for the numerous interactions among PMT variables that have been recently reported in the literature and described in the present review.

Proposed Model

We propose a new model in which the decision-maker does not equally and simultaneously considers all the PMT variables, but rather subjectively ranks the variables based on his or her own perception of their importance and sets minimum cut-offs for each. The person then starts by evaluating the most important variable, and decides not to follow the recommendations if the level of that variable does not meet the minimum cut-off point. If the variable meets the minimum cut-off point, then the next most important variable is evaluated and the overall effect will follow a weighted additive rule.

Costs were found to have the highest impact on persuasion (together with self-efficacy). In addition, costs are certain and represent a loss to the person. Consequently, it is likely that cost information would be considered as the most important among the PMT variables. When decision makers evaluate costs, they will set a maximum level above which they will not consider performing the behaviour (regardless of the other variables' levels). If the costs are considered reasonable (below the cut-off level), thus self-efficacy is reasonable high, we expect people to evaluate the other PMT variables' levels. Again, if the level of any of the variables is under a particular minimal level, the person decides not to follow the recommendations, following an initial elimination-by-aspects rule. In the situation in which all the PMT variables pass the cut-off levels, the general decision rule followed would be a weighted additive one.

Our model is based on the assumption that people are exposed to numerous health messages advocating changes in behavior. They choose not to adopt many of these behaviors, but may consider adopting a few. When exposed to fear-arousing health information advocating changes in behavior, people look for reasons to avoid adopting the recommended behavior. This proposed model thus, posits a combination of strategies frequently observed in the decision-making literature (Bettman, Luce, and Payne, 1998) with an initial use of the elimination by aspects rule to reduce the number of health messages considered for adoption, followed by a compensatory strategy such as the weighted additive rule to select from those remaining.

We believe our proposed model helps explain the inconsistent findings in the literature regarding the presence or the absence of one variable's impact on persuasion and will also provide insight into the decision making process involved when deciding whether or not to follow a particular recommended health behavior.

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The Devil You Know: Effects of Suspicion of an Information Source's Identity

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The sheer number of information sources available for search and choice comparisons has exploded with technology. With the growth of "buzz marketing" and organized "word-of-mouth" tactics such as "alpha pups" and "leaners," marketers are intentionally using strategies to influence consumers that mask their true identity. As a result, the lines between marketer and non-marketer controlled are increasingly blurred. Without knowing the identity of the source, consumers may have problems assessing self-interest, and in turn, may discount credibility and recommendations. Rather than "gaining" the credibility often attributed to true word-of-mouth sources, Fein (1996) suggests that, when suspicion is raised, the "individual actively entertains multiple plausible rival hypotheses about the motives and genuineness of a person's behavior" (p. 1165).

Sources explicitly identified as marketers may allow confident attributions of intent, and consumers can then factor such self-interest into their decision-making. Information provided by sources with expected self-interests in certain outcomes may naturally evoke coping mechanisms based on their persuasion knowledge (Friestad and Wright 1994). In personal sales contexts, perceived self interest has been shown to moderate the effectiveness of argument strength and perceived expertise (Wiener, LaForge, and Goolsby 1990).

Sources appearing in identified "consumer" web forums would be expected to be judged synonymously with other forms of non-marketer controlled sources. If a posting in a web forum, is suspected to be authored by a marketer, instead of being viewed like other identified marketing sources, the suspicion of deception may result in even more negative thoughts than self-interested sources because of uncertainty.

The purpose of this study was to examine the willingness to rely on persuasive sources which vary on identified self-interests across traditional and web-based forums. Specifically, we examine the effects of suspicion of self-interested motives on perceived credibility of the sources and likelihood of relying on them for advice.

Method

An online survey presented a purchase scenario. Respondents were asked to imagine they planned to buy a digital camera as a gift. Though they had identified four models of camera in their price range, they were told that they could not discriminate between them so they sought additional input. Four sources of information were described (abbreviated descriptions below):

A salesperson at a large electronics store has gone through extensive training on digital cameras in addition to 15 years experience in the business.

A website's Buying Guide has ads for electronics companies and direct links to various retailers. Its Buying Guide lets you identify up to five products and it provides a "best in class" recommendation.

A customer in the store who overhears your conversation and offers personal testimony about his recent camera purchase since he'd looked at the same four models.

A person in a chatroom who says he has 15 years of business experience with all types of cameras and experience with the four specific cameras in question.

The respondent was told that each source recommends a different camera so they will have to make a decision based solely on the sources since they must buy the gift immediately.

Each source was then rated on their expertise, believability, trustworthiness and interest in helping them make the best choice on a nine-point scale. They were then asked which recommendation they would be most likely and least likely to take. For the latter, they were asked why they would be least likely to follow this recommendation.

Results

Respondents were 140 undergraduate students. The sample was 54.1% female and 90.1% spent four or more hours per week on the internet.

In terms of interest in helping the customer to make the best decision, the chatroom advisor was rated statistically significantly lower (mean=5.09) than all three other sources (Customer=6.63, Web Guide=6.01, Salesperson=6.04), confirming expectations that suspicion led to lower ratings than those with admitted self-interest. While the salesperson and chatroom advisor were described as having equivalent expertise experience, the chatroom advisor was rated statistically lower (mean=5.48) on expertise than the salesperson (mean=6.81), and was even statistically lower than the store customer (mean=5.90) or the Buying Guide (mean=6.47).

When asked whose recommendation they would most likely take, 31.4% said the website buying guide and 30.0% said the customer, while 25.7% said the electronics' salesperson. In terms of the recommendation they would be least likely to take, 51.4% said the chatroom advisor. The verbatims for those respondents showed that 68% of the responses doubted the chatroom advisor's credibility, some expressing the need to see advisors face-to-face to be able to judge their credibility. Another 11% suggested that the person probably worked for the manufacturer. Interestingly 12% saw the recommendation as part of a possible joke, prank or fraud.

This provides some limited support to Fein's arguments about the effects of suspicion. Consumers seem to be suspicious of sources who may be concealing their true identity and therefore their self-interest, rating them lower than self-interested sources.

This study suggests that marketers should proceed with caution in using online forums. Consumers are becoming more sophisticated in these forums where identity is less verifiable, leading to suspicion. The very "hint" of deceit may be sufficient to elicit significant consumer backlash. The heyday of marketers being able to "masquerade" as consumers to gain greater influence and avoid coping strategies may be past. The suspicion in this study seemed to be limited to the online forums.

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Product Placement: Developing Concepts, Constructs and Measures

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Product placement practice has grown in scope and volume, and expenditure now exceeds one billion dollars per annum. Publicity and public concern is also increasing. Placement research however has not kept pace with these trends. Effects-based research is minimal and findings across studies diverge. Most researchers have adopted traditional advertising effect measures, however placement is qualitatively different to interruptive advertising. Whilst theoretical discussion is ensuing, it remains minimal. Before viable research can emerge, sound concepts and constructs must be developed. This paper presents a discussion and resolution of conceptual issues.

The Effect of Perceived Brand Name-Logo Coherence on Brand Attitudes

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Extended Abstract

This research investigates how the perceived coherence between brand name and logo affects brand attitudes and how this relationship is influenced by consumer-level and marketer-controlled variables (Keller, 1993, 1998). The topic is an important one since brand names and logos are common means to communicate brand identity to consumers (Aaker 1996; Henderson and Cote 1998). However, if these brand elements are incoherent, incongruity may occur at the brand association level (Keller 1993). Therefore, the coherence between brand name and logo is crucial to the development of a strong brand identity. Even though the coherence between brand names and their logos has been recognized as an important research topic, little systematic research has investigated it yet (Henderson and Cote 1998; Henderson, Giese, and Cote 2003; Klink 2003).

The purpose of this research is to study a main effect (the impact of brand name-logo coherence on brand attitudes), its potential moderators and its boundary conditions. To do so, the primary theoretical frameworks we rely on are Keller's (1993) consumer-based

brand equity model, research on self-brand connections (Edson Escalas and Bettman 2003; Edson Escalas 2004) and preference for consistency (Cialdini, Trost, and Newsom 1995). The main rationale is that consumers will favor brand logos that are coherent with the brand's current image and that this preference is affected by several consumer-level and marketer-controlled variables.

The constructs whose relationships are investigated in a first study are perceptions of coherent brand logo actions, self-brand connections (SBC) and preference for consistency (PFC). Specifically, the following hypotheses are tested:

- H1: Attitudes toward a brand action that increases coherence between brand name and logo will be more positive than attitudes toward a brand action that decreases coherence between brand name and logo.
- H2: Consumers with a high PFC will have more positive attitudes toward a brand action that increases coherence between brand name and logo than consumers with a low PFC.
- H3: Consumers with a strong SBC will have more positive attitudes toward a brand action that increases coherence between brand name and logo than consumers with a weak SBC.
- H4: Consumers with a strong SBC and a high PFC will have more positive attitudes toward a brand action that increases coherence between brand name and logo than consumers with a strong SBC and a low PFC.

An experiment was conducted to test these initial hypotheses. A multinational cell phone brand was chosen as the stimulus brand for two reasons. First, most students know the brand and own a cell phone. Second, cell phone brands usually have a distinct positioning and the brand to be investigated possesses distinctive characteristics in terms of brand name and brand marks. Stimuli and instructions were pre-tested with 15 students. Eighty-nine undergraduate students aged between 19 and 23 participated in the main study, which comprised two separate parts presented to participants as ostensibly unrelated surveys. In the first part, personal characteristics were collected including the seven-item SBC and the 18-item PFC scales (Cialdini et al. 1995; Edson Escalas 2004). In the second part, a 2 x 2 x 2 between-participants experiment was conducted (incoherent/coherent logo with brand; weak/strong self-brand connection; low/high preference for consistency). Participants were presented the current brand logo and were asked to imagine a new logo that would be (in)coherent with the name and current positioning of the brand. After time for reflection, they were asked to write down the characteristics of such a logo and why these characteristics could improve cohesiveness with the brand compared to the current logo. Participants also had the possibility to draw a new logo if they wished to do so. Finally, they were asked to rate their attitudes toward a brand action (three items) that would actually introduce a new logo in the market based on participants' recommendations.

A 2 X 2 X 2 ANOVA was conducted with attitude toward brand action as the dependent variable and logo coherence, SBC and PFC as between-participant factors. Low/high groups on the SBC and PFC scales were constituted using a conventional median split. The main effect of logo coherence was significant ($F(1, 81)=47.78, p<.01$), whereby participants rated a brand action introducing a coherent logo with the brand more favorably ($M=4.67$) than an incoherent logo ($M=2.79$). This result supports hypothesis 1 and suggest that brand name–logo coherence matters to consumers. The three-way interaction between logo coherence, SBC and PFC was also significant ($F(1, 81)=4.08, p<.05$). A planned contrast revealed that participants with a strong self-brand connection and a high preference for consistency had more positive attitudes toward a brand action that increased coherence between brand name and logo ($M=5.04$) than participants with a strong self-brand connection and a low preference for consistency ($M=3.85, F(1, 81)=4.23, p<.05$). These results support hypothesis 4 and suggest that the effect of the two psychological difference measures on brand attitudes is strongly intertwined.

As a next step, a series of experiments are projected aiming at testing the effect of additional moderators on the basic relationship of hypothesis 1. These include other consumer-level factors such as brand ownership and but also marketer-controlled factors such as perceived initial congruence between brand and logo, stability of the logo over time and the social visibility of the brand. Specifically, we expect consumers actually owning a product of the brand to judge coherent brand logos more favorably than consumers who do not own any product from the brand. We also expect that brand name–logo congruence will be important for brands that frequently (vs. rarely) change logos over time; and for brands that are highly (vs. weakly) visible in social interactions.

In a broad perspective for future research, our conceptual framework may also extend to brand elements other than logo (slogans, sponsoring, public relations etc.) It would also be interesting to relate our framework to brand extensions research (e.g. Aaker and Keller 1990; Sanjay and Sood 2002). Whether the same factors influence the effect of other brand elements on attitudes as those hypothesized in this research is certainly an interesting question for future inquiry.

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Explaining the Negative Spillover Effect in Target Marketing: Automatic Social Comparisons that Threaten Collective Self-Esteem

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The present research proposes that previously inconsistent findings on the NSE in consumer behavior work can be explained by accounting for the unconscious impact of activated negative stereotypes among non-targeted consumers. More importantly, it appears that (for those consumers highly identified with a particular group membership) this activation occurs even when prompted by cues that are largely irrelevant to the particular stereotype in question. While this finding is troubling, a particular way to mitigate the risk of NSE by advertisers refers to their use of specific regulatory focus manipulations, such as execution variables that put consumers in a state of promotion (strategic eagerness).

Effective Counter Persuasion: Creating Lasting Resistance to a Stronger Opponent

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Two studies investigated a counterpersuasive strategy that can be effective for a communicator facing a rival who can deliver his or her message many more times than the communicator. This strategy incorporated: 1) strong counterarguments against the claims of the target message and 2) a mnemonic link between the target message and these counterarguments. Results demonstrated that the combination of counterarguments and mnemonic links not only produced greater resistance to the target ad than a counterad that lacked mnemonic links, but it also undermined the target ad more strongly as the number of exposures to the target ad increased.

The Role of Mindfulness in Consumer Behavior

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Since its initial publication by Langer and her colleagues (Langer 1977; Langer, Blank and Chanowitz 1978), the psychological construct of mindfulness has gained increased influence in the field of social psychology (e.g., Martin 1997; Brown and Ryan 2003). In this research, we provide (1) a general review and description of the mindfulness construct, (2) a discussion of how mindfulness can be used in consumer research, (3) results from an advertising persuasion study where mindfulness is shown to moderate persuasion routes, and (4) an overall discussion of our on-going research program as well as further research areas for this construct.

Mindfulness refers to "a state of conscious awareness characterized by active distinction drawing that leaves the individual open to novelty and sensitive to both context and perspective" (Langer 1992). There are four main features to mindfulness: greater sensitivity to one's context or environment, more openness to new information, greater aptitude at cognitive categorization, and enhanced awareness of multiple perspectives in problem solving (Langer 1989). As such, mindfulness is distinct from other important psychological constructs which tend to solely apply to issues that are central or salient to an individual. In contrast, mindfulness speaks more about one's general aptitude to notice and deal with what is new. Studies between mindfulness and other cognition, personality and social psychology constructs have shown that mindfulness should be seen more as a cognitive style than just a specific cognitive ability or a personality trait (Sternberg, 2000), and therefore it should be seen as existing at the boundary of personality and cognition, and can be used both as a state or trait variable.

This very brief description should be enough to outline the potential relevance of the mindfulness construct in a vast array of consumer behavior issues, such as consumer decision making, marketing communication, persuasion, and so on. However, a review of articles published in the leading consumer research journals reveals that this construct has been largely overlooked by consumer research scholars.

This lacuna is unfortunate as we believe that mindfulness can provide valuable insights into the study of consumption. First, when used as an individual difference measure (trait variable), mindfulness can be a valuable tool to segment consumers into groups, and can be used in theory testing and development. Second, when used as a state variable, it can provide insights on how contexts, marketing interventions, education and message elements might influence one’s level of mindfulness and therefore consumption behavior. Third, we believe that mindfulness can provide new insights into consumer cognition, judgment and decision making, and especially help us better understand issues such as heuristic processing, selective perception, routine behavior etc. Fourth, because it has been shown that mindfulness can be increased through training or other interventions, it seems that there is a direct consumer welfare implication as well, as increased mindfulness should help consumers make better decisions and achieve improved wellbeing.

To illustrate the potential role of mindfulness, we present a study on how mindfulness might affect persuasion efforts. In particular, we are interested in the role of mindfulness in the well established dual process models of attitude formation and change (e.g., Elaboration Likelihood Model, Petty and Caccioppo 1986; Heuristic-Systematic Model, Chaiken 1987). In this context, we also wish to contrast mindfulness with need for cognition (NFC), as NFC has also been shown to moderate the routes to persuasion, and on the surface, the two construct might appear quite related. However, we also believe that there are fundamental differences between the two. For instance, mindfulness is characterized by high level of conscious awareness, sensitivity to context change, openness to new information, ability to create new categories in cognition, and awareness of multiple perspectives in problem solving (characteristics not necessarily shared by high NFC individuals). In persuasion contexts, where both motivation (e.g., NFC, mindfulness) and ability (e.g., expertise) to process a claim have been shown to determine persuasion routes and outcomes, we propose that NFC and mindfulness operate differently. Figure 1 shows how the two processes can differ. One key difference is that we believe that high mindful individual will attempt to process a claim, even if the information is outside of their typical expertise.

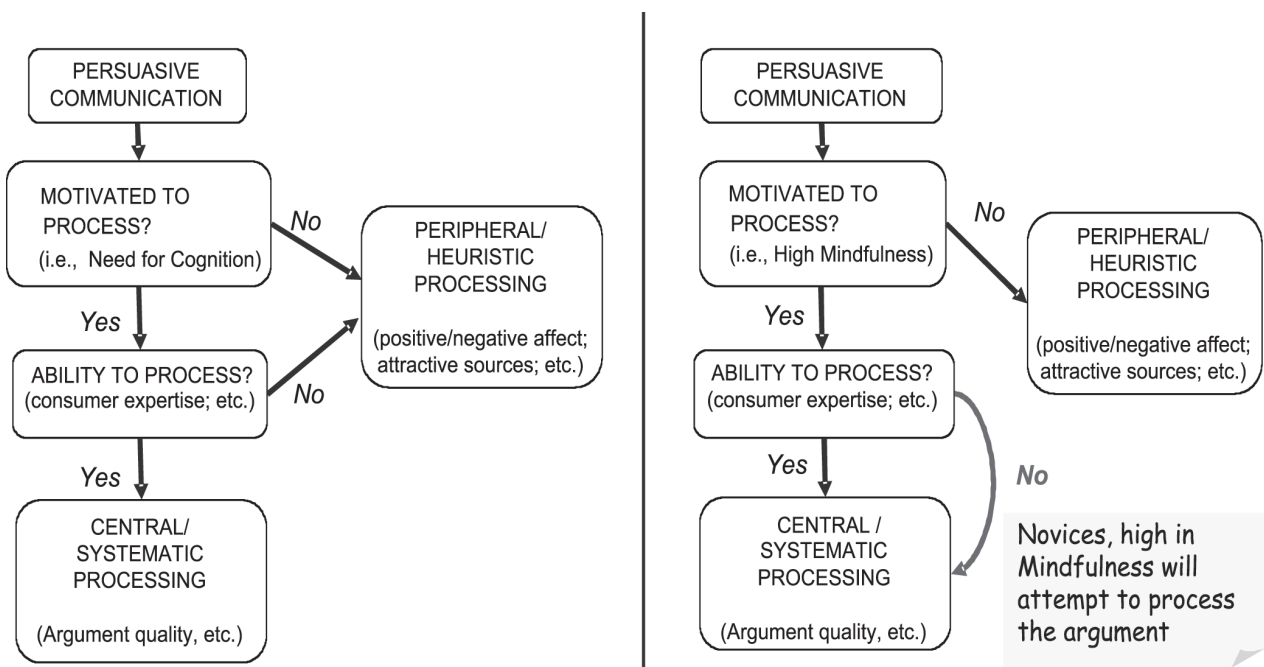
More specifically, we hypothesize:

- H1: Low mindful consumers and low NFC consumers both tend to employ peripheral/heuristics routes in processing persuasive messages (regardless of expertise).
- H2: Experts who are high in mindfulness or/and high in NFC will tend to employ central/systematic routes in processing persuasive messages.
- H3: Novices high in NFC will tend to employ peripheral/heuristics routes in processing persuasive messages, whereas novices high in mindfulness will tend to employ central/systematic routes in processing persuasive messages.

A 2 (NFC/Mindfulness: high vs. low) X 2 (Argument Quality: strong vs. weak) X 2 (Expertise: high vs. low) experiment was designed. 228 undergraduates participated in this study. Participants were shown a series of print ads, in which a target ad for a digital camera (adapted from previous advertising studies) had been imbedded. We varied the product messages (strong/weak arguments, a between-subject manipulation) in the target ad, and took individual difference measures of mindfulness, NFC, and expertise (within-subject measures). Groups (based on median splits) were created for each of the individual difference measures.

Even though our results confirmed that mindfulness and NFC are significantly correlated ($r=0.49, p<.001$), these results also establish that these two constructs are distinct (only 25% common variance). Further, we were able to confirm that the two constructs do not serve

FIGURE 1
The Contrasting Roles of Need-For-Cognition and Mindfulness in Persuasion



the same function in persuasion. Analyses of variance for product evaluation (attitude toward the product) and cognitive responses confirmed our theoretical predictions and allowed us to support hypotheses H1, H2 and H3.

In conclusion, we were able to show in this study that individual differences in NFC and mindfulness lead to significant differences in how consumers respond to persuasive messages. Especially, it is important to note that the introduction of the Mindfulness construct expands our understanding of the routes that lead to persuasion, and outlines routes that were previously deemed unlikely (central processing of a message under low expertise). Future research, however, should investigate further the nature of the processing styles that high mindful novice engage in (e.g., item specific, relational etc.). Also, it would also be important to consider the role of mindfulness in situations where consumers are repeatedly exposed to a message. In these situations, do high mindful consumers notice small change in information more than other consumers do, and are they more likely to update (keep constructing) their attitudes over time (as opposed to retrieving already formed attitudes)? Thus, the next step in our on-going program of research targets longitudinal studies designed to explore how consumers (characterized by mindfulness and NFC respectively) respond differently to multi-exposed messages. These questions can be investigated by exposing respondents to multiple instances of a similar message, with a slight alteration to the message content at a later exposure (for example a change in price), and then showing that this later change gets incorporated in the judgments of the high mindful respondents, but not for high NFC respondents. Also, we believe that this line of research has potential in providing some insights on the constructive vs. retrieval-based perspectives on attitude formation.

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Identifying the Black Sheep From the Ordinary: Social Categorization and Within Group Deviation in Print Advertisements

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From a social influence perspective, Grier and Deshpande (2001) suggest that academics and practitioners seek to better understand how social context and individual characteristics influence consumer response to marketing communications. By addressing the perceived likeability of spokespersons presented in marketing communications, the factors of social identity will emerge allowing for a better understanding of how social identity strongly impacts consumer receipt of marketing communications. The biggest implication for this research is that marketers will be able to construct their strategy in a manner that not only has homogenous appeal for targeted groups but it appeals to the overall heterogeneous market. The lack of empirical data that addresses the deviant norms expressed by a spokesperson of the ingroup, and how it impacts the recipient's evaluation is the motivation for our research question: What happens when consumers reject an ad because the spokesperson undermines the ingroup norms? It is suspected that the consumer will garner an unfavorable attitude of the advertisement and the spokesperson based on the salient ingroup norms, and ingroup derogation for the unlikable target will occur.

Social identity theory (SIT) offers a social-psychological perspective of group formations and inter/intragroup relationships. According to SIT, individuals tend to classify themselves and others into various categories, such as religious affiliation, gender, ethnicity, and organizational affiliations. Social identity theory attributes the general form of intergroup behavior such as ethnocentrism, stereotypic intergroup attitudes, and intergroup differentiation to social categorization and self-esteem processes. Where the categories are defined by the prototypical characteristics derived from the group members (Turner 1985). Social categorization serves two functions 1) it cognitively segments and orders the social environment, allowing individuals to define others around them, and 2) it enables the individual to define himself within the social environment. When members of a particular group differentiate ingroup members from the outgroup, and simultaneously differentiate between specific likable and unlikable ingroup members, the "black sheep effect" occurs. Ingroup members who conform to the ingroup prototype or consistently maintain group norms validate their social identity, and therefore attract favorable reactions. However, in contrast members of the ingroup who do not conform to ingroup norms, exercise deviant (norm undermining) behavior. *Participants*. One hundred and twenty-three undergraduate students from a major Southeastern University participated as a part of a class requirement.

Participants were exposed to all levels of treatment, and the stimuli were counterbalanced to prevent learning effects. Participants were presented with a booklet of print advertisements for a fictitious brand of digital cameras. After viewing each ad, participants responded to a questionnaire that contained all of the dependent measures. The print stimuli were a series of eight advertisements for a digital camera. All advertisements were identical with the exception of the socially categorized model. The models in the advertisements were chosen from stock photos of non-celebrity models. The order of advertisements was counterbalanced according to the various treatment conditions.

As hypothesized members of the respective socially categorized ethnic group classified themselves more favorably than other groups as a whole. This is consistent with the phenomenon of ingroup favoritism. In addition, the black sheep hypothesis held across all treatments for the respondents in the Caucasian and Asian categories. For Hispanic respondents the black sheep effect was supported except for the evaluation of the Caucasian target. Respondents in the African American category did not exhibit the black sheep effect. They evaluated the deviate ingroup member more favorably than outgroup deviates, which is not in support of the black sheep hypothesis. Additionally, ingroup favoritism was only shown among Asian respondents, thus H1 is supported for that group only. The other three groups evaluated themselves less favorably than members of the outgroup.

Consumer Conflict Management Strategies in Everyday Service Encounters

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The nature of services creates a context in which disagreements between consumers and service providers are likely to occur. A growing body of research has been devoted to complaint behavior in services (e.g., Fornell and Wernerfelt 1987; Goodwin and Ross 1989; Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekar 1998), but relatively little research focuses on a broader range of conflicts in services. We draw on an established literature of conflict management, to examine conflict behavior in everyday consumer service interactions.

Conflict, defined as an “interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities” (Rahim 2002); has been studied extensively in the contexts of organizational life (e.g., labor relations) and economic exchange (e.g., channel conflict and buyer/ seller negotiations). Rahim (2002) identifies six conditions which are likely to produce conflict: (1) Activity that is incongruent with needs and interests, (2) Incompatibility of behavior, (3) Differences in attitudes and values, (4) Exclusive preferences in joint activities, (5) Contention for limited resources, and (6) Interdependence in the performance of activities. Relating these conditions to the unique characteristics of services, such as intangibility, heterogeneity, and co-production, suggests that many services are likely to generate conflict between provider and customer. However, it is not clear how service providers and consumers manage such conflict.

In general, conflict management strategies refer to the specific behavior patterns one applies in conflict situations (e.g., Pruitt and Rubin 1986; Rahim 1983). Conflict management strategies/styles can be categorized into five types based on one’s level of concern for self and concern for others (e.g., Rahim and Bonoma 1979). These five styles are integrative/problem solving (high concern for self/ high concern for other), obliging/ accommodating (low self/high other), dominating/ contending (high self/low other), avoiding (low self/ low other), and compromise (moderate self/ moderate other).

Research question 1: What conflict management styles do consumers use in everyday service interactions?

A number of authors have suggested the role of multiple motives in conflict resolution (e.g., Carnevale and Pruitt 1992). Recently, Ohbuchi and his co-authors proposed multiple goal theory (Fukushima and Ohbuchi 1996; Ohbuchi and Tedeschi 1997), which considers social motives, as well as resource (economic) motives, in interpersonal conflicts. Economic exchanges in services involve resource issues (money, time), but also are likely to involve social motives. Ohbuchi and Tedeschi’s (1997) research suggests that in everyday interpersonal conflicts (non-business), social motives are often activated in addition to resource (economic) motives.

Research question 2: In everyday minor conflicts with services providers, are social motives important and are they as important as economic motives?

Fukushima and Ohbuchi (1996) also suggest a relationship between motives and conflict management strategies.

Research question 3: In the resolution of minor conflicts with service providers, are consumers’ resolution tactics related to their motives?

If both social and economic motives are activated in service conflict situations, the choice of resolution strategy is likely to be influenced by the mix (combination) of motives expressed by each customer. Therefore, it would be expected that the level of activation of various motives (profiles) would vary between the different categories of conflict strategies employed.

Research question 4: Does the mix of motives (mean levels of activation) vary across alternative conflict resolution strategies employed?

A study was conducted to exam these research questions. The participants were 70 undergraduate students enrolled in business related courses at a large Midwestern university. Students were given a scenario in which they had been confronted by a video rental store about

a lost rented DVD. They were then asked to respond to a motives questionnaire, followed by an open-ended question about how they would deal with the conflict situation. The student responses to the open-ended question were coded by two independent coders for the presence or absence of four conflict strategies: integrating, obliging, compromising, and dominating. The level of agreement between the coders for each strategy was assessed using Cohen's Kappa statistic ($\text{all} > .70$). Motives were measured with six-point likert-style scales based on Fukushima and Ohbuchi (1996).

The results suggest that respondents used a number of different conflict management strategies in their attempt to resolve the conflict over the lost DVD. Compromise was the most frequently used strategy ($N=26$), followed closely by integration ($N=24$), and obliging ($N=23$). Relatively few respondents used a dominating strategy ($N=6$). The results also indicate that social motives were at least as (two were actually more) important than economic motives. Looking at the means across the motive categories, justice was the most important motive (9.97), followed by relational (8.20), economic (7.80), and identity (7.75), respectively. The relationship between motives and strategies employed was assessed using binary logistic regression. Significant predictors were found for each of the strategies except the integrative strategy. The results suggest that the higher the economic motive the lower the probability of an obliging strategy being used. Similarly, the higher the justice motive, the lower the probability of a dominating strategy and the higher the relationship motive, the lower the probability of a compromise strategy.

Based on the premise of mixed motives, we examined profiles of the means for the four motives by strategy. For the obliging strategy, the justice motive was the strongest, followed by relationship and identity, with economic being the weakest motive. For the aggressive strategy, the economic motive was highest and the relational motive was lowest. For the compromise strategy, the justice motive was highest, followed by economic and identity, with relational being the lowest. For integrative, justice was very high, followed by relational, identity, and economic.

Obviously, the study is preliminary in nature, however, it does provide some insights. The study suggests that even in a fairly insignificant service conflict situation, consumer behavior can be fairly complex. Therefore, service employees cannot rely on predetermined, "one-best-way," strategies for handling consumer conflicts. Frontline employees must be able to identify alternative strategies and be capable of adapting their style of responding to conflict with customers. Alternative strategies were activated based on mixed motives. Maintaining a working relationship with the retailer and justice were rated to be more important motives to customers than the most favorable economic outcome. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have emphasized the importance of justice in complaint resolution (Goodwin and Ross 1989; Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekar 1998). These results are also consistent with Fukushima and Ohbuchi's (1996) research, which indicated that an integrative strategy was related to relational motives, an obliging strategy was positively related to relationship motives and negatively related to economic motives, and an aggressive style was related to high economic and identity motives.

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Relationships Among Individual, Institutional, and System Level Public Trust: A Case for Consumer Evaluations of Food Safety

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Extended Abstract

Many of the most challenging public policy issues of our century hang on the problem of public trust. Despite the central importance of public trust to consumer behavior and public policy research, relatively little is known about the origins and relationships between various types/levels of public trust. For example, it is not clear why consumers trust their own grocery stores and yet distrust grocery stores in general in providing safe food. Further, it is not clear why as consumers distrust food retailers, regulatory agencies, law-makers, food

manufacturers, scientists, they still trust the food system to supply them safe food. Our paper provides a unique perspective for understanding the origins of public trust and relationships between various levels of public trust.

Public trust has been studied largely at the institutional level where the focus has been to understand the citizens' trust in specific social institutions (e.g. Lazarus 1991; Mc Garity 1986; Rampton and Stauber 2001). So far, the focus in understanding public attitudes toward GMF has also been limited at the institutional level-which we find shortsighted. In order to understand public trust in food safety and in the safety of GMF, one should investigate citizen's views of various individual establishments (e.g. family farms) and institutions (e.g. farmers in general) through a holistic approach. Approaching public trust through systems perspective (Patton 1990) is likely to inform us about the relationships between various levels of public trust.

As we noted, the relationships between various levels of public trust are paradoxically conflicting. Various polls conducted over the past a few decades suggest that the public has generally positive perceptions of individual politicians (such as congressional representatives) and quite negative perceptions of political institutions (such as the Congress). These perceptions are not limited to politics. For example, people's overall assessments of their own doctors are systematically more positive than their assessments of doctors in general (Jacobs and Shapiro 1994). Despite negative evaluations by the public at the institutional level, the polls over the same period of time suggest that collectively, across institutions, public trust is still very high. The great majority of people find United States the best place to live; and have confidence in the political system, the health system, the food safety system, etc (e.g. Nye 1997; Cooper 1999; Muntz and Fleeming 1999).

Although social scientists (mostly in the area of political science) have attempted to explain the paradoxical conflict between individual and institutional levels of public trust (e.g. Asher and Barr 1994; Cook 1979; Fenno 1975; Ripley et al. 1992), there has been no attempt to explain the relationship between individual, institutional, and system levels of public trust. In other words, we do not know how citizens' evaluations at the local level affect their evaluations of systems. In addition, we do not know how negative evaluations at the institutional level can collect into positive evaluations at the system level. The purpose of this article is to understand the origins and the relationships between institutional and system level public trust in the context of food safety and consumer evaluations of genetically modified foods. Our research design involved a two-stage iterative data collection process. The first stage involved eighteen depth-interviews and the second stage involved seventeen depth interviews with consumers in a Midwestern state. Based on our findings, we introduce the idea that consumer use "balancing strategies" in that their trust in one institution can offset their lack of trust in other institutions, and as a result, they feel safe about the food they consume. In addition, public trust in the food safety system may depend on the perceived capabilities of the most powerful institution of the system, and/or perceived negative and positive interactions between component social institutions that form the food safety system. We also explore the possibilities that institutional and/or system levels of public trust do not matter in consumers' beliefs about food safety.

We believe that our paper complements to this year's conference theme, Transformative Consumer Research (TCR), as TCR aims to "make a positive difference in the lives of consumers, both present and future generations, through the chosen focus and conduct of specific research, and in the communicating of its implications and usefulness" (ACR 2005). In addition, TCR aims a heightened relevance and value related to consumer research to business executives and public policy administrators. In this paper, we first set out to conceptualize public trust at three different levels, individual, institutional, and system levels. Then we review the prior research related to public trust. After a brief overview of research on public (institutional) trust, we specifically focus on the research that deals with the paradoxical disparity between various levels of public trust. We then provide an overview of our research context and activities that took place between 1999-2003 in the Midwest. After reporting our findings, we conclude with a general discussion of contributions and implications for consumer, for academicians, for practitioners (e.g. the food industry) and for public policy makers.

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Smoke Gets in Your Eyes: The Stigmatization of Smokers

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This exploratory research looks at how anti-smoking messages, legislation and environmental changes have affected non-smokers and their attitudes towards, and treatment of smokers. Preliminary research suggests that a negative smoker stereotype has been created with various possible effects on the smokers themselves. Ex-smokers also appear to enjoy a particularly positive perception. The data collected allows the construction of composite images of each of these stereotypes. Finally, this research seeks to shed light on the possible implications of these attitudinal changes for the efficacy of the anti-smoking campaign.

When I Go Out to Eat I Want to Enjoy Myself: An Investigation into Consumers' Use of Nutrition Information

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Extended Abstract

Over the past several decades, the populations of the world have become more and more overweight. As we have seen from the recent round of legal claims filed in the United States against many of the fast food companies and several best-selling books (i.e. Nestle 2002, Schlosser 2002), many people and organizations are firmly convinced that the fast food companies and their marketing representatives are to blame for this public health epidemic. As a result, many have sought legislative action in the form of new laws and regulations from the USDA to control what aspects of food products are marketed and to which age brackets certain products can be targeted (Nestle 2002). For example, The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) released a report in early 2005, urging that nutrition information be included on fast food and chain restaurant menus. They found that when nutrition information is provided, consumers have the ability to make healthier food choices off of restaurant menus. They also noted in their report that in a study of nutritionists, nutrition information was grossly underestimated for restaurant menu items (CSPI 2005). Also, within the past year the HeLP America Act of 2005 (S1074) has been introduced in the United States Congress to require restaurants to list the standard nutrition information on their menus for their regular offerings. While this legislation may not pass, this issue is not going away and will play a major role in the way restaurants and other food service establishments develop their marketing strategies for the future. Despite the increased government and public interest group efforts to include nutrition information on restaurant menus because they feel it is in the consumers best interest, the key question from a consumer research perspective is: whether consumers will in fact use the nutrition information if it is presented on a menu to make healthier food choices?

The current consumer literature on nutrition information began with the public policy research surrounding the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA) of 1990, which regulated the nutritional labeling of packaged foods. This literature covers a wide variety of topics ranging from how consumers use nutrition information from a food package (Balasubramanian and Cole, 2002) to how nutritional labeling has effected the way in which food products are advertised (Pappalardo and Ringold, 2000). However, the consumption of food at home and the consumption of food in a restaurant seem to be different activities in that one meal can take place in a private setting (e.g. at home), while the other takes place in a more public location (e.g. at a restaurant). As Ratner and Kahn (2002) find, consumers make different decisions in public and private contexts and so we should reasonably expect that they also use different information to make decisions in public and private contexts (e.g. at home or in a restaurant). In an effort to study consumers' choices from a restaurant menu, recent research has shown that evaluations of a restaurant are affected by the presence of health claims and nutrition information on the menus (Kozup, Creyer, and Burton 2003). Also, consumers have been shown to be willing to pay more for healthier food options at a restaurant (Burton et al. 2004). However, the consumers' decision process is not thoroughly explored in the above studies and as a result, this paper will attempt to shed some light on the decision making process for consumers' choices at a chain restaurant.

One model frequently used in the public health literature may help to explain why consumers have differing reactions to the addition of nutrition information to restaurant menus, and may use or not use the information presented. The Stages of Change Model (Prochaska and DiClemente 1992) posits that there are five stages consumers pass through when they are changing their behaviors (from precontemplation to maintenance) and at each stage, the consumers use different strategies to make decisions. This model was previously used to examine consumption-control processes in a self-chosen problem behavior area (Lawson 2001). As a result, in this context, consumers should have different reactions to the nutrition information (i.e. whether the information is used, and what types of affect are generated by the presence of nutrition information) based on the stage in which their current behaviors fall.

In an effort to study this issue, Study 1 involved an experiment with 121 subjects in three different settings, a community barbecue on the Mid-Atlantic and a weight loss center and student subject pool in the Southeast of the United States. The study consisted of a menu of selected items from a nationally-recognized chain restaurant, questions to determine the subject's stage of change, food choices, and evaluation of the menu. The quantitative results from this study indicate that there are no effects of stage of change on the use of nutrition information or on the decisions made by consumers. Also, the presence of nutrition information on the menu in this study has no effect on the evaluation of the menu ($p=0.13$). As a result, the responses to the open-ended questions on the survey were analyzed and some interesting patterns were noted. These results show that a majority of the consumers made their food choices based on the description of the menu option and their food preferences. For example, as one respondent noted, "When I eat out I get what I like, regardless of money or health." These results provide some preliminary insights into why consumers' make certain (usually unhealthy) decisions when they eat out at restaurants. They also contribute to the literature on the Stages of Change model, which contains a debate about the appropriateness of the Stages of Change model for complex decisions like food choices (Jeffrey et al. 1999).

Since the results of Study 1 did not support the predicted hypotheses, Study 2 was developed to try to further uncover some factors that could explain an individual's reactions to nutrition information on a restaurant menu. The purpose of this study was to examine the function of dietary restraint in food choices and whether there was a moderating effect of the presence or absence of nutrition information on this relationship. The secondary purpose of this study was to examine the role of health knowledge in food choice decisions. Study 2 involved an experiment with 124 subjects that again used the menu items from a national chain restaurant and the manipulation of either nutrition information being present or absent on the menu. In this study, the measured variables included dietary restraint (Herman and Polivy 1980), self-esteem (Heatherton and Polivy 1991), self-objectification (Fredrickson et al. 1998), and health knowledge (Moorman 1990; Moorman and Matulich 1993). The results support the hypotheses that self-esteem ($F(1,103)=19.017, p<0.001$) and self-objectification ($F(1,103)=3.481, p=0.06$) are predictors of dietary restraint. The results also indicate that health knowledge has a significant effect on food choices ($F(1,119)=4.755, p<0.05$). The results of the moderation of nutrition information on the relationship between dietary restraint and food choices are in the predicted direction, such that when an individual is a restrained eater, if nutrition information is presented on the menu, they order meals with fewer calories than unrestrained eaters. However, the moderation was not significant.

In conclusion, when examining the two studies together, we may be able to gain some interesting insights into how adults chose foods from restaurant menus. From the results of the qualitative data in each study, we can see that the main reason people state for choosing foods are that they like the way to food tastes or that these are the foods they prefer. Results so far are mixed in answering the question of whether or not individuals make healthier decisions when nutrition information is on the menu. Future research in this area could continue to investigate the role of health knowledge as well as dietary restraint in food choices. The framework developed in Study 2 may also be tested in restaurants that serve different types of food since the restaurant in this study offered mainly American food. Overall, the results of this series of studies may have some implications for the current legislation as well as further public policy efforts to regulate the provision of nutrition information at restaurants.

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Field Experiments in Nonprofit Marketing: Social Identity and Status Influence Contributions

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This project examines whether the level of contribution to a public good is influenced by the relational affiliation, relative status of donors, and motivational framing of the transaction as consumption versus a charitable exchange. We use a field experiment in alumni giving to study such effects. Pilot field research has shown that social factors do influence contributions, and that donors do categorize their motivational framing of the transaction differently. In this abstract, we will focus on the hypothesis and the design of the actual research.

I Gave at the Office (And I Hated It): Changes in Preference for Ethical Behavior Following an Unrelated Ethical Act

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Two studies examine propensity to give to a charity following another, unrelated charitable act. We find that giving is affected both by 1) assimilation of affect from the first charitable act to the second and 2) a newly-identified phenomenon we call “gave at the office”: respondents sometimes feel that they have done their fair share of charitable giving and lose a sense of obligation to donate to subsequent activities. Manipulations of difficulty and morality of the first charitable activity determine whether people are likely to experience assimilation or “gave at the office” effects and thus influence people’s likelihood to donate to a second unrelated ethical cause.

Can a Rational Consumer Be a Good Citizen? Conflicting Goals in Today’s Society

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According to public opinion polls, when “all other things are equal” consumers prefer “green” products (Ginsberg and Bloom 2004). However, other things are almost never equal. Price, characteristics and functionality are often poorer for environmentally friendly products, and people compromise. Our preliminary research suggests the existence of a goal hierarchy formed by consumers. The highest level of conflict is perceived between self related goals and environmental goals, while least perceived conflict is between self related goals and family and friends related goals. To explain the phenomenon we draw from the literature on social dilemmas, as well as motivation theory.

Free Bumper Stickers for a Better Future: The Long Term Effect of the Labeling Technique

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Abstract

We compared the labeling technique with a traditional social marketing campaign, providing thought-provoking arguments, regarding their long term effect on ecological behavior. In this study ($n=241$), we provided participants either with an ecological, self-descriptive label, an information-based campaign promoting ecological behavior or no information at all, and compared behavior in a repeated social dilemma situation, framed as an ecological task. We found that labeling outperforms classical campaigns on the longer term. We did not observe the expected interaction with mental load.

Paper Summary

Campaigns promoting different kinds of sustainable consumer behavior (e.g. buying ethical or ecological products) have often shown limited success, especially in the long term. Classical social marketing efforts, communicating arguments in favor of the sustainable alternatives, may cause consumers to think about the pros but also the cons of these purchases. Ethical and ecological products often are more expensive, require more effort to find, and their quality is trusted less. Even if these campaigns achieve short term success, people

often regress to their original purchase habits because the original drawbacks of sustainable products re-gain salience over time. We propose that 'labeling' the consumer might lead to better results. The labeling technique (Kraut, 1973; Miller, Brickman, & Bolen, 1975) exists of providing people with a self-defining label after an external stimulant has provoked a certain behavior. We will focus on ecological behavior. Consumers might, for example, be tempted into buying an ecological product by offering a price promotion. After this externally motivated purchase, a message is communicated which labels the consumer as an ecologically responsible person. When people accept this label as self-descriptive, their future ecological behavior might be internally motivated and hence be more robust to regression to the original purchase habits. We expect that imposing a mental load while receiving this label will result in increased acceptance of the label, and increased compliance.

Experiment

Two hundred forty-four students participated in the study for course credit. In a first phase, we provoked an ecological purchase decision. In order to do this, we provided the participants with a list of seven identically priced TV-sets, which were rated on several dimensions (Image quality, image quality in sunlight, sound quality, remote control, ecological aspects, ease of programming and quality of the manual). One of the TV-sets was superior on both image and sound quality, pretested as the most important features in the choice for a TV-set, and most participants (92.6 %) therefore chose this option. The others were discarded from the analysis. Importantly, the chosen TV set was also rated highest on 'ecological aspects'.

Following this initial choice, participants were assigned to one of three conditions in the second phase of the experiment. Those in the 'labeling' group received feedback on the personality traits of the typical customer choosing this TV-set. The subjects who chose the superior TV-set learned that the people making this choice were typically 'very concerned with the environment, and ecologically conscious'. A second group got to read an explicit plea in favor of ecologically conscious consumer behavior. These two groups read this information either when imposed to a cognitive load manipulation or not. A third, control group merely received the mental load manipulation, but did not get any information.

In the third stage of the experiment, the participants made three consecutive decisions in a social dilemma, framed as an ecological task. They were asked to imagine that they needed to buy 10 bags of potato chips for a party. The available potato chip alternatives were either packed in conventional or in bio-degradable bags. The bio-degradable bags were more expensive because they were bought less often. If enough people would buy the bio-degradable bag, its associated price could go down. After making a first decision, all participants received bogus feedback, saying that among the eight people present in the lab not enough bio-degradable bags had been bought to achieve a price decrease. They then proceeded to identical second and third rounds.

We also measured participant's social value orientation, and asked on a seven point scale to which degree they took ecological aspects into account when making a purchase decision. Answers to the latter question demonstrated that the manipulation was successful.

Labeling had an effect on how many biodegradable bags were chosen. We assessed the effect both within and between subjects.

Within subjects, we compared behavior on choice 1 and choice 3. The choice position by communication (labeling vs explicit vs control) interaction was significant ($F(2,213)=6.27, p<.01$). In the explicit plea group the number of ecological choices increased, on average, from $M=5.30$ ($SD=.38$) to $M=7.80$ ($SD=.38$), in the control group it increased from $M=5.31$ ($SD=.56$) to $M=7.57$ ($SD=.57$). In the labeling group we observed the sharpest increase from $M=5.07$ ($SD=.40$) to $M=8.59$ ($SD=.41$).

The means for the three groups differed significantly in round 3 ($F(2,213)=4.63$); $p<.01$

To examine the differential impact of the persuasion tools we tested how choice order interacted with the contrasts among the communication conditions. The contrasts between the labeling and the control condition and between the labeling and the explicit plea condition interacted with choice order ($F(1,142)=8.15$; $p<.01$ and $F(1,138)=12.17$; $p<.01$, respectively). The interaction of choice order with the contrast between the control and the explicit plea conditions, on the other hand was not significant ($F<1, NS$).

The effects of neither mental load nor social value orientation were significant.

The results suggest that providing people with a self-descriptive label is an effective means to achieve an internally motivated increase in sustainable consumer behavior, particularly in the longer term. Future research will deal with the generalizability of these findings to more involving situations, requiring actual personal sacrifices.

We will also investigate why mental load did not have the expected effect.

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Do "Possessors" Really have a Stronger Desire to Possess than "Non Possessors"? Study of Consumer Desires of Visitors and Collectors of Contemporary Art Vis-à-vis Two Modes of Consumption-Access and Possession

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Extended Abstract

Consumer behaviour studies seem to be separated into two different approaches: the "possession" behaviours-the classical modality of purchase- considered as "the most basic and powerful fact of consumer behaviour" (Belk, 1988, 1992; Mehta and Belk, 1991; O'Guinn and Belk, 1989; Richins, 1994 etc.); the "access" behaviours- the experience within a service which permits the temporal or long-term

utilisation without purchase, initially linked to the “experiential products” in the field of consumer studies (Holbrook, 1980; Evrard et al., 2001; Pine II and Gilmore, 1999 etc.).

However, few studies have been done regarding on the situation where both “possession” and “access” -as two possible available means to “consume” the wanted goods- can occur depending on the consumers’ desires and choices.

From the literature, we find that 1) there is a lack of research that takes into account the two kinds of consumption behaviours concerning the same products and makes a comparison between them; 2) previous work puts emphasis on the objective of the consumption experience, but rarely focused on “what consumers desire” vis à vis these two consumption modes. This paper will contribute to the comparison of consumer desires between two modes of consumption -access and possession- by developing scales measuring consumer desires.

In our study, we are interested in two questions:

- 1) Are consumer desires for “access” different for “possessors” and “non possessors”?
- 2) Are consumer desires for “possession” different for “possessors” and “non possessors”?

Proposed Methodology:

Field chosen:

The field of contemporary art has been chosen due to the pre-existing consumption modes -notably art museum visits and the purchases- as well as due to the continual new creation of artworks. Therefore, the access and possession situations in this study refer to visits and purchases; possessors correspond to the collectors and non possessors correspond to the visitors.

The qualitative part:

The part of qualitative study, based on more than 30 depth interviews, shows that the desires of visitors to contemporary art exhibitions include discovery; curiosity; emotion; pleasure; passion; understanding; cultural broadening; inspiration; the enjoyment of beauty; escape; meeting friends; pastime; social representation; stimulus; social obligation; extended-self; and freedom of imagination. The desires of collectors of contemporary art are found to be emotional; aesthetic; intellectual; social; utilitarian (decorative); symbolic; philanthropic; ostentatious, and financial.

The quantitative part:

A questionnaire containing 273 items, developed on the basis of the results of the qualitative study, was sent to 1000 people on the occasion of the FIAC (International Fair of Contemporary Art) and GMAC (Grand Marché d’Art Contemporain) in Paris. One hundred and ninety six complete responses (98 from collectors and 98 from visitors) were received and allowed us to obtain preliminary empirical results. The responses to the items were subjected to a principal components analysis. The items were divided into 7 different factors (consumer desires in access experience, those in possession experience, etc.) and the analyses are effected respectively by these categories. The empirical results of the final study will be presented in this paper.

Analysis of data:

Analysis of principal components (APC) and Structural equation modelling (AMOS) were used in this study.

We have followed logical steps to analyse the data:

1. Item purification (APC)
2. Scale validation (AMOS)
3. The test for invariant factorial structure (AMOS)-the application involving multiple samples. The central concern is whether or not components of the measurement model and/or the structural model are invariant across the multiple groups.

In our study, we use this method to first confirm the stability of the measurement model and then learn about the similarities or differences of the desires for “access” and for “possession” of visitors and collectors.

Empirical Results:

Results in this study show that consumers have some contradictory desires vis à vis their behaviours: regarding the desire for possession, collectors have a weaker possessive desire; desire for accomplishment; desire for keeping family traditions. and desire for intellectual enrichment than visitors, while having a stronger philanthropic desire and desire for sociality. Regarding the desire for access, visitors have a stronger desire for sociality and desire for freedom, and a weaker desire for a simple visit than collectors.

The Act of Giving: Involvement, Habitual Giving, and Motives of Volunteerism

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Charitable organizations are under constant pressure to increase both financial and non-financial contributions. The question of how and why people give is crucial in helping non-profit organizations attract and retain donors and volunteers. Although the literature is rich in studies on helping behavior (*c.f.* Bendapudi, Singh and Bendapudi, 1996), research in consumer behavior provides little guidance in helping us understand motives of volunteerism (Fisher and Ackerman, 1998). Given that the number of voluntary organizations has increased in recent years, marketing techniques are playing an ever more important role in helping organizations recruit and retain volunteers (Bussell and Forbes, 2002). Understanding the psychological and behavioral aspects of volunteerism helps charities to identify characteristics of those most likely to volunteer, as well as target volunteer recruiting campaigns more effectively.

The purpose of this study is to explore relations between various psychological and behavioral aspects and volunteerism. Specifically, *reasoned influences* (e.g., attitudes, values, involvement and motives), *unreasoned influences* (e.g., habitual giving), and *situational influences* (e.g., income, education, etc.) are used to predict volunteer behavior. Extending existing theory in social psychology, Ronis et al.'s (1989) repeated behavior model is adapted to the study of volunteer behavior. The adapted model allows for measuring the effects of reasoned processes, unreasoned processes, and situational factors on volunteer behavior. Ouellette and Wood (1998) were able to demonstrate that repetitive past-behavior (habits) directly affects future behavior, independently of cognitions (attitudes, subjective norms, intentions, and perceived control). Although recent research has shown the influence of social norms on volunteerism (Fisher and Ackerman, 1998), there is evidence to indicate that there may be additional functions (or motives) served by volunteering (Clary et al., 1998).

Survey data were collected from members belonging to The Cancer Council Australia (TCCA), Australia's national non-government cancer control organization. Surveys were mailed to 1000 randomly selected members in the TCCA database, with 418 completed surveys returned (42% response rate). TCCA members include those that have contributed either time through volunteering and/or made financial contributions to the organization in the past. The first step was to determine if existing scales measuring attitudes towards helping others (AHO) and attitudes towards charitable organizations (ACO) (Webb, Green and Brashear, 2000), and volunteer motives (Clary et al., 1998) could be replicated in Australia. Consistent with Webb et al., (2000), the four items measuring AHO and the five items measuring ACO loaded on two factors, respectively. Similarly, the factor analysis on the 30 items in the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) was consistent with prior scale development by Clary et al. (1998). The results produced six factors representing various functions served by volunteering (protective, values, career, social, understanding and enhancement). Based on the ability of these scales to capture the dimensions intended, composite measures were developed for each of the two attitude scales (AHO and ACO), as well as for each of the six volunteer functions (protective, values, career, social, understanding and enhancement). In order to test the adapted repeated behavior model, additional independent measures were gathered: *involvement* (number of activities supported, degree of support to other non-profits); *habits* (length of time supporting specific events, degree of habitual support of charity days, volitional/automatic support of charities in general); *values* (Schwartz's (1992) 27 universal values: altruism, equality, etc.); and, *situational/enabling* factors (employer involvement with TCCA (2 items), age, income, education).

To identify significant predictors of volunteer behavior, stepwise multiple discriminant analysis (SMDA) was performed using a model consisting of 46 variables: attitude (2), volunteer motives (6), involvement (3), habitual giving behavior (3), values (27), and situational variables (5). Two groups were created, based on whether members volunteered for the organization or gave monetary donations or other financial contributions (e.g., purchased merchandise). The SMDA resulted in an 11-step model. Based on minimum Mahalanobis D^2 and Wilks' Lambda values, the 11 variables included in the final discriminant model, based on their loading order, were: Total number of activities involved in with TCCA (*involvement*), Employer involvement with charity (*situational/enabler*), Length of time supported special charity event (*habit*), Support provided to other non-profits (*involvement*), Employer matches donation (*situational/enabler*), Values (*motive to volunteer*), Social (*motive to volunteer*), Routine involvement in special charity events (*habit*), Enhancement (*motive to volunteer*), Age (*situational*), and INCOME (*situational*). Together, these 11 variables made up a discriminant function that was able to correctly classify just over 74% of TCCA members.

A summary of the findings suggests that attitudes (AHO, ACO) were poor predictors in discriminating between volunteers and non-volunteers. Similarly, personal values (e.g., altruism, helping, etc) were not able to explain variation between volunteers and non-volunteers. One of the best predictors of volunteerism was involvement. Those that consistently showed prior support to TCCA through greater number of activities (breadth of support) were volunteers. Interestingly, those that showed greater involvement in other non-profit organizations were non-volunteers, suggesting volunteers were loyal to TCCA. Habits were also a significant predictor of volunteerism. The amount of prior time supporting TCCA's special charity events significantly predicted tendency towards volunteering. Similarly, routinely supporting the special charity event was also a significant predictor of volunteerism. Consistent with past research (Clary et al., 1998), three of the six volunteer motives (values, social, and enhancement functions) were able to significantly predict volunteer tendencies. Although personal values (Schwartz's values) were not able to directly predict tendencies towards volunteering, they appear to manifest themselves in one's specific motives to volunteer. Factors that were able to predict non-volunteers are also meaningful. Non-volunteers were significantly influenced by their employer's involvement with TCCA, suggesting that situational enablers help facilitate and encourage donation behavior. Furthermore, donors tended to be younger and have a higher income, perhaps influencing their decision to donate money versus time. And as expected, donors tended to make greater financial contributions to other non-profit organizations than did volunteers. These findings suggest that there may be a trade-off in how members of non-profit organizations decide on what they are going to give. Involvement, habitual giving tendencies, and motives to volunteer appear to serve as important predictors of why members tend to volunteer versus donate. Future research investigating such trade-offs in a repeated behavior framework are encouraged.

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An Examination of a Strategic Household Purchase: Consumer Home Buying Behavior

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In the past few years, a criticism has been directed towards publication in the consumer behavior field, claiming that it is biased toward a marketing perspective and that it neglects consumer well-being and difficulties consumers face when making buying decisions for a strategic product. Existing literature lacks empirical studies of consumer decision making for "big" or "strategic decisions" (Bazerman, 2001; Gronhaug, Kleppe, and Haukedal 1987). According to Wells (1993), investigating purchasing decisions that can change lives of consumers, such as a car or a house purchase, can make an essential contribution to consumer behavior knowledge.

In view of the dearth of literature exploring consumer decision making when purchasing high-involvement and emotionally charged products, the purpose of this research was twofold: a) to develop a conceptual model of consumer decision-making process for a prefabricated house purchase; and b) to gain knowledge of factors impacting this process from the empirical standpoint. The product selected in this study was a custom-made prefabricated house. House is the most important durable good in the household and it requires high involvement as well as complex decision making. The strongest parallel can be made with a car purchase, and many studies of consumer decision making indicate there are similarities in the buying processes of different durable goods (Punj, 1987). Hence, the empirical literature in this area and the real estate literature provided a basis for conceptual and empirical work.

After a thorough review of the existing empirical work, a conceptual model of a consumer buying process in case of a home purchase was developed. This model consists of three main groups of variables: the buying process, the external and the internal factors. It suggests that an individual's lifestyle and the meaning a person wants to derive from owning a house influence his/her needs and desires concerning the house. We posit that a house will reflect its owners' individuality and personal style. For a complex product such as a house, the information stemming solely from a buyer's memory is generally inadequate (Gibler and Nelson 2003). Therefore, consumers continuously gather new information and adapt their desires and goals accordingly. The buyer usually does not get to know all the alternatives simultaneously. Rather, new alternatives are gradually added.

The second stage of this research involved empirical testing of the presented conceptual model. A number of factors prompted us to utilize qualitative research methods, i.e., in-depth personal interviews with consumers: a deeper understanding of consumer behavior, a complicated nature of the buying process, and potential useful directions for further quantitative research. In this research, six semi-structured in-depth interviews were carried out; three with recent owners of the prefabricated house, and another three with potential buyers of the same product. Due to a very limited population, the sample was selected on a non-random basis. Interviews were carried out in participants' households. At least one decision maker in the household participated in the interview which lasted from 45 to 90 minutes and it was audio-taped. Topics of discussion followed the established interviewing protocol.

In the analytic stage of our research, we followed the procedure for analyzing qualitative data by Miles and Huberman (1984). These guidelines enable investigators to produce compelling analytic conclusions and enhance the internal validity of the study. The analyses involved three types of activities: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing. Audio tapes with interviews were transcribed and reviewed several times by the researchers. The conclusion drawing was based on the cross-case comparisons, reference to previously reviewed empirical studies and to the theoretical framework. Noting patterns, themes and regularities supported final conclusions.

One of the major contributions of this study was an extensive review of the literature dealing with consumer decision making processes and behavior in relation to strategic purchases. Using qualitative research design, we empirically examined the conceptual model and carefully compared the theoretical and empirical findings. Similar to Erasmus, Boshoff, and Rousseau (2001) and Loewenstein (2001) our results suggest that cognitive and rational factors alone do not offer a sufficient explanation of consumer behavior in the case of high-involvement products such as a prefabricated house. In addition to the idiosyncratic characteristics of the customer, his/her personal situation and environmental factors, the role of feelings, experience, subconscious factors, needs and goals should be taken into account. Along with the emotionally charged internal factors, other factors identified in our qualitative analysis include consumer's experience with and prior knowledge of a house buying process. Significant external factors in this qualitative study included recommendations from people buyers trust, the seller/company's behavior and marketing communication activities in the housing market.

As households may have serious problems in making wise strategic purchase decisions (Gronhaug, Kleppe, and Haukedal 1987), we offer several implications for consumers. Since house buying is a decision with long-term consequences, we recommend to consumers that they first explicitly define their needs and objectives concerning the purchase. Next, we propose consumers gain information about available alternatives and specific criteria relevant to them. Clearly, external information search is a way to increase knowledge, and reduce perceptions of risk and uncertainty (Dowling and Staelin 1994). Respondents in our study seem to have had limited knowledge about houses and the buying process itself. We emphasize that gaining additional knowledge about this topic is of critical importance. We recommend to the home buyers that they make attempts to experience the house independently of its producer. The findings of this study indicate that an individual's experience with company's representatives plays an important role in the consideration set formation and

decision making regarding the house purchase. Decision should be made based on direct comparison of evaluated alternatives consistent with a person's goals and needs. Taking into consideration the specifics of the selected product, it is hoped that this study contributes to a better understanding of the strategic buying process and provides some useful guidelines for consumers.

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Community and Connectivity: Examining the Motives Underlying the Adoption of a Lifestyle of Voluntary Simplicity

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Duane Elgin's book *Voluntary Simplicity* resonated with those seeking an alternative to America's "commodity culture," a culture in which people are "primed to want and desire commodities even though they cannot afford to have them" (Elgin, 1981, O'Sullivan, 2003). While "voluntary simplicity" is not a new concept, recently there has been a growing ripple of individuals adding steam to this longstanding "anti-consumerism" movement (Etzioni, 1988). In the popular culture, many books, such as *Circle of Simplicity* and *Choosing Simplicity*, and organizations, such as Adbusters and Seeds of Simplicity, have emerged to give validity to this lifestyle and provide a forum for exploring ideas and gaining support (Andrews, 1997; Pierce, 1999).

Prior to this past decade, there was little academic interest in the voluntary simplicity movement. However, as the movement gains momentum in the popular culture, researchers are beginning to focus on understanding the attitudes, values and motivations of voluntary simplifiers, as well as those engaged in other anti-consumerism lifestyles (Cherrier and Murray, 2002; Zavestoski, 2002). This limited body of research suggests that voluntary simplicity can be viewed as a lifestyle choice since it pervades all aspects of behavior and is not necessarily correlated with what may otherwise appear to be highly related personality traits, such as frugality (Lastovicka 1999, Todd 2002). In fact, many who currently practice voluntary simplicity experienced a transformative learning process that led them to simplify their lives. In *Choosing Simplicity*, a book that explores the different ways in which individuals have chosen to implement the principles of voluntary simplicity, several adherents stated that they were not content just going along with the "norm" and sought something more meaningful in their lives (Pierce, 1999). Interestingly, though implementing the voluntary simplicity lifestyle in quite divergent ways, those interviewed for the book shared the conviction that the "good life" is not based upon material possession or image.

Because research on this topic is still in its infancy, we currently lack answers to even the most basic questions about the voluntary simplicity lifestyle, such as what a lifestyle of voluntary simplicity entails, what factors prompt an individual to simplify their life and how voluntary simplifiers participate in the traditional marketplace. One of the earliest accounts of voluntary simplicity states that:

"Voluntary simplicity involves both inner and outer condition. It 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. It means an ordering and guiding of our energy and our desires, a partial restraint in some directions in order to secure greater abundance of life in other directions. It involves a deliberate organization of life for a purpose" (Gregg 1936).

In another work, Elgin and Mitchell categorize simplicity according to five basic values: material simplicity, self-determination, ecological awareness, human scale, and personal growth. However, based on a review of the definitions appearing in the popular press and selective articles in the marketing field, Johnston and Burton (2002) reports that Elgin and Mitchell's taxonomy of values fails to provide a complete account of the values and motivations underlying an individual's decision to adopt this lifestyle. Johnston and Burton's review represents a step forward, in that it attempts to provide a more clearly articulated conceptualization for future academic research on the topic.

Other attempts to bring coherence to the definition and motivations underlying this lifestyle have focused on clarifying what voluntary simplicity is *not*. This work shows that, contrary to the common misconception, voluntary simplicity does not advocate giving up all material possessions, but instead promotes the notion of mindful consumption.

In this working paper we attempt to bring greater clarity to our understanding of voluntary simplicity by examining the values, attitudes and marketplace behaviors of those adopting the lifestyle. Unstructured, in-depth interviews were administered with self-proclaimed voluntary simplifiers. Initial results provide insight into many dimensions of voluntary simplicity. In particular, the data reveal an interesting pattern among participants with regards to motivations for choosing this lifestyle. The stated motivations varied from individual to individual and included environmental concern, desire for financial independence and time freedom. However, the concept of community, both local and global, entwined many of their reflections. The local community aspect dealt with the face-to-face interactions with family, friends, and community members, whereas the global community referred to all living things on the planet, including plants, animals, and humans. Along with the discussion of community arose the desire to feel “connected” with nature, people and their inner self. This indicates that perhaps the most basic underlying motivation for choosing voluntary simplicity is the desire to feel connected to one’s inner, external and global community.

The need for connectivity is universal. The means by which voluntary simplifiers satisfy this need suggests that past consumer behavior research, which draws a direct link between identity and material items (Belk 1988), may need to be refined. The findings also suggest that marketers seeking to increase consumer well-being must decrease their focus on material possessions and emphasize experiences that facilitate connectivity.

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Sacred and Profane Consumption Revisited: The Case of Fair Trade Consumers

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Conceptualisation

Two main responses to globalisation prevail. Protagonists committed to programmes of industrial and economic modernisation emphasise the role of world trade in attaining universal peace, prosperity and well-being. Antagonistic to the consumer culture driven by marketing and neo-liberalist activity, a ‘rainbow coalition’ points to a long list of the ills of globalisation ranging from habitat destruction through ‘air miles’ issues to child labour.

‘Third Way’ approaches to globalisation attempt a measured response based on the reality of the current propensity to consume. Accepting the dominance of consumption, strategic solutions to the ‘dark side’ of globalisation are understood in terms of responsible and ethical practices by producers and consumers alike. The Fair Trade movement represents a case in point.

Whilst recording the positive effects of Fair Trade on producers in developing countries, this paper proposes to concentrate on its benefits to consumers. A definition of Fair Trade is given:

“Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers—especially in the South. Fair Trade organisations (backed by consumers) are engaged actively in supporting producers, awareness raising and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade.” (European Fair Trade Association 2002)

This generates a discussion of the relational dynamics between consumers and Fair Trade producers. Given the Christian or humanist foundations of some Fair Trade companies, this discussion leads canonically to issues of the sacred and profane.

Russell Belk and his colleagues assert that anything may become sacred (or profane) as a result of a process of the investment of meaning by an individual or group. 'Sacred' consumption refers to that which is "more significant, powerful and extraordinary than the self". The 'profane' is "ordinary and lacks the ability to induce ecstatic, self-transcending, extraordinary experience." (all quotes, Belk et al 1989, p.13). Experiences of Fair Trade suggest that this notion of profanity needs adjustment. It is precisely in the mundane, everyday world of making coffee, washing clothes and dusting ornaments that we find the magical reality of our humanity. When the objects of our domestic actions are already 'pre-sacralised' through being fairly traded, then those actions serve to intensify that sacredness.

Design and Method

The central aim of the research is an inquiry:

"To what extent is Belk et al's conceptualisation of the 'sacred and profane in consumer behavior' consistent with the experiences and understandings of Fair Trade consumers?"

There are methodological challenges in addressing the sacred and profane. The terms are complex. For example, Belk et al list twelve 'properties of sacredness'. They are also open to considerable personal interpretation. Further, initial informal discussion between the researcher and informants suggested a degree of perplexity in relating the sacred and profane to consumption. The researcher was also aware of the twin pitfalls of reification and the 'double hermeneutic' (Giddens 1976)—the phenomenon of respondents adopting the researcher's terminology in formulating their responses.

With these challenges in mind, the researcher drafted a semi-structured interview schedule that would progressively create a framework for the discussion of the sacred and profane. The schedule has four sections:

- I) Details of respondent's Fair Trade purchase and use.
- II) An exploration of interviewees':
 - Length of involvement and reason for involvement in Fair Trade;
 - Fair Trade meanings;
 - Personal beliefs and values;
 - Understanding of the relevance of these beliefs and values to Fair Trade involvement;
 - Opinions of personal and other changes connected to the development of Fair Trade.
- III) Using a set of consumer artefacts (e.g. Fair Trade coffee) and written prompts (e.g. quotes), the researcher and research participant engaged in discussions on:
 - Reactions to Fair Trade and non-Fair Trade products;
 - Intentional action and the Fair Trade consumer;
 - Comparative and contrasting views of the consumer culture, elicited using written prompts:
 - i) "... Render therefore unto Caesar ... " (Matthew, xxii, 22);
 - ii) "The consumer society exists today ... " (Miller 1995);
 - iii) Five summary critiques of the consumer culture derived from Droege et al (1993);
 - iv) The 'definitions' of sacred and profane used by Belk et al (1989);
 - v) A description of Fair Trade Christmas composed using four of the twelve properties of sacredness.
- IV) Personal details: age / occupation / education / religion.

The schedule is a mix of conversational prompts typical of traditional qualitative research and the use of media that have a market research character.

Due to the origins of Fair Trade and the focus on sacred/profane, respondents were purposively sampled as Christian and 'no formal religious affiliation' (NFRA). Additionally, 'greater than ten years as a Fair Trade consumer' was used as a selection criterion.

Initial Findings

Currently, data from 10 interviews have been processed. Interviewee breakdown is: 4 female/Christian; 3 male/Christian; 2 female/NFRA; and 1 male/NFRA. Experience as a Fair Trade consumer ranged from 10 to 40 years. (Interviewing of other respondents continues; more NFRA's need to be recruited.)

Initial findings indicate:

- Considerable use of Fair Trade products in daily life;
- A belief in making social justice a reality, common to all interviewees;
- Clear articulation of Fair Trade as a means of substantiating those beliefs;
- Christian respondents expressed the view that their faith needed to be lived out as direct connection with the Poor and Fair Trade was one means for doing this;
- Respondents least favoured the Puritan critique of the consumer culture and most favoured the Quaker;
- Before considering the sacred/profane issue, many interviewees referred to certain products as evil. Connections were made to ecological degradation and particularly the promotion of formula milk in developing countries. Respondents used these opinions to inform their complex reflections on the sacred and profane. For Fair Trade products, there was partial agreement with the

definition of sacred but the facet of 'ordinariness' provoked rich and varied responses, difficult to reconcile with the definition of the profane.

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Effects of Interior Color on Healthcare Consumers: A 360 degree Photo Simulation Experiment

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The effects of the 'servicescape' (Bitner, 1992) on consumer behavior have long been recognized. Especially in high-stress services, such as medical care, the physical environment can strongly influence customer evaluation. This experiment investigates the effect of interior color on patients' emotional and cognitive appraisal and perceived service quality. Subjects were exposed to QuickTime 360° panorama photos of a first aid examination room and a private ward room. Blue walls (as compared to white walls) reduce anxiety and increase cognitive and affective appraisal and even perceived service quality.

Introduction

Hospitalization can have a great psychological impact. A patient's health is at stake, and (s)he is temporarily separated from family and friends. Under such conditions, patients display a strong need for information concerning their health and treatment (Engström, 1984). However, reliable information about the quality of healthcare is rather difficult or even impossible to obtain, as patients lack insight into the procedure and effects of the treatment. To reduce this uncertainty, patients will be inclined to infer their judgment of service quality from other indicators, such as the tangible environment. Therefore, physical aspects of the service environment play an important role in customers' evaluation of healthcare services (Arneill & Devlin, 2002).

A considerable amount of empirical evidence is available about the effects of environmental factors on a wide variety of consumer responses (Turley & Milliman, 2000). Historically, the atmosphere in clinical environments has been cold and sterile due to color, lighting and furniture. The current trend in hospital interior design is to create an attractive, relaxing atmosphere in order to relieve patients' stress and anxiety, improve their emotions and hence encourage the healing process (Devlin & Arneill, 2003). Color can be used effectively for this purpose (Calkins, 2002; Marberry & Zagon, 1995). Blue has been found to be the most preferred color throughout color literature (e.g. Bellizzi, Crowley & Hasty, 1983; Guilford & Smith, 1959), and stress-reducing effects of short wavelength colors (blue, green) are well-documented (e.g., Birren, 1979; Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994). Yet, solid empirical evidence for anxiety-reducing and affect-enhancing effects of interior color in healthcare settings is largely lacking.

In this study we investigated the effects of wall color on anxiety, pleasure, evaluation of the room and perceived service quality in a simulation of a general hospital. We expected subjects exposed to a hospital room with blue walls to experience more positive emotions, and lower anxiety, to evaluate the room more positively, and to appraise the quality of the service higher than subjects exposed to a white hospital room.

Method

Procedure

A total of 90 students participated in a uni-factorial between-subjects design (blue vs. white wall color), using desktop computers in a social science laboratory.

First, participants were asked to imagine being hospitalized with a leg fracture, after a fall from a ladder. The vignette described how the patient, upon arrival in the hospital, was admitted to a first aid examination room. After the doctor made X-ray pictures, he performed surgery on the patient.

Next, for 70 seconds, subjects were exposed to a QuickTime 360° panorama of an examination room. Photos were taken at a local hospital. In a 360° panorama, the direction and rotation speed of the representation can be controlled by moving the mouse in the desired direction. Wall color was manipulated using Adobe Photoshop. Subjects were randomly assigned to either the white (Hue 336°, Saturation 3%, Brightness 93%) or the blue condition (Hue 226°, Saturation 27%, Brightness 80%). They filled out a questionnaire measuring anxiety, pleasure, cognitive appraisal and perceived service quality. Subsequently, the vignette described the patient being transferred to a private ward room for a 10-day recovery. A 360° panorama of the ward room was shown. Again, subjects were randomly assigned to the color conditions. The same colors were used as in the examination room, and again, the cognitive appraisal, pleasure and anxiety-scales were administered.

Measures

Anxiety and emotion were measured using the 6-item translated 'Profile of mood states' anxiety subscale (Wald & Mellenbergh, 1990; $\alpha=.92$) and the 6-item Mehrabian & Russell pleasure subscale (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; $\alpha=.84$), respectively. Cognitive appraisal was assessed using the 10-item environmental appraisal scale (Bitner, 1992; $\alpha=.81$), and perceived service quality was measured, using a 13-item adjusted SERVQUAL-questionnaire (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988; Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml, 1991; $\alpha=.87$).

Results

Not surprisingly, respondents felt far more anxious receiving treatment in the examination room ($M_{\text{examination room}}=3.05$), than they did recovering in the ward room ($M_{\text{ward room}}=2.18$; $t=9.32$, $p<.001$).

Analyses of variance showed that in both rooms, blue walls significantly decreased anxiety compared to white walls (examination room: $F(1,88)=4.77$, $p<.04$, $\eta^2=.05$; ward room: $F(1,88)=5.77$, $p<.02$, $\eta^2=.06$), and also improved the subject's pleasure (examination room: $F(1,88)=5.81$, $p<.02$, $\eta^2=.06$; ward room: $F(1,88)=5.36$, $p<.03$, $\eta^2=.06$) and cognitive appraisal (examination room: $F(1,88)=12.30$, $p<.002$, $\eta^2=.12$; ward room: $F(1,88)=8.54$, $p<.005$, $\eta^2=.09$). Even more interestingly, participants in the blue examination room condition perceived a higher service quality ($M_{\text{blue}}=3.53$), than participants in the white examination room ($M_{\text{white}}=3.24$; $F(1,88)=9.56$, $p<.004$, $\eta^2=.10$), even if the items referring to tangible aspects of the service, were omitted from the scale ($F(1,88)=7.33$, $p<.01$, $\eta^2=.08$).

A mediation analysis (Baron & Kenny, 1986) revealed that the relationship between color and perceived service quality ($\beta=.28$, $p<.004$) was partially mediated by both pleasure ($Z=1.83$, $p<.07$) and cognitive appraisal ($Z=2.56$, $p<.02$).

Discussion

The results provide consistent empirical evidence regarding the effects of interior color on patient responses. The hypothesis that blue walls in healthcare settings alleviate anxiety and improve emotion, the evaluation of the physical environment, and perceived service quality, was confirmed.

Mediation analyses confirm that affective as well as cognitive processes underlie the relationship between interior color and consumer evaluation. Color can enhance service evaluation by improving customers' affective state and by increasing their evaluation of the physical environment. This may be the result of a halo effect (Thorndike, 1920): because the physical environment is positively evaluated, customers assume that other aspects of the service, such as the diagnosis and the treatment, are of the same, high quality.

When entering an emergency room, patients experience elevated levels of distress as a result of an acute health threat and the anticipation of a medical treatment. The aforementioned positive effects of blue walls are found in a high-anxiety, short-stay emergency room and in the relatively low-anxiety ward room, in which a patient is to spend considerable time recovering. First, this suggests that the beneficial effects of a blue wall color are not restricted to high-stress encounters, but may also occur under moderately stressful conditions. Secondly, the effect seems to be independent of exposure length.

Some care needs to be taken in interpreting these outcomes, since the data were collected among healthy subjects who were asked to imagine being hospitalized. These results should be replicated under realistic circumstances.

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A Taxonomy of Spiritual Motivations for Consumption

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Consumer researchers have acknowledged that spirituality is an important factor in motivating consumption (eg. Baumgartner 2002; Curasi, Price and Arnould 2004; Gould and Stinerock 1992; Hirschman 1985; Holbrook 1999, 2001; Kozinets, 1997, 2001; Murray 2002; Thompson 2004; Twitchell 2004). Considered to be the 'life force' by which we act (Golberg 1998), the spirit is a major driver for human behaviour (Dyson, Cobb and Forman 1997; Golberg 1998; Stoll 1989), including consumption. Yet despite this, consumer researchers still lack a clear understanding of what spirituality is and how it affects consumer choices. This study set out to develop a taxonomy by which researchers may understand this previously ill-defined and misunderstood motivation for consumption and presents propositions through which it may be studied.

A review of consumer research reveals a paucity of studies that explicitly focus on spiritual motivations for consumption. This seems surprising given the host of studies that reflect facets of a search for spiritual fulfilment, including river rafting (Arnould and Price 1993), skydiving (Celsi, Rose and Leigh 1993), collecting (Belk 1995; Belk et al. 1988), sporting spectatorship (Holt 1995; Kozinets et al. 2004), ownership of automobiles (Belk 2004) or pets (Hirschman 1994), and engagement in consumption communities (Belk and Costa 1998; McAlexander, Schouten and Koenig 2002; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Thompson and Troester 2002) or anticonsumption activities (Huneke, 2005; Kozinets 2002;). Furthermore, the few studies that have directly examined spiritually-motivated consumption (SMC) have predominantly focussed on its religious expression (eg. O'Guinn and Belk 1989; Ozanne 1992; Wright and Larsen 1992), thus excluding the substantial portion of SMC that is not within a religious context (see Durgee 1999, for one exception).

Much needs yet to be learnt about spiritual motivations for consumption. Central to this is the acknowledgment that spirituality is a complex, multifaceted phenomena (Emmons and Paloutzian 2003) that cannot be characterised by a single behaviour or experience. Rather, spirituality represents a series of interrelated constructs that work together to form a cohesive yet intricate whole. Accordingly, this study offers a theoretical framework through which the many facets of spirituality may be understood and further examined.

Method

An extensive multi-disciplinary review of literature from psychology, religion, anthropology, personality, consumption and health care was undertaken. Content analysis revealed eleven potential descriptors of spirituality or spiritual experience which were synthesised into three main categories. The first two (meaning and connection) reflect the cognitive component of spirituality, while the third (emotional transcendence) reflects its affective component (Seidlitz et al. 2002). Testable propositions were then developed to enable future study.

Results

Meaning. Whether sought through literature, art, food, music, ideology, or relationships (Burkhart 2001; Dyson et al. 1997; Golberg 1998), meaning was identified as a primary focus of spirituality (Apikos 1992; Zinnbauer et al. 1997), and thus a sense of meaning in life was seen to be central to spiritual wellbeing (Stoll 1989). Closely related to meaning were the concepts of purpose, hope and personhood (Dyson et al. 1997; Golberg 1998; Stoll 1989), each giving a sense of 'what or who one ought to live for' (Stoll 1989, 6).

Seen from a consumption standpoint, meaning may be proposed to shape an individual's SMC choices as follows:

- P1: Individuals who feel their lives lack meaning are more likely to choose SMC experiences that offer an explicit meaning narrative within a structured context such as a church (eg. O'Guinn and Belk 1989) or a social activist group (eg. Kozinets and Handelman 2004).
- P2: Individuals who feel their lives already have inherent meaning are more likely to choose SMC experiences that enable them to create their own meaning narrative via self-driven behaviours (eg. the personal fashion discourse of 'Delores' in Murray 2002)

Connection. Caring connections with both external 'others' (other people, nature or a Higher Power) and with one's internal selves were frequently cited as key expressions and experiences of spirituality (eg. Burkhart 2001; Dyson et al. 1997; Hirschman 1985; Holbrook 1999; Moore 1996; Rose 2001; Thompson and Troester 2002; Walton 2002; Zinnbauer et al. 1997). A sense of connection to the past, present or future (Badone 1991; Golberg 1998) or to a greater plan (Emmons and Paloutzian 2003) were considered important influences on spirituality. Hope, love, compassion, trust and forgiveness were identified as vital foundations for one's relationships, thus influencing one's sense of connection (Dyson et al. 1997; Golberg 1998; Rose 2001; Stoll 1989).

A desire for connection may be proposed to influence SMC choices in the following ways:

- P3: Individuals seeking outer-directed spiritual connection are more likely to seek SMC experiences that are other-focussed or externally-driven such as antimarket festivals (eg. Kozinets 2002).
- P4: Individuals seeking inner-centred spiritual connection are more likely to seek SMC experiences that are internally-focussed and self-generated such as sky diving (eg. Celsi et al. 1993).

Emotional Transcendence. The final key characteristic of spirituality concerned the 'feeling level' (Stoll 1989) of spiritual experience. Desirable affective states ranged from tranquil emotions such as peace, inner harmony, comfort, or a sense of security (Golberg 1998; Moore 1996; Stoll 1989), to more vibrant emotions such as joy (Zinnbauer et al. 1997), ecstasy, exaltation or rapture (Holbrook 1999).

The nature of emotional transcendence that is desired may be proposed to influence SMC choices as follows:

- P5: Individuals who seek tranquil spiritual experiences are more likely to engage in SMC activities that are of a quiet, gentle nature such as collecting (eg. Belk 1995; Belk et al. 1988) or meditative ritual (eg. Badone 1991).

P6: Individuals who seek vibrant spiritual experiences are more likely to engage in SMC activities that are of a vigorous, exciting nature such as river rafting (eg. Arnould and Price 1993) or shamanistic dance (eg. Gould 1991).

Future Directions

This study set out to advance understanding of a dynamic consumer value that has vital implications for consumer motivation. Future research may explore SMC using the taxonomy and propositions presented. Further analysis of extant literature may also be required so as to integrate additional facets of spirituality such as healing (Golberg 1998) into this taxonomy.

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Childhood Socialization Effects on Adult Ability to Control Impulse

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Extended Abstract

Conceptualization: There has been widespread recognition of the inability of purely cognitive decision models to fully account for important aspects of consumer behavior (Bargh 2002; Luce, Jia et al. 2003). Consequently there has been increasing interest in including "visceral" factors such as impulsive drives in consumer decision-making paradigms (Alba 2000; Loewenstein 1996). The merging of these conceptual models offers great promise for transformative consumer research by improving understanding of how and why consumers often act against their own self-interest, despite their having exquisite knowledge of the negative implications of their behavior. Consumer domains in which this line of inquiry shows great promise include, drug abuse, addictions, impulsive and compulsive buying, and overeating (Hirschman 1992; O'Guinn and Faber 1989). To date, many consumer researchers interested in visceral factors have focused on immediate external circumstances, such as "high pressure" sales tactics, or aversive states such as hunger, or fear (Aaker, Stayman et al. 1996; Cools, Schotte et al. 1992; Keller and Block 1996; Kroeber-Riel 1979; Lang, Greenwald et al. 1993; Pham 1996; Raju 1980; Sanbonmatsu and Kardes 1988; Sternthal and Craig 1974). However, there is an extensive developmental psychology literature that details how experiences during child development can have longlasting influences on a person's capacities, sensitivities, and predispositions (Berntson and Cacioppo 2000; Goldhaber 2000). For example, unloving and overprotective parenting is known to increase risk for emotional disorders, school dropout and impulsive behaviors such as drug use, initiation of sexual behavior, and conduct disorder (Chisholm 1993; Chisholm 1999; Chisholm 1999; DuHamel, Manne et al. 2004; Hall, Peden et al. 2004; Hill, Young et al. 1994; Hojat 1998; Karen, Byron et al. 2005; Mason, Cauce et al. 1994; Meyer and Gillings 2004; Wells and Rankin 1991; Zimmerman, Salem et al. 1995). Long-term effects of childhood socialization may occur via several different varieties of "carry-forward" effects: (1) neural growth effects such as those known from studies of visual deprivation in infancy; (2) neuroendocrine organizational effects; (3) cognitive features such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, and cognitive models of relationships; or (4) predisposition of one social adversity to others (Decker 2000; Flinn, Quinlan et al. 1996; Rutter 1994; Worthman 1999). In the case of the first three varieties, emotionally-valenced experiences during childhood, including those resulting from parental care, may alter long-term psychological characters via molecular reorganization of neurobiological networks involved in the integration of impulsive and reflective psychological states (Bechara 2002; Bechara, Damasio et al. 1997; Damasio 2001; Posner, Rothbart et al. 2001).

Method: We examined the influence of parenting on consumer impulse-control with a go-no-go task, and retrospective ratings of maternal care among 140 healthy women ages to 18 to 83 years. Vulnerability to consumer impulsiveness was examined through performance on an experimental affective-shifting task that requires participants to rapidly distinguish neutral from emotional stimuli (in this case positive or negative valence words), and to either respond by pressing a key or withholding response as directed. Impulsiveness was operationalized as response time to negative and positive targets, numbers of omissions and errors, as well as aggregated disinhibition and discrimination scores. Maternal care was measured using the "Parental Bonding Instrument" (PBI) (Parker, Tupling et al. 1979), which includes two scales, "caringness" and "controllingness." The PBI has been widely found to have good long-term reliability, and sound validity.

Expectations: Several studies have revealed PBI “caringness” to be associated with adaptive adult outcomes, whereas “controllingness” often has been linked to maladaptive outcomes, such as emotional disorders. Go-no-go tasks have revealed differences in executive function among persons suffering psychiatric and/or substance abuse disorders. Go-no-go tasks have revealed that manic patients have impaired ability to inhibit behavioural responses and focus attention. Depressed patients are impaired in their ability to shift attentional focus, and also exhibit negative attentional bias (Murphy, Sahakian et al. 1999). Recovering alcoholics show generally slower response times than non-alcoholics, and poor discrimination between targets and distractors, but better executive functioning for alcohol words, indicating cognitive biases toward alcohol (Xavier, Van Der Linden et al. In Press). Based on past findings about parental bonding and impulse control, we expected that maternal caring would be associated with better executive function, whereas maternal controlling would be associated with deficits in executive function, including more omissions, more errors, and slower responses.

Major Findings: We did not find maternal caring to be strongly associated with measures of impulse control. Response latency was not found to vary as a function of childhood socialization. With age controlled ($Y = \text{CONTROL} + \text{AGE} + \text{CARE}$) women who reported their mothers as more controlling had less flexibility in shifting stimulus reward associations. This was manifest as both: greater response disinhibition $F(1, 136) = 1.86, p = .064$ ($\beta_1 = 0.17$), and lower accuracy when shifting away from positive targets $F(1, 136) = 2.22, p = .028$ ($\beta_1 = -0.2$). Although this trend was also true for performance on all shift-blocks aggregated $F(1, 136) = 1.74, p = .065$ ($\beta_1 = 0.17$), a similar effect was not observed for the “shift-to-positive” condition, indicating that the impairment in adult executive function associated with maternal controlling during childhood is specific to flexibility in turning attention away from positive targets. Similarly, an association between childhood maternal control and errors in distinguishing positive from neutral stimuli during all shift blocks $F(1, 134) = 2.15, p = .033$ ($\beta_1 = -0.2$), was accounted for entirely by the shift-FROM-positive condition $F(1, 134) = 2.22, p = .028$ ($\beta_1 = -0.168$). Despite the fact that there was a non-significant difference in disinhibition during shift compared to non-shift blocks in general, maternal controlling associated with increased disinhibition in shift- compared to non-shift blocks $F(1, 136) = 2.72, p = .008$ ($\beta_1 = 0.25$). Results suggest that the childhood experience of having a controlling mother may influence impulsive, “out of control” consumer behavior. These findings indicate that controlling maternal behavior specifically decreases flexibility in turning attention away from positive stimuli. Such an effect could influence many of the maladaptive behavioral outcomes that have been associated with maternal “overprotectiveness,” as well as “out of control” consumer behavior.

Contributions to Transformative Consumer Research: The impulse control dimension examined in this study may be integral to a wide range of consumer behaviors ranging from overeating, to drug addictions, gambling, and impulsive buying. However, this study represents merely the first steps in one example of how transformative consumer research may be strengthened through an interlocation of traditional decision-theory and concepts and methods from developmental psychobiology for addressing “visceral” factors. This study provides a foundation for myriad trajectories through which future studies may extend the consumer-centric values of the present findings. Future work should seek to relate the parental bonding, and impulse-control variables examined here to actual patterns of consumer behavior, such as food buying habits. Representative community samples are needed to establish the degree to which parental behavior is correlated with, or confounded by other childhood socialization influences, such as schools, neighborhoods, poverty, illness or trauma. Studies of these issues in current parent-child social interactions will be needed to reveal the relative and/or interactive influence of the various carry-forward effects described above.

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Biases in Mental Extrapolation

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Extended Abstract

Consumption choices often involve forecasting one's future preferences with a product based on limited information. The current investigation examines the biases and cognitive processes in a particular class of such preferential forecasting, namely, mental extrapolation tasks. By mental extrapolation we mean the process of envisioning the appearance of whole product on the basis of exposure to product fragments. For example, home owners often have to choose paint colors based on small swatches of various colors, so they have to imagine how their home would look like with each particular color since the complete product (i.e., their home in various colors) is not available. Likewise, movie goers often select movies based on trailers, essentially fragments of a movie, they have seen on TV. Although this problem is extremely common, there has been little academic research on this topic. The current research aims to fill the research void and to contribute to our understanding of preferential forecasting.

Background

Two lines of research are relevant. First, the affective forecasting literature (for a review, see Wilson and Gilbert 2003) examines people's ability to accurately predict their affective reactions to a future event. This literature has shown a pervasive tendency to overpredict the intensity and duration of their future affective experience (i.e., the impact bias). In other words, the feelings people actually experience are often weaker than what people predict. A major source of this bias is anchoring; that is, predictions are excessively influenced by people's current affective reaction to the target event and not tempered by considerations of future circumstances that may attenuate this reaction. In the context of mental extrapolation, we should also expect anchoring to influence forecasts more than actual experience since evaluations of the fragments per se are more salient in the forecast context than in the consumption context. This also leads to more extreme forecasts.

The second line of research, that on memory processes, helps to shed more light on the detailed cognitive processes for such judgments. The accessibility of prior experience affects preferential forecasts by strengthening the anchoring effect. Several authors have discussed the anchoring phenomenon in the framework of priming (e.g., Chapman and Johnson 2002), which highlights the role of accessibility in anchoring effect. In addition, more accessible information (e.g., memories of prior experience with a product fragment) is likely to be activated earlier than other information and bias the subsequent retrieval process (Roediger 1978). As a result memories that are consistent with the initial information are more likely to be retrieved than inconsistent memories. Both processes are likely to be present in mental extrapolation tasks, and both will result in more extreme forecasts and hence greater inconsistency between predicted preferences and actual experience.

Empirical Studies

These predictions were tested in two laboratory experiments. Both experiments recruited undergraduate students at an east coast university as participants for partial course credit. In both experiments, participants were told to evaluate some new shirt designs from a catalog company that was considering to expand business to target college students in the region where the school is located. All materials were presented on computer screens and all measures were collected by the computer. Each experiment consisted of two sessions separated by a short filler task. In the first session (forecast session), participants were first shown a series of patterns and were told that each pattern would be arranged in a particular array on a shirt. They were asked to indicate how much they would like a shirt with each pattern on a 100-point scale (i.e., a scroll bar). In the second session (experience session), participants were shown shirts with the patterns they saw in the forecast session and asked to evaluate each shirt on the same 100-point scale. The order of presentation for the stimuli was randomized.

The shirt patterns were manipulated on two dimensions: typicality for the product class, and familiarity. Both manipulations were confirmed by ratings of a pretest group. A third factor, predicted liking, was created based on each participant's response in the forecast session in the following way: for each participant shirt patterns that ranked in the top third in predicted liking were coded as high in predicted liking, and patterns that ranked in the bottom third in predicted liking were coded as low. The middle third was dropped, but this did not affect the pattern or direction of results reported below.

In all respects, the two experiments were very similar except that in experiment 1 manipulations of typicality and familiarity were based on ratings of the pretest group whereas in experiment 2 they were manipulated based on each participant's own ratings. Therefore, participants in experiment 2 first evaluated each pattern on typicality, familiarity, and attractiveness, and then proceeded to the forecast session after a short filler task.

The key dependent measures are forecast errors (= predicted liking [response in forecast session]–actual evaluation of shirt [response in experience session]) and response time for each prediction measured in seconds.

Results

Across the two experiments, several stylized findings emerge. First, in support of H1, forecast errors were positive when people expected to like the final product but negative when they expected to dislike it.

Second, consistent with H2, predicted likings in the forecast session had a significantly stronger correlation with evaluations of the shirt patterns per se than did actual evaluations of the whole shirts in the experience session. This indicates that preference forecasts were anchored on evaluations of the product fragment. Moreover, about 70% of participants across the two studies exhibited this anchoring effect, that is, pattern evaluations were more correlated with forecasted liking than with actual experience.

Third, familiarity with the product fragment tended to increase the magnitude of these errors, especially when the fragments were also atypical. This suggests that memory processes may have played a significant role in such judgments.

Discussion

The current research provides some initial investigation into a class of common consumption judgments (i.e., mental extrapolation) and extends the existing research on affective forecasting by introducing the role of memory processes and richer stimuli. The results also have implications for some retail practice.

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Toward Developing Conceptual Foundations of Internet Brand Community

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Extended Abstract

The concept of brand community has been studied by a number of marketing scholars. Recently, Internet brand communities are attracting attention from marketers. Internet brand communities are growing taking various forms include extensions of a brand community built by corporations and Internet-centric brand communities built by consumers. Despite the widely acknowledged significance of Internet brand community, consumer behaviors within such a context have rarely been studied in the marketing literature, particularly when considering critical characteristics of the Internet environment. This paper seeks to address this distinctive absence.

In this paper, concepts that lie within the Structuration theory (Giddens 1984) will be used as a framework for integrating literature and conceptualizing Internet brand community. This paper's objectives are as follows: One purpose of this study is to offer conceptual foundations of Internet brand community by developing an integrated overview of the current research. Concepts from the Structuration theory are used for synthesizing the consumer behavior literature. Among the basic concepts of Structuration theory, structure, social integration, time and space, and routines are employed for comparing the concepts of brand community and Internet brand community in the literature synthesis. Brand community and Internet brand community are compared based on the concepts in the Structuration theory.

A second purpose of this study is to find and fill the gaps between brand community and Internet brand community in the literature. Internet brand community is a new concept in academic literature. Comparing brand community and Internet brand community by using the basic concepts of Structuration theory, structure, social/ social system integration, time and space, and routines, gaps between brand community and Internet brand community were found. To fill the gaps in the literature, potential research questions are suggested.

First, while the literature offer insights into defining the structure of brand community by discussing hierarchy and formalization, the structure of Internet brand community has only been discussed in terms of the super membership (Schau and Muniz 2003). Further, super membership in an Internet brand community is discussed not in an Internet-centric context but as an extension of offline brand community. It is imperative that the gaps between brand community and Internet brand community studies be filled, in order to clarify the Internet brand community structure. Thus, the following questions may be drawn upon in future research endeavors to fill the gaps: How can the structure of Internet brand community be conceptualized? What are the differences and similarities in structure between brand community and Internet brand community? What are the differences and similarities in structure between Internet brand community as an extension of offline brand community and Internet-centric brand community?

Second, while the literature conceptualized integration of brand community as Customer-Brand Relationship, Customer-Customer-Brand Relationship and Customer-Centric Relationship (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001; McAlexander, Schouten and Koenig 2002), the integration of Internet brand community has not been conceptualized. Further, loyalty and satisfaction related to the Internet brand community have not been discussed. It is imperative to fill the gaps between brand community and Internet brand community studies, in order to clarify the Internet brand community integration. Thus, the following questions can be drawn upon during future research efforts: How can Internet brand community integration be conceptualized? What are the differences and similarities in integration between brand community and Internet brand community? How can loyalty and satisfaction be conceptualized and measured in Internet brand community integration?

Third, Internet brand community studies clearly propose time-space compression in the Internet environment. By considering time and space, the following questions can be drawn upon for the future research efforts which will consider the Internet environment: How does time-space compression affect the structure of Internet brand community? How does time-space compression affect the integration of Internet brand community?

Fourth, Brand communities as subcultures of consumption are characterized by sets of shared beliefs and values, rituals, symbolic expression, shared consumption patterns and ideologies of consumption. But discussions of routines, shared consumption patterns, or shared values in the Internet brand community were hardly found in the literature. The following questions can be drawn upon in future research efforts considering Internet brand community: What are shared beliefs and values, rituals, consumption patterns and ideologies of consumption in the Internet brand community as subculture? How do Internet brand community members present symbolic expression in the Internet environment?

Finally, the future research directions for conceptualizing Internet brand communities are discussed by considering basic concepts in the theory of Structuration and critical characteristics of the Internet environment. Critical characteristics of the Internet environment will be discussed. Then, by considering those characteristics, the future research direction for the Internet brand community will be suggested to fill gaps in the literature.

A conceptual model of Internet brand community will be suggested by providing theoretical underpinnings of Structuration theory in the Internet environment. The Structuration theory offers insights into the relationship between structure and interactivity, by providing the concept of the duality of structure. In fact, interactivity is a central issue in the Internet environment. However, few articles in the literature offered partial information toward interaction in the Internet brand community in order to build a conceptual framework for Internet brand community in the Internet environment, the relationships between structure and interactivity would need to be thoroughly captured into the model.

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Consumers' Internet and Internet Consumers: Exploring Internet-based Electronic Decision Aids

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Extended Abstract

As early as 1955, Simon introduced the notion of bounded rationality. Since then, it has become clear that the traditional approach in explaining consumers' decision-making, which is based on rational choice theory, is incomplete and flawed (Bettman, Luce, and Payne 1998). According to Simon (1955), bounded rationality takes into account that consumers have cognitive limitations in respect to processing information, and that it is the interaction between task environment and human information-processing system that ultimately determines the behavior of consumers (Bettman et al. 1998; Simon 1990; Todd 1999).

Technological advances, shorter product lifecycles, and the globalization of market transactions have led to a new environment that is not characterized any more by its lack of products and information but by its abundance. In particular the development and fast dissemination of the Internet constitutes such a new task or information-search environment that makes available an enormous amount of information on alternatives (Alba et al. 1997; Urban and Hauser 2004).

It becomes clear that in such information- or choice-overloaded situations, in which the decision task becomes more complex, it is often not possible for consumers to make rational decisions. Customers simply do not have the time (Weenig and Maarleveld 2002) and/or the cognitive capacity to process all of the information available to them in a given time (Iyengar and Lepper 2000; Malhotra 1982, 1984). Because of limitations of consumers' cognitive system—such limitations include limited online memory and computational capabilities (Bettman et al. 1998)—research has demonstrated that customers simplify their decision-making processes in information rich environments or under time constraints by relying on simple heuristics (Payne 1982; Timmermans 1993).

While the amount of information available on the Internet keeps expanding, the human processing capacity remains limited. This has created the need for sophisticated decision support tools that are available to consumers in the Internet environment to reduce their cognitive stress by helping them make their choices and providing them with information that is appropriate and relevant for their specific needs (Ariely 2000). Internet's own technological development accommodates this need. Dickson (2000, 117) therefore calls the Internet a super-diffusion innovation, i.e. one that stands above other technological innovations in that it increases effectiveness, efficiency, and speed of "the transmission of new ideas and technologies between individuals and cultures" (see also Diamond 1998).

The focus of consumer research to date on Internet's technological advancement has been to investigate how Internet tools influence consumers' online search behavior. Little attention has been given to examine how the Internet helps improve consumers' decision-making (Kohli, Devaraj, and Mahmood 2004; Zeng and Reinartz 2003) despite the increasing needs of more research that benefits consumers in general and that helps "individuals make wise consumption decisions" in particular (Bazerman 2001, 500). In a different vein, Bechwati and Xia (2003) note that traditional models of decision-making need to be revisited in the new Internet context. Others go even so far as to suggest that the Internet has changed at least some part of traditional theories of marketing, economics, and other fields of business management (see Biswas 2004; Gatarski and Lundkvist 1998; Hawkins Mansell, and Steinmuller 1999). Diamond (1998) therefore calls on scholars to examine how the available Internet services change consumers' decision processes. In response to these calls, the present study developed a conceptual framework to demonstrate that Internet's technological advancement could be used to (1) reduce consumers' perceived information overload; (2) replace or supplement consumers' choice heuristics; (3) redefine consumers' optimal choice; and (4) reduce consumers' post choice cognitive dissonance.

Specifically, we argue that the Internet not only provides customers with electronic decision aids (e.g. recommendation agents, side-by-side comparisons, ordering and ranking) but also with multi-sensory stimuli (e.g. pictures, short films, or sound) that ultimately help customers in their decision-making process through mental imagery or mood-creation. While research has widely acknowledged the former form of decision aids, it has not sufficiently considered the latter one. We propose that both electronic decision aids and multi-sensory stimuli are being used by online consumers as choice strategies in addition to or instead of commonly discussed heuristics to reduce their perceived information overload and/or to deal with the huge information load provided by the Internet.

In addition, we bring forward that the electronic decision aids and multi-sensory stimuli on the Internet help consumers make more rational decisions. We borrow Bazerman's (2001) definition of rationality, according to which a decision is considered rational when it maximizes the consumer's expected welfare. As such, we propose that the most rational decision in the Internet environment does not necessarily have to be the most optimal choice according to the expected utility theory (Tversky and Kahneman 1981) or weighted adding strategy (Bettman et al. 1998). Rather, we propose that consumers judge their choice outcome or the "quality of the decision" according to a reference (e.g. recommendation, average customer rating) that does not necessarily constitute the theoretically optimal choice. This argumentation is in accordance with the information theory that implies to maximize consumers' benefits (welfare) and minimize their costs (cognitive [over]load through information [over]load). Hence, the Internet environment requires a redefinition of "optimal choice" or "optimal decision performance."

Finally, we argue that the Internet also changes post choice behavior. The foregoing discussion implies that a redefinition of "optimal choice" will also lead to more satisfied customers and ultimately alleviated consumers' post-choice cognitive dissonance.

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Delivering Differentiated Experiential Branding in Web Environments

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Recent empirical evidence revealed that, beyond the hedonic/utilitarian distinction, a more differentiated representation of pleasure or positive affects or attitudes provides additional marketing insights (Dubé, Cervellon and Jingyuan 2003; Dubé and LeBel 2003). For instances, Dubé and LeBel showed that laypeople's conception of pleasure is best captured by four differentiated pleasures: sensory/physical, emotional/aesthetic, social, and intellectual/accomplishment. Brand positioning strategies anchored in the delivery of differentiated pleasurable experiences have become ubiquitous and web communications are privileged vehicles to convey such positioning.

The present study focuses on consumers' on-line experiences with products and/or services websites positioned along Dubé and LeBel's four pleasure types. The objectives are: 1) to examine to what extent the intensity of the four types of pleasures is predictive of consumer responses at the individual level, as measured by website satisfaction and revisit intent, and 2) to examine to what extent the success of a website in inducing each of the four types of pleasures is predictive of market response at the brand level, as measured by patronage patterns reported by Media Metrix. We expect that the experiential positioning of the brand moderates the pleasure-intensity and consumer (vs. market) response relationship.

At the individual level, 100 web-sites with differentiated experiential branding strategy (sensorial, emotional, social and intellectual) were each observed on 24 visits by a panel of 200 participants. Websites were pretested so that each experiential branding strategy (sensory, social, emotional/aesthetic, intellectual) was represented. Each participant browsed a different website for 12 days and after browsing each website visit reported on the intensity of their experience of differentiated pleasures (twelve items, 7-point scale), website functionality (5 items, $\alpha=.87$), satisfaction (4 items, $\alpha=.81$) and revisit intent (a single likelihood item). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) performed on the 12 differentiated pleasure items revealed that a three-factor structure best represented the differentiated pleasures experience during the browsing episodes: sensory/emotional, social, intellectual. These results imply that sensory and emotional pleasures might have even fuzzier boundaries than expected, which may be due in part to the fact that Internet browsing is dominated by the more abstract senses of sight and sound (Howes, 1991). The correlations over the three types of online experiential pleasures are: -0.68 (for sensory/emotional-social), 0.49 (for sensory/emotional-intellectual) and -0.57 (for social-intellectual).

Structural analyses conducted at the visit level revealed a distinct contribution of the different pleasures to satisfaction and revisit intent, with a moderating effect for the website's experiential branding strategies. Specifically, the results revealed that sensory/emotional pleasure accounts for the largest main effect on satisfaction (standard coefficient equals to 0.589, with p-value <0.01) over the four types of website. Further, the results demonstrated that website functionality contributes to browsing satisfaction (standard coefficient equals to 0.421, with p-value <0.01) and website browsing satisfaction in turn has a positive and strong impact on revisit intentions (standard coefficient equals to 0.862, with p-value <0.01).

Results revealed that social pleasure has overall a negative impact on website satisfaction, and the effect is further moderated by the type of experiential positioning espoused by a website. Specifically, social pleasure experience while browsing has a significant negative effect on website browsing satisfaction, except for website with a sensory pleasure positioning strategy (standard coefficients of -0.321 for social websites, -0.228 for emotional websites and -0.308 for intellectual websites). Further, intellectual pleasure has a mild positive impact on website satisfaction and the effect is further moderated by branding positioning as well. Specifically, intellectual pleasure had

no significant influence on website satisfaction when visitors were browsing websites with sensory and emotional pleasure branding strategy, while significant effects were detected for websites with social and intellectual pleasure branding strategy, with standard coefficients equal to 0.296 and 0.211 respectively.

At the website level, we tested websites' effectiveness in conveying the brand's experiential positioning. To this end, Media Metrix data on traffic and information search patterns were obtained for the period extending from March to August 2003. The number of unique visitors served as a proxy for site traffic performance at the aggregate market response level. Further, based on Moe and Fader (2004) we also used indicators of visit depth and breadth such as average pages per usage day, average minutes per page, average usage days per visitor and average minutes per visitors.

Due to the censored nature of Media Metrix data, the standard Tobit Maximum likelihood estimation was adopted to explore the relationship between experiential pleasures aggregated as website level and website effectiveness. TOBIT analyses performed at the site level highlighted the central role of intellectual pleasure, more so that the site functionality, in accounting for traffic and search pattern. Sensory/emotional pleasure and social pleasure didn't demonstrate any significant predictive power on website-level response indicators, yet the coefficients are negative and large. Further tests revealed that intellectual pleasure has the highest predictive power on website effectiveness for sensory website, and second for social website.

In this study, we attempted to trace and document the linkages between the differentiated pleasures that a brand may be attempting to convey, consumers' responses when visiting websites for these brands, and aggregate market level responses. Overall, our research provides exploratory insights to better understand and estimate these linkages. It is clear that when using differentiated experiential branding strategies in the web environment, different types of pleasures have different influences on consumers' responses. This suggests that brand managers and web designers should use extra care in planning their positioning and communication strategies.

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Watchdogs on the Internet—Protecting Consumers against Online Fraud

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Counterfeiting is one of the biggest growth industries in the world and factors such as increased profit margins, tax free incomes and low overheads, when combined with the relative 'safety' from prosecution that the internet provides, has contributed to the explosion of 'fake' good that consumers are offered through mediums such as E-Bay and other on-line auction sites (Alcock, Chen, Ch'ng, Hodson et al 2003). In the past it was generally accepted that consumers knowingly purchased these items as counterfeit, and were prepared to trade off inferior quality goods for the satisfaction of owning a luxury product they might not have been otherwise able to afford. The rise of the 'super counterfeit' however, has meant that consumers are often paying large amounts of money for products they believe are genuine (Nia and Zaichkowsky 2000). The sale of branded goods identical in nature to legitimate articles is contrived to purposely deceive naive consumers (Ang, Cheng, Lim and Tambyah 2001) as well as capture a segment of the consumer market who are willing collaborators in the trade (Tom, Garibaldi, Zeng and Pilcher 1998).

A number of studies in recent years have examined the ability of consumers to differentiate between 'fake' and genuine luxury products (e.g. Ang, Cheng, Lim and Tambyah 2001), consumer demand for such products (e.g. Prendergast, Chuen and Phau 2002; Tom, Garibaldi, Zeng and Pilcher 1998), the value of these goods and consumer purchase intentions towards them (e.g. Cordell, Kieschnick and Wongtada 1996; Nia and Zaichkowsky 2000) as well as means of preventing counterfeiting at the manufacturing end (e.g. Alcock; Chen, Ch'ng, Hodson et al 2003). However, studies of this type do little to actually aid those consumers who are not willing participants in the trade of counterfeit goods—those who genuinely believe they are purchasing legitimate luxury goods.

Counterfeit products on the internet are somewhat of a hidden menace (Field 2005), particularly when they are positioned as genuine, and often sold through a team of sellers to avoid detection of large scale operations. Organisations such as the Anti-Counterfeiting Group (ACG) are useful in identifying and prosecuting large-scale offenders, however, this does not always help the individual consumer looking to buy a designer good at slightly less than retail. Firms such as Tiffany's have launched legal action against E-Bay as a response to the high numbers of counterfeit products sold through this medium, however Rolex's failure to successfully sue E-Bay's German site raises questions regarding the success of any such lawsuit (Passariello 2004). Individual countries' (such as France's) tightening on the import of Asian-made replica products and the like has spurred the growth of sales of this type on the internet, as it becomes the most "easy way for a counterfeiter to get the product out to an end customer" (David Margolis, cited in Passariello 2004). Most luxury goods companies employ individuals to monitor representation of their products on the net, but these companies are more concerned with large scale fraud than the individual seller with one or two items on offer. In addition, programs such as VeRO (E-Bay's Verified Rights Owner program), which shift the burden of monitoring sales to the brand holder in return for an agreement to remove all infringing items at the brand's request, have not been successful, as the debate as to whose job it is to prevent sales of these items remains unresolved and most luxury goods brand (including Tiffany's and LVMH) have refused to join the program.

Given that the law is still somewhat behind in effectively policing trade of this type on the internet, some consumers, frustrated by stories of friends and acquaintances bad experiences of purchasing faux luxury goods, have set themselves up as self-styled 'consumer

watchdogs', campaigning about this type of fraud by educating their more naïve counterparts. This research is concerned with two key issues—firstly the question of what motivates certain consumers to set themselves up in this way and give their time (and often money) to aid in the education of consumers about purchasing on the internet, and secondly to assess how consumers in general react to such 'watchdogs' and to what extent they utilize these services.

The research is exploratory in nature, and is designed to be conducted in two distinct phases. A number of organizations (including 'watchdog' sites, online auction sites and regulatory bodies) have been identified to form the basis of the initial development of this research, with depth interviews to be conducted with individuals representing these organizations. The second phase of the research involves qualitative analysis of consumer responses to a number of watchdog sites and online auction chat forums. Responses will be content analysed to determine overall themes and a guidelines for the development of watchdog sites that disseminate brand specific anti-counterfeiting related information to consumers. It is hoped that in the future such sites may be adopted by large scale trading sites such as E-bay as a consumer information resource, allowing greater protection of consumer interests than is currently provided.

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Technology-Based Communication Patterns of Youth

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Extended Abstract

This paper explores the consumption practices of young consumers in relation to their use of technology. We seek to understand the use of communication technologies, the underlying motivations for these uses and how young consumers select these communication technologies.

Consumer researchers have studied consumer practices and experiences centered on technological products. Specifically, scholars have considered various aspects of technology consumption such as use-diffusion of technology (Shih and Venkatesh 2004), consumer self-presentation through websites (Schau and Gilly 2004), disappointment in consumer technology (Thompson 1994), paradoxes of technology (Mick and Fournier 1998), and intimate self-disclosure via computers (Moon 2000). Whereas the focus of most of these studies has been on adults, our study focuses on young consumers.

There are two main reasons for our focus on young consumers. First, technology occupies a central position in the lives of these consumers. They have grown up with technology such as television, video, arcade games and CD players (Sefton-Green 1998). These technologies form a ubiquitous part of their cultural environment (Hutchby and Moran-Ellis 2001, Pearce and Mallan 2003). Second, young consumers form one of the most viable segments for targeting technological products. For instance, online spending by American 18-24 year olds was four times greater than among older age groups (Pastore 2000 in Osgerby 2004).

The research reported here is part of an ongoing study. We used qualitative research methods and collected data from eight informants in Southern California. This sample size is deemed adequate for generating themes and cultural categories (McCracken 1988). The informants were all undergraduate students and their ages ranged from 18-25 years. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews which lasted from 90 to 120 minutes. We followed the general procedures of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1998) in our data analysis. First, we identified conceptual categories and themes. Then we established relations among the emerging patterns. NVivo, data management software (QSR1999) was employed in the analysis.

The results indicate that there are evolving communication patterns among young consumers. They use various types of technological products for communication purposes. These communicative mediums include phones, cell phones, instant messaging, email, chat rooms, blogs and websites. Our analysis reveals that the underlying motivations for use of these mediums are guided mostly by young consumers' need for connectedness, and to a lesser degree, by their need for self-expression and instrumental purposes. Self-expression as an underlying motivation is specifically evident in case of blogs. Blogs constitute a medium to reflect and express one's self to others in the

virtual world. Our participants argue that blogs can be personalized in various ways to reflect the blogger's identity and can constitute a medium through which individuals carry their real-life self to the virtual world. The instrumental reasons, on the other hand, are reflected in instances such as the use of instant messenger to discuss schoolwork with classmates and the use of blogs to organize and maintain a record of daily activities.

Consumers' *need for connectedness* emerged as the central theme which motivates the use of different communication mediums. Our findings suggest that participants use different technologies to connect with their existing friends, family members, new people and communities of interest. In doing so, they cultivate their existing relations, bond with friends, meet new people and become members of broader communities.

The data also reveals that there are two main factors guiding consumers' selection of specific communication technologies. These are *structural properties* of a particular technology and the *level of intimacy* in social relationships. Informants describe their choice of a particular medium in terms of its convenience in communicating and maintaining contact with others. Convenience of different forms of communication technologies stems from their inherent properties. For instance, participants view instant messaging as suitable for maintaining contact with friends. The structural properties of instant messaging allows participants to create a 'buddy list' composed of their community of friends and to engage in different levels of participation ranging from active conversations to merely observing others. Consumer discourses also reveal that participants act quite intuitively in their selection of different modes of on/off line communication technologies available to them based on *intimacy in relationships*, *intimacy of content* as well as the *interplay between intimacy and structural properties*.

Both the nature and the intimacy of relationship determine the appropriateness of the medium. Participants easily delineate among "family", "friends", and "acquaintances". They use different communicative mediums depending on whom they want to communicate with. For instance, some young consumers communicate with email and instant messenger at the start of a relationship, then as the relationship progresses they use communication mediums such as phone. The subject matter of conversation is also found to affect the selection of a particular communication medium. For example, participants use online chat for impersonal conversations, while they prefer using the phone for more personal conversations. Finally, there is interplay between intimacy and structural properties which provides a sense of control and empowerment to participants. For example, they maintain several email accounts not only to channel different kinds of information, but also to differentially communicate with other individuals depending on the level of intimacy in the relationship.

We contribute to the existing literature by illustrating the ways in which intimacy in social relationships influence and guide young consumers' use of communication technologies. Overall as consumers' relations with social actors in their lives move along the continuums of impersonal to personal and distant to intimate, the use of particular technological products also changes. Consumer narratives reveal the role of technology in mediating social and personal relationships. These accounts highlight how technology usage shapes and structures, and in turn is shaped and structured by consumers' relationships. This study has implications for consumer research. Due to changing communication patterns, marketers should consider the role of communication technologies in enabling different patterns of information exchange. These exchanges have implications for diffusion of product information. Given that this is an ongoing study, further work is anticipated to extend the findings.

A Blind Mind's Eye: Perceptual Defense Mechanisms and Aschematic Visual Information

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This research reports on an eyetracker experiment exploring aschematic perception in visual processing. While eighty percent of those exposed to an urban image containing a woman committing suicide fixated on the woman, only thirty-five percent reported seeing her. Another thirty-five percent reported schema consistent items in her place and were three times as likely to insert other false schematic items into image recall. Schematic responders were also partially protected from the negative affect the image created. These findings suggest that people ignore aschematic stimuli due to top-down cognitive frameworks that transform images between sight and memory, rather than changing the visual search pattern itself.

'Do I Know You?': Constraints on the Recognition of the Celebrity Endorser

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We explore a celebrity recognition framework in which the ability to recognize other-race faces is based upon not only the race of the viewer relative to the celebrity, but also the amount of exposure/familiarity the viewer has had with others who are of the same race as the celebrity. The other-race-effect is pertinent for marketing researchers to understand because it has significant implications for not only multicultural celebrity facial recognition in advertising, but also for other marketing-related issues, including customer service, direct marketing, and personal selling.

The Role of Self in Evaluation of Advertisements with Highly Attractive Models

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Media, whether it is print, television or even the Internet, is flooded with advertisements for products and services endorsed by sources that are highly attractive. Marketers targeting their products towards women often use highly attractive sources in their advertisements in an effort to increase the ad's effectiveness (Bower 2001). Marketing literature provides evidence of the positive effects of using highly attractive sources on consumers' evaluations of both the product and the ad (Baker and Churchill 1977; Kahle and Homer 1985; Kamins 1990; Solomon, Ashmore and Longo 1992). However, researchers have been divided in their support for the effectiveness of the use of highly attractive sources in advertisements. For example Bower (2001), Cabellero and Solomon (1984), and Cabellero, Lumpkin, and Madden (1989) have documented the negative effect of using highly attractive sources in advertisements. These studies suggest that such negative effects are due to social comparison, feelings of inadequacy and/or jealousy (Bower 2001, Richins 1991). The research presented here furthers existing literature in this area by investigating the cognitive process underlying the formation of negative attitudes toward advertisements using highly attractive sources.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: It has been suggested that the use of attractive sources in advertisements may result in more favorable attitudes toward the product advertised—either by serving as peripheral cues when elaboration likelihood is low or by providing information central to the merits of the argument when elaboration likelihood is high (Kahle and Homer 1985, Puckett, Petty, Cacioppo, and Fisher 1983; see also Petty, Unnava and Strathman 1991 for a review). Here, we examine how the use of attractive sources in advertisements may result in more negative attitudes by influencing the extent of elaboration itself. Specifically, we draw upon theories of self-concept (e.g., Grub and Grathwohl 1967), comparison and dissatisfaction (e.g., Richins 1991), dual process models of processing (e.g., Chaiken 1980; Petty and Cacioppo 1986), and preference-inconsistent information processing (e.g., Jain and Maheswaran 2000) to suggest that the relative gap between consumers' perceptions of their own attractiveness and that of the source influences the extent of processing, and thus whether consumers will process the message claims in the advertisements or use attractiveness of the source as peripheral cue in forming attitudes. We suggest that it is not just the absolute level of attractiveness of the source that determines whether consumers form positive or negative attitude towards the advertisement, but also the gap between the perceived self-attractiveness and attractiveness of the source.

Based on this conceptualization, we propose the following hypotheses. First, the use of highly attractive sources in ads will result in a greater gap between self-attractiveness and attractiveness of the source (H_1). Further, the greater the gap between the self-attractiveness and the attractiveness of the source, the greater the processing of ad claims (H_2). Finally, in the case of a weak message, higher gaps will lead to: lower credibility of ad claims (H_{3a}), more negative evaluations of the ad (H_{3b}), and negative evaluations of the brand (H_{3c}).

METHOD: A 2 x 2 x 2 between subjects experiment was conducted with source attractiveness (high/low), message strength (strong/weak), and gender (male/female) as independent variables. The stimulus was an advertisement for a bank. Male participants viewed an advertisement with a male model and female participants viewed an advertisement with a female model. Message strength was manipulated by the text in the ad. Gap was measured as the difference between the perceived self-attractiveness of the participants and that of the source (model featured in the advertisement). The experiment yielded 213 usable responses (113 males and 100 females).

RESULTS: As hypothesized, we found that the use of highly attractive sources in the advertisements resulted in significantly greater gaps as compared to the ads using less attractive sources across male and female participants (H_1 supported). Second, we found that greater gaps between the perceived attractiveness of the self and that of the source leads to more processing of the ad claims for both males and females, as measured by a greater number of thoughts (H_2 supported). Third, we found significant effects of gap and message strength on the credibility of the ad for males but not for females (H_{3a} partially supported). The attitude toward the ad was found to be less favorable when the gap was high for males, while females were only influenced by message strength (H_{3b} partially supported). Finally, the attitude toward the brand was negatively affected by the magnitude of the gap for both males and females (H_{3c} supported).

DISCUSSION: The results of this study indicate that the use of highly attractive sources in advertisements can lead to a gap between perceived image of the self and that of the source, and higher levels of gap motivate consumers to scrutinize and process the ad claims more closely. This study also found significant effects of gap and message strength on advertisement effectiveness measures, showing that it is not the absolute level of attractiveness of the source that may determine the effectiveness of ad but the gap between the perceived attractiveness of the self and that of the source. Unlike previous research that views negative attitude toward advertisements with highly attractive sources as an affective response, this study explains the cognitive process involved in the negative attitude formation.

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The Generation Gap: A Baby Boomer vs. Gen Y Comparison of Religiosity, Consumer Values, and Advertising Appeal Effectiveness

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Marketing academics have increasingly shown an interest in consumer values over the past decade, with materialism garnering most of the research attention (see e.g., Burroughs and Rindfleisch 2002; Richins 1994). Relatively little consumer researcher has been done on religious values, despite the fact that religion is an influential and important aspect of American and many other cultures, impacting consumer attitudes (e.g., towards divorce, music, political issues), values (e.g., altruism, sexual morality, work ethic), and behaviors (e.g., food and alcohol consumption, holiday celebrations, dress) at both the individual and societal levels. (For notable exceptions, see Hirschman 1983; LaBarbera and Gurhan 1997; Wilkes, Burnett, and Howell 1986.) This research attempts to fill some of the gaps in extant knowledge about how religion and other values may influence consumer behavior by examining the relationship between religiosity and materialism, as well as two related sub-values: concern for consumption ethics and value expression through brands. These values are compared across two generations of consumers of high interest to marketers today: Gen Y and Baby Boomers. In addition, this study tests the influence of generation and consumer values on the effectiveness of several types of advertising appeals. With respect to values, members of Generation Y were expected to be more materialistic, more likely to use brands as communication devices, and more concerned about the ethics of consumption as compared to Baby Boomers. Little is known at this point about Generation Y's level of religiosity, so this was an open research question. With respect to appeal types, members of Generation Y were expected to respond more positively to advertising in general, and in particular to image, indulgence, eco, and sex appeals.

The sample for this study consisted of 264 Baby Boomers and 213 members of Generation Y. The method was a pencil and paper experiment in which each participant evaluated four advertisements drawn from the following set: image vs. functional appeals, value vs. indulgence appeals, waste vs. eco appeals, and high sex vs. low sex appeals. In the first three categories, the ads were for either a car (a public, durable product) or for a shampoo (a private, nondurable product). Both sex appeals were for cologne. In all cases, fictitious brand/organization names were used and ad presentation order was rotated and counter-balanced across subjects. Participants' attitudes toward each of the four ads and intention to purchase the advertised product were assessed on ten Likert-type items, all on seven-point scales. Participants also completed multi-item scales to assess individual differences in religiosity, materialism, brand value expressiveness, and consumption ethics, and were asked to report their religious affiliation (if any), gender, age, education, income, and marital status. All multi-item scales were subjected to factor analysis, and composite variables were created for use in further analysis.

The results of the data analysis support the majority of the initial hypotheses. As expected, members of Generation Y were more materialistic and more likely to use brands as communication devices than members of the Baby Boom generation. They were also less significantly less religious on every measure, providing a preliminary answer to this research question. However, there was no significant difference between the two generations in concern regarding the ethics of their consumption practices. With respect to responsiveness to appeal types, Gen Y'ers responded more positively to image, indulge, and sex appeals, as expected. However, they also responded more positively to function appeals, which was not specifically hypothesized, and no difference was found in response to eco, value, or waste appeals between the two generations. In addition, regression analyses were run separately for each of the four consumer values to test the interactions among generation, value, and appeal type factors. Several complex, higher-order interactions were found, but due to space constraints, cannot be discussed here.

This research potentially makes a couple of contributions to the study of consumer values and advertising effectiveness. First, the study examines religiosity and several other consumption-related values in two important generational cohorts to construct a more complete picture of religious consumers as a group. Although materialism and, to a lesser extent, religiosity have both been examined in the literature, the relationship between the two has not yet been fully explored. Furthermore, consumption ethics, its ties to religiosity, and the connection between brand value expressiveness and religiosity are also new to the literature. By explicating these relationships, a clearer picture of how these values relate to consumption may be obtained. Furthermore, the cross-generational nature of this study yields additional insights into these value constellations. Second, this research explores how generation and consumer values impact advertising appeal effectiveness. Studies on appeal effectiveness for different personality types and subcultures have been limited in general, so more

work is needed in this area. In addition, despite the apparently strong influence of religion and religiosity on a wide variety of consumer attitudes, values, and behaviors, this area has received much less attention than some other similar areas of influence (e.g., race or ethnicity). Although the results of the present research are limited in scope, it appears likely that religion and religiosity may have important implications for segmentation, targeting, and advertising strategy development and may serve as the basis for an important area of transformative consumer research.

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Bilingual Processing of Advertising from a Psycholinguistic Perspective: The Link Between Attributes Remembered and Attributes Preferred

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When marketers first studied cross cultural communications the focal audience was African-Americans and the usual issue was the ethnic match between perceiver and spokesperson(s) (For a review see Whittler, 1991).

As immigration from the south increased, researchers set their sights on the Hispanic market. In order to study this group, language necessarily became an operant variable. However, researchers seemed to be accepting the theoretical implication of an invalidated premise—the Whorfian hypothesis of linguistic relativity (Whorf 1956)—by treating language and culture as if though they were completely dependent on each other. As a result, most studies looked at cross cultural communication from a strictly cultural/social perspective and demoted language to the status of a corollary variable.

Seemingly justified by this type of research, Madison Avenue came up with a most disingenuous solution to the issue of how to communicate with ethnic target populations: simply translate the message to their dominant language. However, very little theory-based research exists to validate such an approach (Luna & Peracchio 2002).

The psycholinguistics literature suggests there are universal aspects of language learning and production, including characteristics of second language acquisition, encoding, and recall regardless of what language(s) we consider. Working from this knowledge, Luna & Peracchio have begun to study cross cultural marketing communications from a psycholinguistic perspective (Luna & Peracchio 1999, 2001, 2002).

Although Luna & Peracchio have looked at the quantity of recall by bilinguals when processing a second language message, and have concluded that the extra cognitive effort results in less recall for bilinguals than monolinguals, they have not considered the possibility that the information bilinguals do recall may be more valuable from a cognitive and/or affective standpoint than the information monolinguals are able to recall.

Contrary to what Kroll & Stewart's Revised Hierarchical Model and the Conceptual Mediation Model have suggested, Silverberg and Samuel (2004) found that bilinguals who had learned their second language past the age of seven, did not exhibit any cross language semantic priming regardless of their second language proficiency. The cut off age of seven was based on research which found that during the planning of second language words, bilinguals who learned their second language after the age of seven, showed significantly different brain activation patterns than bilinguals who had learned their second language before the age of seven (Kim et al, 1997). This information leads us to believe that bilinguals who learn their second language after the age of seven (highly representative of U.S. adult immigrants), are likely to engage in more lexical activity than many theories would suggest.

For bilinguals, second language lexical to first language lexical activation results in a form of elaborative rehearsal as information is linked between short term and long term memory and both a lexical link and a conceptual link are activated. Elaborative rehearsal has been shown to improve episodic memory (Kellog 2003). It is believed that the extra elaboration undertaken by bilinguals, will result in a generation effect: better memory for target items that are generated (Slamecka & Graf 1978). Research has shown the occurrence of a bilingual generation effect (O'Neill, Roy, & Tremblay, 1993).

We intended to show that presenting a second language selling message to a bilingual may actually result in better recall of personally relevant attributes for any given product category, than would be the case for monolinguals.

It has been said that "recognition of the impact of attribute importance on information search is so widespread... that information acquisition behavior is accepted as a direct measure of attribute importance" (Mackenzie 1986, p.174). It therefore stands to reason that in an advertising context, a developing bilingual will begin to learn, recognize, and pay special attention to words representing the attributes he/she feels are most important in the focal product category. Because second language word recognition is not as automatic as first language recognition, a bilingual is better able to focus on the "important" words and essentially ignore the rest.

Our research began with a pilot study; a nested 2 x (2 x 2) between-subjects design: Hi/Lo-Motivation, Monolingual/Bilingual-Language, Forced/Unforced-translation (for bilinguals only). Subjects were randomly assigned to each of the controllable conditions.

Low-motivation subjects were only told they would be asked to judge an advertisement; additionally, hi-motivation subjects were told they would have to explain the ad to another subject at a later time. Within the bilingual group, half the subjects were asked to make a conscious effort to think of the words in the ad in a language other than English.

Subjects were then exposed to an advertisement for a backpack which featured seven distinct attributes. Immediately after the exposure, subjects were asked to complete a standard attitude toward the ad scale, they were then asked to list all of the product information they could recall from the ad. This was followed by language usage, demographics, and product involvement questions and a measure of lexical activity.

One week later, subjects were asked to complete a conjoint task meant to assess their revealed preferences for a subset of the different product attributes presented in the stimulus advertisement.

It was hypothesized that bilingual subjects' revealed preferences for certain product attributes would be more highly correlated with the attributes they recalled after exposure to the stimulus ad during week one, indicating that bilingual subjects had better recall for the attributes they preferred in the focal product category than monolinguals.

Through a series of binary logistic regressions, we regressed the relative importance of all attributes on the likelihood that a given attribute was recalled. We expected to find more and higher significant betas corresponding to our dependent attribute for bilinguals than monolinguals.

Examination of the data revealed sampling problems related to self-reported language proficiencies by American bilingual subjects; however, tests on a small sub-sample of international bilinguals yielded strong directional support for the hypothesized effects.

Future studies will be conducted with subjects whose language proficiency can be objectively assessed; specifically, individuals enrolled in English as a Second Language programs.

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Advertising Claims About Search and Experiential Attributes and Their Effect on Post-Trial Evaluations of Functional versus Hedonic Products

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Introduction

Advertising and product trial are often used by companies to encourage consumers to buy their products. One focus of ad-trial research has been on type of attribute information provided by advertising versus trial. A key finding is that product trial provides maximum information relative to experiential attributes (e.g., taste, speed, softness); whereas advertising provides maximum information for search attributes (e.g., price, ingredients, calorie content) (Wright and Lynch 1995).

Several researchers have speculated that other factors are important in the ad-trial experience. In particular, Devi and Ang (2001) argue that advertising can more effectively communicate products' hedonic dimensions, and product trial can more effectively communicate the utilitarian dimensions. Additionally, research indicates that message claims affect advertising's degree of effectiveness (see Darley and Smith 1993; Edell and Staelin 1983; Ford, Smith, and Swasy 1990; Holbrook 1978), and in the context of trial, the extent to which a claim provides more objective versus more subjective information may be important.

To-date, no ad-trial research has examined the effect of advertising claims on post-trial evaluations. Specifically, the objective of this study is to investigate whether objective versus subjective pre-trial advertising claims about experiential versus search product attributes differentially affect consumers' post-trial perceptions of a functional versus a hedonic product.

Background Literature

The Integrated Information Response Model

The Integrated Information Response Model (Smith and Swinyard 1982) provides an insightful framework in understanding the processing of advertising and trial experience. IIRM states that an advertisement because it is provided by a source with a vested interest will be met with resistance by consumers, generating weak beliefs about the advertised brand. These weak beliefs coupled with weak affect lack sufficient expected value to create brand preferences; only upon trial can these weaker beliefs be transformed to stronger beliefs and affect, and result in commitment to the brand.

Although advertising may be less effective in generating stronger belief strength and belief confidence, it may still play a significant role in product evaluation. In his two-stage model of advertising effect, Deighton (1984) argued that advertising arouses expectations. Therefore, even though consumers may indicate that they do not believe in the ad claims, they store the message and (subconsciously) form a tentative hypothesis regarding the product, which is then assessed during product trial.

In the context of advertisement and product trial effects for highly diagnostic products, I argue that the processing related to the IIRM is dependent upon product type (hedonic vs. functional), type of attribute information (experiential vs. search) and claim objectivity (objective vs. subjective).

Hypotheses Development

Functional products are those that fulfill utilitarian needs (Babin, Darden, and Griffin 1994; Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard 1993), and the utilitarian value of a product is decided objectively. Using the expectancy value model, several studies investigating functional products have demonstrated that objective claims, as opposed to subjective claims, generate more positive expected values, are more credible (Ford, Smith, and Swasy 1990; Holbrook 1978), and generate higher purchase intentions (Darley and Smith 1993). Further, Ford et al. (1990), by cross-classifying claim objectivity (objective/subjective) with attribute type (search/experiential attributes), indicate that in the context of functional products: (1) consumers are least skeptical of advertising claims about search attributes expressed in objective terms (e.g., "Buy this product for only \$4.99"); (2) consumers become more skeptical of subjective claims about search attributes ("Buy this product at an extremely low price"), which are relatively ambiguous; (3) consumers are even more skeptical of objective claims about experiential attributes (e.g., "[...] carpeting will not mildew or rot for at least three years"); (4) consumers are most skeptical of subjective claims about experiential attributes (e.g., "this auto service treats you fairly time after time"). Further, because belief confidence is a function of the amount of information the individual has available to form a judgment of relevant attributes (Peterson and Pitz 1988), search attribute claims have the potential to generate more confidently held trial-based brand beliefs than trial alone.

The hedonic value of a product is decided based upon the ability to provide feelings or hedonic pleasure. Hirschman (1980) defines hedonic consumption as consumer behavior that is related to sensual, fantastic, and sensitive experience with a product. As argued by Hopkinson and Pujari (1999, 273), "the unrestricted imagination is controlled ultimately by the participant, hedonism creates the opportunity for the individual dream" and experiential attributes, as opposed to search attributes, may facilitate imagination. For instance, when shopping for perfumes, trial by giving away scented cards does not effectively communicate the fantasy and imagination attributes associated with a perfume. Perfumes do not just sell the fragrance. They also sell beauty, image, dreams, and fantasy, which are more effectively communicated through advertising's experiential attribute claims than through trial (Dewi and Ang 2001).

With regard to claim objectivity for the experiential attribute information, the subjective claims should generate more positive consumers' responses than objective claims in the context of hedonic products. In fact, research indicates that subjective claims may be more effective than objective claims for value-expressive products (Park and Young 1986) or other hedonic products like perfume or stylish clothes. However, for the search attribute advertisement, I do not expect a significant difference between the objective and the subjective ads in the post-trial responses they generate, because the search attributes, by definition, are pragmatic and do not allow the customer to imagine experiencing the product. Finally, trial alone should generate the least positive post-trial responses because it neither "prepares" the customer for the experience that is about to occur, nor does it provide additional information (i.e., search attribute information) to increase consumers' beliefs in their evaluations.

Conclusions

This paper develops the theoretical foundation and hypotheses related to the effect of pre-trial advertising messages (i.e., objective versus subjective claims about search or experiential attributes) on subsequent trial experience. This study provides practical insights for advertisers in formulating specific advertising claims for functional versus hedonic products, when advertising precedes a sampling campaign.

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Brand Stereotypes and Consumer Judgments: The Automatic Shifting of Standards in Brand Evaluations

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Applying the social psychology precepts of the Shifting Standards Model (Biernat, Manis, and Nelson 1991) it is shown that—depending on a marketer's particular choice of eliciting consumer feedback—a brand that fares objectively better than another on a specific attribute can in fact be perceived as equal or even relatively worse than the same brand on that very attribute. Such anomalous explicit response originates in consumers' use of different stereotypical standards for the competing brands. Unless brands are directly juxtaposed (objective judgment), evaluative standards are implicitly more relaxed for the inferior brand, allowing it to match or even surpass its competitor in subjective judgments.

Empirical Support for an Item and Relational Conceptualization of Sponsorship

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Many marketers rely on commercial sponsorship as a means of promoting brand awareness or enhancing brand image, and many events rely on sponsorship as a source of funding and would potentially cease to exist without it (Gardner and Shuman 1988, Lardinoit and Derbaix 2001). Despite a growing body of research aimed at investigating various aspects of sponsorship, such as potential outcomes and measures of effectiveness (see Cornwell, Weeks, and Roy 2005 for a discussion), few researchers have proposed fully developed psychologically-based conceptual models of how commercial sponsorship might function to affect its audiences. Without such models, predictions about sponsorship success can be difficult to make, and firms that might otherwise invest in worthwhile events may be reluctant to do so (Lardinoit and Derbaix 2001). This paper uses theory from the item and relational information memory literature (e.g., Einstein and Hunt 1980, Hunt and Einstein 1981) to explain how commercial sponsorship can be conceptualized. Further, it reports empirical data in support of this conceptual model, and illustrates that the model can be used to predict memory for various types of sponsorship information. This theoretical framework has been presented in Weeks, Cornwell, and Humphreys (forthcoming) and the empirical support from the current study demonstrates its validity.

Item information is that which is encoded to represent specific events or objects in memory, while relational information is that which is encoded to represent the relationships between events and objects. If both brands and events (the two key components of a sponsorship) can be considered forms of item information, and the relationship a brand holds with an event (a sponsorship) can be considered relational information, then an item and relational information framework should be a valid way to conceptualize commercial sponsorship. Item and relational theory suggests that item information is encoded in such a way that item-specific features are stored which make the item distinctive from other information represented in memory (Einstein and Hunt 1980). Relational information, on the other hand, is encoded such that features shared across items are stored, thereby enabling the representation of relationships among items in memory (Einstein and Hunt 1980). Memory for the relationship that a brand holds with an event (a sponsorship), is therefore dependent upon the encoding and storage of both sponsor-specific item information (which distinguishes the brand as a sponsor) and sponsor-event relational information (which ties the brand to the event). Congruent sponsorships (e.g., where a sporting goods manufacturer sponsors a sporting event) may be at an advantage to incongruent sponsorships (e.g., where a mineral water brand sponsors an electronics fair) in that relational information is more readily available given that a relationship is more obvious. Market competitors can also be conceptualized in this model, as sources of information (also encoded as item or relational information) that can potentially interfere with the storage of the target (sponsor) information.

The current study used an experimental design to test the predictive value of this model. Since sponsorship information is likely to be processed as peripheral information (Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann 1983, Pham and Vanhuele, 1997), participants were exposed to

a series of radio-like press announcements detailing upcoming event sponsorships, which were embedded among distracter announcements outlining horoscope predictions and weather forecasts. Participants were asked to rate the announcers in terms of effectiveness and suitability to be radio presenters rather than focus on content, and at the end of the session they were given an unexpected recall task. In total, 196 student volunteers took part in the study and received course credit for doing so.

The study used a 4 (competitor information type) x 3 (sponsor information type) x 2 (sponsor-event congruence type) mixed factorial design. Participants heard twelve announcements, each containing a description of a fictitious upcoming event, one of four levels of competitor information (no competitor, competitor mention, competitor-specific item information, competitor-event relational information) in order to assess the effects of competitor information interference, and one of three levels of sponsor information (sponsor mention, sponsor-specific item information, sponsor-event relational information). Each level of competitor information was presented between groups, while the three levels of sponsor information were presented within groups. Half of the announcements that participants heard detailed congruent sponsors and competitors, and half detailed incongruent sponsors and competitors. All conditions were counterbalanced to avoid possible order effects. Memory for the sponsorship information was assessed using cued recall where the event name served as the recall cue.

Results lend support to conceptualizing sponsorship within an item and relational information framework. In general, the provision of sponsor-specific item information produced superior memory performance to simply having a sponsor mention, and providing sponsor-event relational information was generally superior to providing sponsor-specific item information. As predicted, sponsor-specific item information facilitated recall for the already-related congruent sponsors, but did little to improve recall for the unrelated incongruent sponsors. Sponsor-event relational information enhanced recall for incongruent sponsors, and improved recall for congruent sponsors to a similar extent as sponsor-specific item information. Although it was expected that higher levels of competitor information would result in greater interference and hence reduced memory for sponsors, marginal means tended to suggest relatively stable levels of overall recall across the four competitor information conditions.

The data provided here, although preliminary, lend considerable support to an item and relational information conceptualization of commercial sponsorship. The model is able to predict, based upon the type of sponsorship information a consumer receives and the congruence between an event and sponsor, just how well the consumer will remember that information. If these results can be replicated in future studies, this model will prove valuable to both marketing researchers and practitioners alike. Although memory for sponsorship information is an important outcome of sponsorships, whether the model is able to predict affective and behavioral outcomes must also be considered in future work.

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Elaboration, Imagination and the Misinformation Effect

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Consumers' recollection of their consumption experience has been shown to be open to suggestion and susceptible to external influence. For instance, recollections about product quality as well as product type have been shown to be open to misleading suggestions from print advertisements (Braun, 1999; Cowley & Janus, 2004). While these initial studies have demonstrated the presence of the misinformation effect in the consumer behavior context and some boundary conditions for the same, they have also raised important questions regarding the nature of the effect, the level to which it extends to and processing strategies that might enhance or mitigate the effect. For instance, one important question that is raised is whether consumers' false recollections are limited to the actual misinforming stimulus or do they extend to confabulations that go beyond the misinforming intrusion. The objective of this study is to investigate this possibility.

Previous studies in the decision making literature have shown that extended processing of information may not always lead to accurate judgments and might, in some cases, reduce judgment accuracy. In addition to this, evidence from the eyewitness testimony and cognitive psychology literature suggests that when individuals are placed in situations that elicit extended recollection, they are prone to greater

memory errors. The interesting aspect of this is that in certain situations these errors of recollection could go beyond the misinforming stimulus. Recent qualitative studies on the role of imagination in the consumption of products (Martin, 2004) have also provided us with an explanation of how imagination, by way of enhancing vivid imagery and inducing embellishment, could actually lead to greater errors in recall of the consumption experience.

The above two threads of rationale lead us to expect that some forms consumption, specifically, consumption experiences that encourage extended processing of information (through elaboration), might actually lead to *greater* errors in memory as compared to experiences with no such extended processing. Studies on autobiographical memories find that in situations when participants were encouraged repeatedly (along with misinformation stimuli) to provide detailed accounts for their childhood experiences, misinformation effects were particularly strong and confidence in their recall were also high. Accordingly, we expect that when consumers are in an immersive experience and are naturally placed in a situation conducive to imagination, their consumption memory is not only susceptible to misinformation but can also be led to *confabulate*. That is, via the misinforming stimulus and imagination, they can be expected to not only recall their experience to be more consistent with the misinforming stimulus but also go beyond the stimulus itself and ‘hyper-recall’ aspects or features of the experience that were actually not presented. We expect these reconstructions to be specific features or aspects that are extensions of the (main) misinforming stimulus. In a way, contrary to previous misinformation effect studies, we expect misinformation at the more ‘general’ thematic level to lead to greater ‘specific’ feature-level false alarms.

Based on a survey and pretest examining product relevance and involvement, we chose computer games as the test setting. In a 2 X 2 computer-based experiment, the misinformation stimulus manipulated a) the basic theme of the game and b) the primary evaluative dimension related to the game via misleading questions presented after the participants had read a description and had actually played the game for 4 minutes. Imagination was manipulated by a story which placed them in an imaginary problem situation and asked them to imagine and write down their account of the way in which they tackled the problem. In addition to free recall measures, we also collected recognition measures on a variety of words that were semantically related (as well as unrelated) to the key misinformation stimulus. Preliminary analyses show that the main effect of misinformation on both theme-related and evaluation-related words was significant at the $p < 0.001$ level. That is, when exposed to the incorrect theme (in the misinformation condition), participants’ recognition of the misinformation-consistent theme and evaluation words was significantly more than the no-misinformation condition. The main effect of imagination was not significant on both. However, imagination had a significant effect on unrelated words, i.e. words that were neither part of the description nor part of the misinformation stimulus. Further, this effect was found to be inhibitory. That is, in the imagination condition, participants were *less* likely to falsely recognize unrelated words. The misinformation X imagination interaction was also not significant.

The pattern of results suggests that consumers’ susceptibility to misinformation is robust. However, increased thought put in on the game after initial consumption (by way of the ‘imagine’ instruction) seemed to do two things. Firstly, it led participants along a different path which made them falsely recognize words that were actually consistent with the imagination story (and thus inconsistent with both the game and the misinformation). Secondly, the increased thought induced by the imagination condition probably enhanced the involvement of these participants and led them to reduced false alarms with respect to both misinformation-related and completely unrelated words. The lack of an interaction between misinformation and imagination leads us to believe that further study is necessary to untangle the effects of involvement and imagination upon consumers’ susceptibility confabulate and embellish their memories.

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Innovating and Lagging as Signals of General Intelligence

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We approach innovativeness from a costly signaling perspective. We suggest that both innovative and lagging consumer behaviors signal general intelligence. Only highly intelligent consumers can afford not to follow the majority, possibly because they can justify their choices. Innovators and laggards do not follow the majority by definition. In three studies, we find evidence that (1) more intelligent people are expected to innovate or lag, (2) people who do not follow the majority, either by lagging or innovating, are actually more intelligent and (3) are perceived by others as more intelligent than those who follow the majority.

The Impact of Mathematics Anxiety on the Evaluation of Price and Price Presentation Formats

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Price, a numeric aspect of product information, at time requires simple calculations and comparisons with either prices of competing offers or a price in memory to determine the savings or evaluating an offer. But for some consumers these computations could become a source of anxiety. This research develops a conceptualization that predicts the effects of mathematics anxiety and motivation to process information on the processing of price information and price presentation formats. The results from two studies show that mathematics anxiety influences the evaluation of prices and price presentation formats.

Intuition in Consumer Decision Making

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Almost 30 years ago, Mace (1977) published a paper on his interpretation of the theories of perception espoused by psychologist James J. Gibson. The subtitle of that paper should serve as a constant reminder of a very common mistake in consumer research, as well as a roadmap to significantly greater understanding of consumers and consumer decision making from an academic and an applied perspective: "ask not what's inside your head but what your head's inside of." Qualitative research into naturalistic decision making (e.g., Zsombok & Klein, 1997), including consumer decision making (e.g., Readinger, 2004), has repeatedly shown the importance of recognizing environmental cues in making split-second decisions. Currently, the most convincing model explaining this phenomenon is Klein's (1989) Recognition-Primed Decision (RPD) model. It shifts the emphasis of decision making away from selecting among a set of options, and towards assessing a situation and mentally simulating courses of action. Essentially, it places a premium on the ability of the decision maker to perceive and interpret the environment. In this framework, recognizing relevant aspects of past experience in the current situation is the fundamental step in making many rapid decisions. Therefore, understanding "what the head's inside of" is the key to understanding consumers' intuitions in many naturalistic situations.

Domain experts recognize in an instant the presence of certain contextual factors that tell them nearly everything they need to know about a situation. For example, critical care nurses in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) know (without explicitly knowing that they know) the factors that indicate sepsis (Crandall & Calderwood, 1989). They may have memorized a list of symptoms "by heart," but they recognize the physical manifestations of those symptoms "by intuition." In many cases, all such experts need is an appropriate frame in which to situate their cognition; they need to recognize features of the environment that are familiar, and then proceed to build expectations about what will happen next and what cues and factors they should pay attention to. Consider another example. When professional hockey players are on the ice in a game situation, they recognize a defense and take actions to exploit its weaknesses well before they can verbalize where their opponents are located and what they're doing (Readinger, Ross, & Phillips, in preparation). The action (or reaction) seems to precede the explicit decision. The players call it intuition or instinct, and it is very similar to what the NICU nurses mentioned above. Intuition, though, is a keen perception of the environment, now and in the past. It is the conjunction of what an expert has thought and done before, when the environmental context was relevantly similar.

In this sense, buying a product is not significantly different from recognizing sepsis or playing professional hockey. The critical contingency in the comparison is the "expertise" of the consumer. Is he or she an expert, in the way that the NHL hockey players or the nurses are? There are differences, but the similarities are more striking. The ability to "size up" a situation in a moment's glance often comes with practice, and it is present when a shopper purchases household goods at a supermarket, just as it is when nurses diagnose sepsis. Behavior often becomes routinized and difficult to verbalize, when consumers are questioned. In the extreme, the experts do not even recognize that they are making any decisions at all. Certainly not all consumer behavior will be at the expert level; purchases made infrequently, for example, are often considerably more analytical (involving the explicit comparison of options) in nature. In these cases, there has been no opportunity for intuition to develop, no environmental and contextual factors that can be grouped across experiences. In some cases, though, consumer intuition can be studied and demystified in the same way that tacit, expert knowledge has been researched in other domains.

Research techniques exist, such as the Critical Decision Method (e.g., Hoffman, Crandall, & Shadbolt, 1998), that focus attention on the aspects of the environment that are critical in making rapid decisions. These have been used on a somewhat limited basis for purposes of consumer research, but will be critical in further exploring the role of intuition in consumer decision making, as well as identifying the cases where analytical decision making predominates. Consumer needs and wants can ultimately be better met when research professionals have the appropriate tools and theoretical stance to uncover the primary environmental cues and factors behind split-second, intuitive behaviors, and relate these to cognition and behavior.

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Consumer Preference Between Price and Feature Changes

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Over time, a firm may be required to either cut features or raise price in order to maintain profitability. Conversely, a firm may decide to deliver additional value to customers and will have to choose between increasing features and reducing the price. In this paper, we explore these trade-offs across multiple product categories to better understand consumer preferences. We expect to find that consumers prefer feature changes to price changes due to loss aversion. We also expect to find that consumers prefer non-alignable gains and alignable losses. We are currently conducting experiments to test our predictions.

Today It's New! Great! And Tomorrow? Perceived Product Newness and Product Liking with a Time Perspective

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With today's companies innovating at the speed of light, it's no wonder that consumers' response to new products has aroused a great deal of interest in the past years. But are consumers as fast? Most prior research has addressed the issue of product newness or innovativeness from a firm perspective (e.g. Garcia and Calantone, 2002) but the psychological approach of newness from a consumer point of view has received little attention in the marketing and consumer behavior literature. In this research, we propose that, from the consumer's perspective, newness can be seen as lying along two dimensions with distinct effects on product liking: (1) mere perception (perceptual newness) and (2) an epistemic dimension linked to the difficulty of understanding a new product. Besides, if a large number of studies focused on exposure effects on new stimuli evaluation (e.g. Bornstein, 1989), product newness perception over time has been relatively poorly addressed. This paper examines the effect of time and exposure on product newness evaluation and product liking separately, as well as on the relationship between these two variables; it also examines the effect of product trial on perceived product newness.

Building on Berlyne's (1960) theory of 'collative' variables (i.e. variables of comparison), we conceptualize newness as a two-dimensional construct, but how do we expect these two dimensions to evolve over time? As newness involves a comparison in time between a previous and a current status, we expect newness perception to decrease over time. Yet, previous research suggests that repeated exposure results in perceptual fluency when encoding is based on perceptual information, but also conceptual fluency with meaning-based representation (Shapiro, 1999; Janiszewski and Meyvis, 2001). Consequently, we argue reaching a better understanding of the new product (conceptual fluency) with repeated exposure, actually leads to a temporary increase in perceptual newness.

With respect to liking, Mandler's theory (1982) and empirical findings in the consumer behavior context (e.g. Meyers-Levy and Tybout, 1989; Moreau et al., 2001), suggest liking increases with newness as long as newness remains cognitively manageable; otherwise the effect is reversed. As a result, the type of newness considered should greatly influence product liking. More precisely, product liking is expected to increase with perceptual newness, whereas it is expected to drop when epistemic newness increases (i.e. makes the problem-solving task more difficult for consumers). Over time and with repeated exposure there is reason to believe that although the differential effect of perceptual and epistemic newness on product liking will remain, consumers should also develop new criteria to form their judgment over the new product (e.g. resulting from their experience). Hence the explanatory power of newness for liking is expected to decrease over time and with exposure.

In the first study, we examine the evolution of newness perception and its relationship with product liking in product usage conditions. With the collaboration of a market research agency, 420 Dutch consumers were randomly assigned one of five new products (in the fabric care category) and data were collected throughout the 2.5 months of the experiment at t_0 (start of the experiment), t_1 (after 3 weeks), t_2 (after 6 weeks) and t_3 (after 9 weeks). After confirming the two dimensions of product newness in a consumer's perspective, we find opposite effects of these two dimensions of product liking. Namely, a positive effect of mere perception versus a negative effect of the epistemic dimension. We also find that the mere perception of product newness increases in the short run (3 weeks), as consumers simultaneously become more able to make sense of the product. Finally, we find that, in the longer run (12 weeks), newness remains persistent despite daily product usage and exposure, yet, its explanatory power for product liking decreases.

In a second study, we examine the particular impact of product trial on the evolution pattern of perceived product newness and liking. In a test-retest context, we ask 160 consumers to rate perceived product newness and liking before and after trial for three new food products. Similar to the first study, we find that mere newness perception is higher after product trial compared to before trial. We also find that consumers become more able to make sense of the product after product trial.

Overall, these findings suggest that getting consumers exposed to the product fosters understanding and simultaneously facilitates perceiving change, thus potentially product advantage. This may be emphasized in this study where consumers were in a context of daily product usage and exposure. Interestingly, consumers acknowledge the fact that the product is new on both dimensions, hence both perceptually and cognitively, however it seems that the benefits/disadvantages of being new vanish. Consequently, it seems that although product newness is critical to determine innovation trial rates, it may not be an appropriate determinant for long-term success.

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Brand Equity and Shadow Diffusion in the Music Industry: Implications of Familiar and Popular

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Extended Abstract

Explicitly or implicitly, it is generally accepted that brand equity plays a role in the sales of entertainment products. For example, new novels by established authors such as John Irving or J.K. Rowling generally sell better than a first novel by an unknown author. In this research we recognize that consumers are subject to a number of influences when consuming entertainment. Two broad forces, one's own prior consumption (personal consumption capital) and other consumers' consumption (social consumption capital) constitute the brand equity effect that we consider. Of particular interest and note relative to prior diffusion models, we focus on how the sales of a current offering are complementary to the sales of prior offerings.

Record executives, book publishers, and film studios have increasingly focused on selling the products of established artists. While new bands, authors, and movies are breakouts on occasion, it is perceived that there is less risk to offering the known or familiar. Movie sequels and new books or albums by established names are generally believed to perform better in the market. The charts of top selling offerings (e.g., Billboard 200, New York Times Bestsellers) are primarily populated with established artists, providing ample support for this perception.

In many cases, preference is a function of one's own past consumption and experience as well as the consumption of others (e.g., Becker 1996; Zajonc and Markus 1982). One area where this may hold is in entertainment goods. For example, Backstreet Boys albums are phenomenally successful with teenagers, but these consumers were not born with the inherent desire to buy Backstreet Boys albums. Instead, it is the consumption of these albums by their peers and their own consumption of prior Backstreet Boys album(s) that contributes heavily to their current preference and the album's sales.

We contribute to the existing knowledge in this area by constructing an estimation model that explicitly captures the effect of consumption of a previous generation entertainment product, as well as the effect of peer consumption of the current generation. This model allows us to investigate differences in consumer purchase patterns for new and established artists. By estimating diffusion parameters for several generations of albums by numerous music groups, we are able to provide insight into the diffusion pattern for music purchases. This decomposition of sales provides knowledge that allows managers to more proactively manage new product introductions and better manage multiple generations of offerings.

The estimation model is a modified diffusion model (e.g., Bass 1969). While this model has generally been applied to product categories, it also fits many entertainment markets quite well. With many entertainment products there is a distinct consumption cycle for each product generation. Within a cycle, a population of potential consumers may buy based on an innovative influence or buy because of social influence, but few consumers will buy the product more than once.

While Norton and Bass (1987; 1992) investigated the situation where a latter generation cannibalizes, we investigate the converse, incorporating complementarity by expanding the basic diffusion model to include an across generation imitation influence in addition to the traditional within generation effects of innovation and imitation. This framework is consistent with Becker's (1996) conception that prior consumption and social consumption (consumption by others) will affect an individual's current consumption.

Our model allows us to empirically explore two areas of interest. First, we provide hypotheses about the across generation pattern of the coefficients of innovation and within- and across-generation imitation. This focuses on the patterns, systematic variation due to brand equity–personal influence, social influence, and innovation. Second, we use information a past generation’s success to forecast the success of a new generation.

To specify the model we use the Billboard 200 data. Limiting the set to the Billboard 200 allowed us to focus on albums that received greater than marginal attention but was not too restrictive. Sales volume outside the top 200 was fairly inconsequential; usually well below 5,000 units per week nationally. Sales of the top three albums were around 200,000 with sales for the top album occasionally substantially above that figure.

Our findings show that an album’s sales over time are influenced by an innovative (or external to the social system) influence as well as both within- and across-generation imitative (or internal) influences. The first two influences, innovative and within-generation imitative are part of a traditional diffusion model. The last influence, across-generation imitative, is new and explicitly connects the diffusion pattern of the current generation with brand equity established prior to the launch of the current generation.

Turning attention to predicting future success for an album we focused on whether a follow-up album makes the charts and if it does, how success in the prior generation is related to success for the current generation offering. Our data show that if a prior album makes the charts, less than 30% of follow-up albums fail to make the charts. The data shows that this occurs when a prior album experiences relatively minimal success in the top 200. Another observation is that the contribution of brand capital may not grow with each successive offering. We did not observe growth in the importance of brand equity across latter generations of offerings and in fact observed a non-significant decline in the importance from 48% to 39%. We did observe a U shaped effect from the 2nd to third and fourth and beyond albums for albums subsequent releases not to even make the charts.

Clearly, brand equity and sales due to across generation effects are important. Our results and the fact that knowing a group’s prior album made the charts significantly elevates its chance of making the charts with its next album seems to justify the industry executive’s focus on the established and familiar.

Our approach has been to decompose the sales pattern and derive a separate estimate for sales due to across generation effects. This provided a better understanding of differences across generations of offerings and implications for a group’s next offering.

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If I Don't Understand It, It Must Be New: Processing Fluency and Perceived Product Innovativeness

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Extended Abstract

The meta-cognitive experience of the ease or difficulty with which new information is processed, referred to as 'processing fluency', has been shown to influence a wide range of human judgments including judgments of truth and preference (e.g., Lee and Labroo 2005; Reber and Schwarz 1999; Skurnik et al. 2005; Winkielman et al. 2003). In relation to preference, high fluency has typically been found to increase subjective liking of the judgment target due to the positive feelings elicited by the fluency experience (see Winkielman et al. 2003). However, what people conclude from their meta-cognitive experiences of processing fluency should be influenced by which naïve theory of information processing they bring to bear on their fluency experience (see Schwarz 2004). The present study addresses this possibility.

Study objectives and hypotheses

High processing fluency is hedonically marked and experienced as positive, which can be captured with psychophysiological measures (Winkielman and Cacioppo 2001). This positive affective response, in turn, results in more positive preference judgments. Suppose, however, that the initial judgment pertains to a specific product attribute (e.g., innovativeness). In this case, fluency may serve as input into a more specific judgment, provided that the task brings an applicable naïve theory of information processing to mind that can serve as an inference rule. We test one such naïve theory, namely the (usually correct) assumption that 'new information is more difficult to process than familiar information'. This assumption may influence judgments of the novelty and innovativeness of a described product. Specifically, we predict that a given product is judged as more innovative when consumers have difficulty processing the product information. Once that judgment is made, it may feed into a later judgment of product preference, reversing the typically observed pattern of the fluency-liking link.

Whether consumers rely on their subjective experience of processing fluency in making specific attribute judgments, however, may depend on their willingness to engage in effortful cognitive processing (referred to as Need for Cognition; Cacioppo and Petty 1982). If a judgment of product innovativeness is seen as pertaining to an objective product characteristic, consumers high in NFC may draw on the details of the product description, whereas consumers low in NFC may rely on their processing experience. Hence, the expected influence of fluency on innovativeness judgments may be limited to low NFC consumers.

Finally, judgments of preference always pertain to one's own subjective response to the product. Accordingly, high as well as low NFC consumers may, in principle, draw on their fluency experience in making preference judgments. But they may be more likely to do so if they have not already attributed this experience to a specific product characteristic. The reported experiment explores these possibilities.

Method

Following a 2 (Fluency: High vs. Low) x 2 (NFC: High vs. Low) between-subjects design, 95 undergraduates read a product review printed in either an easy-to-read font (10 point, black Arial font) or a difficult-to-read font (10 point, dark gray Agency font). Pretests confirmed that the text was differentially easy to read. The product was a multi-functional digital handset which can function as a phone, mp3 player, camera, video recorder, and e-mailer. After reading the product review, participants were asked to indicate how innovative the product was and how much they liked it, each on a 7-point scale. At the end, participants were shown the same product review article (printed in Times New Roman font) where twenty-five key product attributes were underlined, and asked to circle those they thought were false, based on their memory of what they read before. This measure serves to capture participants' substantive processing of the text. NFC was measured using an 18-item NFC scale (Cacioppo, Petty, and Kao 1984); a median split on this variable is used for data analysis.

Findings

Innovativeness. A 2 (Fluency) x 2 (NFC) ANOVA revealed the predicted fluency x NFC interaction on the product innovativeness judgment ($F(1, 91)=4.264, p=.042$). Contrasts confirmed that low NFC participants perceived the product as more innovative when the product information was printed in a difficult-to-read font rather than an easy-to-read font. This provides the first evidence that processing fluency can serve as an experiential basis of judgments of innovativeness. The innovativeness judgments of high NFC participants, in contrast, were not influenced by the fluency manipulation.

Preference. A significant fluency x NFC interaction was also obtained for participants' preference judgments ($F(1, 91)=6.454, p=.013$). As predicted, low NFC participants, who just inferred from low processing fluency that the product is highly innovative, drew on this preceding judgment and tended to like the product *more* when its description was *difficult* to process. That is, we obtained a reversal of the commonly observed fluency-liking link. In contrast, high NFC participants liked the product more when its description was easy to process, replicating the standard finding in this area.

Memory. It is conceivable that our fluency manipulation affected participants' attention to the presented product information. To address this possibility, we assessed their memory of what they had read. A 2 (Fluency) x 2 (NFC) ANOVA of the product attribute verification judgments measure revealed no difference in participants' memory of the product attributes across the four conditions, putting this concern to rest.

Conclusions

This study extends our understanding of the role of processing fluency in consumer judgment as follows. First, it provides the first evidence that fluency can serve as a basis for judging the innovativeness of a product. Because familiar information is easier to process

than novel information, consumers may infer from difficulty of processing that the information is novel, resulting in favorable assessments of the product's innovativeness. Second, once low fluency is attributed to innovativeness, it no longer leads to a negative response to the product. Instead, we observed a reversed pattern of the usual high fluency–high liking link. Third, our findings highlight the role of NFC in the use of fluency as a source of information for making specific attribute judgments. In our study, only low NFC participants relied on their fluency experience as a heuristic cue when asked to judge an objective product characteristic, innovativeness. In contrast, high NFC participants' judgments of innovativeness were not affected by fluency, presumably because they relied on the substantive description of the product. Finally, high NFC participants used their fluency experience in making liking judgments, replicating the usual fluency-liking link. This reflects that liking judgments are subjective, rendering one's fluency-related affective response (Winkielman and Cacioppo 2001) highly relevant.

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The Impact of Regulatory Focus on Brand Choice and Category-Brand Associations

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Consumer decisions vary with the specific wishes and requirements of consumers. For one consumer, a product has to be very reliable whereas, for another consumer, it has to be well designed. Recent research demonstrated that such decision criteria are affected by basic orientations and motivations which are related to hedonic goals of avoiding an undesired state and approaching a desired state. A very sophisticated framework to study the impact of these motivations is provided by Higgins (1997). In his regulatory focus theory, he posits two different self-regulatory strategies: The regulation of behavior according to ideals, hopes, and aspirations, termed promotion focus, and the regulation of behavior according to responsibilities, duties, and security, termed prevention focus. The promotion focus emphasizes the pursuit of positive outcomes. The prevention focus is related to the avoidance of negative outcomes. A basic assumption of regulatory focus theory is that individuals are more concerned with information relevant for the regulatory focus and that attributes compatible to this focus are given more weight in choice (Chernev, 2004; Florack, Scarabis, & Gosejohann, in press).

The main objective of the present paper is to complement this research by showing that the regulatory focus of consumers has an influence on product preferences as well as on the strength of the association of a brand with the product category. In particular, we assumed that category-brand associations vary over different contexts and that products of a category which are compatible to consumers' regulatory focus are more likely to be associated with the category than products that are less compatible with the consumers' regulatory focus. Product preferences and category-brand preferences are two important factors influencing choice. Whereas brand preferences determine the choice between available alternatives of a consideration set, category-brand associations have an influence on whether brands are recalled from memory (Posavac, Sanbonmatsu, Cronley, & Kardes, 2001). The latter is of particular importance when brands are not displayed and when they have to be recalled from memory (Negandgi, 1990).

To examine our hypotheses, we conducted two experiments. The goal of Experiment 1 (N=415) was to show that the regulatory focus of consumers has an impact on the preferences of sun lotions with different claims. We asked participants to evaluate two different brands of sun lotions (cf. Aaker & Lee, 2004) and to indicate which one they would purchase for their summer holidays at the sea. The two sun lotions were presented by two pictures with an advertising claim for each. For one brand, we used a claim that was concerned with the avoidance of sunburn ("Give sunburn no chance. Brand X provides safe protection.") while for the other brand we used a claim that stressed enjoyment of the sun ("Enjoy the warm rays of the sun. Brand X for a healthy tan."). Before participants evaluated the brands, we induced either a promotion or prevention focus with a few questions. In the promotion focus condition, we provided participants with a list of positive things that could happen during their holidays (e.g., meeting nice people) and asked them to indicate which of these things they would actively pursue. In the prevention focus condition, we provided participants with a list of negative things that could occur during holidays and asked them to indicate those they would actively try to avoid (e.g., risk of terror attacks). As predicted, prevention-focused participants preferred the sun lotion with the claim that stressed protection more than promotion-focused participants. This pattern of

preferences was reversed as regards the advertisement for a sun lotion with a claim related to enjoyment. Thus, our results are congruent to those of Chernev (2004) who showed that the regulatory focus of consumers may have a direct effect on product preferences.

In Experiment 2 (N=110), we tested the question whether the manipulation of the regulatory focus of consumers also changes the association between a brand and a product category. In the first part of this experiment, participants saw advertising claims for various products and for the target sun lotion. In one condition, a promotion-focused claim and, in the other condition, a prevention-focused claim was used for the target brand. To guarantee that participants elaborated the claims, they were also asked to recall the presented claims.

In the second part of the experiment, we applied a procedure of Pham and Avnet (2004) to induce either a promotion or a prevention focus. In the promotion focus condition, participants were asked to list present and past hopes and ideals. In the prevention focus condition, they were asked to list present and past responsibilities and duties. Then, we measured the brand category associations with a procedure of Fazio, Herr, and Powell (1992). On a computer screen, we presented the name of a brand category (e.g., electronics) followed by the name of a brand. We presented a total of 60 category-brand pairs. The target brand was presented five times in the correct category-brand pair. The task of participants was to decide as fast as possible whether the presented brand belonged to the preceding product category. The response latency of the trials in which the correct pair was presented was used as a measure of category-brand associations. The results provided support for our hypotheses. Participants showed stronger category-brand associations for the target brand when the claim of the target brand was related to the primed regulatory focus of participants.

Since preferences and category-brand associations are important determinants of product choice, our findings suggest that advertising strategies are more effective when they consider the regulatory focus of the consumer at the point of purchase which may differ within the specific context of choice (e.g., buying a sun lotion in a pharmacy or in a shop for beach equipment).

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Does Ingredient Branding Improve Choice of Host and Ingredient Brands? A Test of Brand Equity-Choice Behavior Consistency

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We extend prior research in ingredient branding in two important ways. First, we use real data about consumer's *choice vs. judgment* measures employed by prior research to find out if ingredient branding improves choice (and not just brand attitudes) of host and ingredient brands. Second, *with attitudinal survey data*, we attempt to find out to what extent consumers' equity perceptions about the ingredient product and the ingredient and host brands explain their choice behaviors towards these products. This investigation of the consistency between consumers' brand equity perceptions and their choice behaviors is rare and thus adds to the brand equity literature. Our analytical approach involves running a Random Coefficient Logit Model of consumers' actual choices of four ingredient products from a rich scanner data set

Mortality Salience and Regional Consumer Behavior Effects of Mortality Salience on Ethnocentric Consumer Behavior at a Regional Level

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Effects of Mortality Salience on Ethnocentric Consumer Behavior at a Regional Level

How do we react as consumers to information that reminds us of the inevitability of our own death (e.g., news of terrorist attacks, natural disasters, wars, murders, accidents)? Terror management theory suggests that one possible reaction to mortality salience is consumer ethnocentrism. But what are the cultural boundaries that define in- and out-groups in such comparisons? And are these ethnocentrism effects only responsible for consumer attitude change or do they also have an influence on less cognitive concepts, e.g., gustatory preferences for a local drink?

Consumer Ethnocentrism is an individual's tendency to view the in-group's objects of consumption as superior to those of the out-group. As Shimp and Sharma (1987) stated, this tendency increases when people experience an economic threat from foreign competition.

Economic threat may be an important source of out-group derogation but another existential threat that also seems to influence ethnocentric tendencies can be derived from *terror management theory* (for an overview see Greenberg, Solomon, and Pyszczynski 1997). According to this theory, affiliation to an in-group and belief in its worldviews serve as a mechanism to buffer our death-related anxieties. The bolstering of a shared cultural worldview against views of the out-group could lead people to ethnocentrism (e.g. Nelson et al. 1997).

Consequently, priming thoughts of people's own mortality (mortality salience) should also lead to stronger *ethnocentric consumer preferences*. Indeed, an ethnocentric bias related to mortality salience is not only an in-group-out-group phenomenon, but it can also be found towards objects of consumption (consumer ethnocentrism): e.g., preferences for national cultural items (cars, food, sports, etc.) under mortality salient conditions (Jonas, Fritsche, and Greenberg 2005). As information that reminds us of the inevitability of our own demise is frequently presented in the media, the influence of our existential concerns on ethnocentric consumption behavior should be investigated thoroughly.

Since many consumer brands and products (e.g., foods and beverages) are mainly or exclusively marketed and consumed within a local region, we were interested in whether ethnocentrism effects only occur on a national level or if they can be found among regions as well. In accordance with social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979), worldviews in a regional context should have at least the same strong influence on individuals' cognitive structure as national views because regions are less inclusive than nations and so they should provide the individual with an even more homogeneous worldview.

We analyzed the *local beer preferences* of the inhabitants of two German cities under mortality salient versus control conditions. We chose the cities of Cologne and Düsseldorf because they are situated close to each other and, objectively, have an almost identical cultural background. Nevertheless, from the inhabitants' perspective, a *cultural competition* can be observed that is manifest in different traditions, lifestyles, and consumption patterns. Hence, the residents of each city were assumed to perceive at least an unconscious threat to their regional worldviews if asked to evaluate a cultural symbol (we chose beer sorts) from the other city.

We were also interested in whether the predicted ethnocentrism effects would take place if a less cognitively controlled concept like taste was the dependent measure. Thus, *gustatory preferences* between two German beers that either came from either the participants' own or the competing region (within the same nation) were examined.

- H 1: A regional ethnocentrism effect—i.e., a main effect of beer sort—will occur across all experimental conditions: the beer sort of participants' own city will taste better than that of the other city.
H 2: This main effect will be qualified by an interaction effect between priming and beer sort. Mortality salience will additionally increase this ethnocentrism effect.

In our experiment, we used a 2 (city) x 2 (mortality salience vs. control condition) x 2 (own beer vs. foreign beer) between-subject design with condition and beer sort randomly manipulated and two fixed city samples (Düsseldorf and Cologne). The dependent measure was evaluation of beer's taste compared to an idealized one. 192 people (72 females and 120 males)—96 from each city—agreed to participate in our study (participants were between 19 and 88 years old; $M=43.8$).

Results show that both hypotheses could be confirmed. Participants in both cities and both conditions rated their own beer as tasting significantly better than the beer of the other city ($F[1, 184]=25.46, p<.001$). This main effect was qualified by a significant interaction effect between sort and priming: the taste difference was greater in the mortality salience condition than in the control condition ($F[1, 184]=7.85, p<.01$) mainly due to a devaluation of the foreign region's beer sort.

To summarize, we would argue that our research adds to the emerging line of research that relates terror management theory to consumer behavior. Our research showed that individuals that have previously thought about their own death have a tendency towards regional consumer ethnocentrism. According to terror management and social identity theories, we found that regional identity serves as an anxiety buffer when mortality is salient, and consumption objects that challenge our regional worldviews—like a foreign region's beer sort—are devaluated more strongly under that condition.

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"Is This Product Really New?" A Study on the Effect of Category Information and Certainty on Newness Evaluations for New-to-Market Products

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Both academic and industry research shows that consumers desire and value new and original products (Battel.org/news; Dahl & Moreau, 2002; Lee & O'Connor, 2003). Individuals strive to obtain new products for both functional benefits that can provide utility as well as psychological benefits inherent with being the first to recognize an innovation. Research has shown that the perceived product newness can have a major impact on the product's diffusion and adoption (Gatignon & Robertson, 1991; Rogers, 1976). A new product can also instigate demand and may even redefine major aspects of consumption in a particular product category. Finally, new products can motivate consumers to seek more information, stimulate word of mouth and can enhance consumers' receptivity to marketing activities surrounding the innovation. Given the ascribed benefits of newness it is not surprising that organizations spend millions of dollars in developing new products and convincing consumers of their newness. Yet, very little research has been conducted to determine how consumers recognize and define newness in new-to-market products. What constitutes newness in the mind of a consumer?

Research suggests that people naturally rely on categorization and perceived prototypicality to form inferences about newly encountered objects (Cohen & Basu, 1987; Gelman & Markman, 1987; Veryzer & Hutchinson, 1998). Categorization is necessary to incite learning and the formation of product evaluations and preferences (Gregan-Paxton & John, 1997). Aesthetic response to product prototypicality is also influential in the development of preferences in consumers. Research on prototypicality indicates that people respond more favorably to objects that are stronger category exemplars than to objects that are less prototypical (Veryzer & Hutchinson, 1998). To date, new product learning has been studied in a context that provides consumers with obvious categories and detailed attribute information (Hoeffler, 2003; Moreau et al., 2001A; Moreau et al., 2001B). However many consumer product encounters occur under information limited and ambiguous circumstances where a category label is not immediately available (e.g., limited visual exposure, teaser ad campaigns). This context provides a rich opportunity to explore the direct effect of categorization and certainty on newness perceptions. The following studies are the first of a series that are designed to illuminate the interplay between categorization, certainty and perceptions of newness. Thus far, we find evidence to support that newness perceptions, first rely on the ability of the consumer to identify a product's category and, second, depend on the accuracy of this categorization.

Study 1 provided a direct test of the effect of categorization on newness perceptions for new-to-market products. Participants were randomly assigned to receive either a 30 second visual product exposure only or a product exposure and product category. The product stimulus was the Roomba Vacuum Cleaner, a new-to-market product. Following the manipulation, participants completed a survey containing measures relating to perceived product newness. There was a significant difference in perceived newness between individuals who received the product category [$M = 5.33$], and individuals who did not receive the category [$M = 4.24$] ($t(50) = -3.31$, $p < 0.05$). This finding demonstrates that categorization plays an important role in facilitating perceptions of newness during new-to-market product encounters. Having a category label enhanced newness ratings, and not having a category label reduced newness ratings.

Study 2 examined the effect of natural categorization processes on perceived newness for new-to-market products. The design was a 2 information level (no demo/demo) x 2 product prototypicality (prototypical/non-prototypical) between-subjects design. The Roomba differed substantially from typical category exemplars and was used in the non-prototypical condition. The Dyson Cyclone vacuum was selected as a new but representative exemplar for the prototypical condition. After the manipulation, participants described the product as though talking to a friend. This description was coded for the use and accuracy of a category label. Participants then completed a survey with the key dependent variable, perceived newness and relevant manipulation checks.

A significant interaction between information level and product prototypicality on perceived product newness was found [$F(1,76) = 4.66$, $p < 0.05$]. Perceived newness was significantly higher for the high [$M = 4.83$] versus low [$M = 3.76$] information conditions for the non-prototypical product [$t(39) = -3.06$, $p < 0.01$]. Perceived newness in both the low and high information conditions for the prototypical product were significantly lower than perceived newness in the non-prototypical, high information condition [both p 's < 0.05]. Perceived newness did not differ significantly among the prototypical and non-prototypical products at the low information level and the prototypical product and the high information level [all t 's < 1 , $p > 0.05$].

A significant interaction between information level and product prototypicality on categorization accuracy was found [$F(1,76) = 37.06$, $p < 0.05$]. Accurate categorization for the prototypical product in the low and high information conditions and the non-prototypical product in the high information condition were all significantly higher than in the non-prototypical, low information condition [all p 's < 0.05]. Prototypicality also had a significant effect on categorization, such that accurate categorization always occurred for the prototypical product in comparison to the non-prototypical products [$F(1,76) = 75.17$, $p < 0.01$]. There was also a significant main effect of information level on correct categorization [$F(1,76) = 37.06$, $p < 0.01$]. High information enhanced categorization accuracy in comparison to low information.

Accurate categorization mediated the relationship between information level, product prototypicality and perceptions of product newness (as per Baron & Kenny, 1986). The first two mediation criteria were realized above. When categorization accuracy was added into the analysis, the interaction between information level and prototypicality on perceived product newness was significantly diminished [$F(1,75)=0.64, p>0.05$], while the effect of categorization accuracy remained moderately significant [$F(1,75)=3.02, p<0.1$].

These findings provide evidence that 1) participants naturally engage in categorization processes upon encountering new products, and 2) the identification of a correct category label is needed to facilitate accurate newness perceptions for new-to-market products. Our findings suggest that people are not willing to perceive new-to-market products as new until they can identify with some level of certainty an appropriate category anchor.

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The Impact of Information Characteristics on Negative Spillover Effects in Brand Portfolios

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This study investigates the moderating effect of the information characteristics, namely crisis severity and attribution, on the spillover effect of negative information in a brand portfolio context. Three experiments provided validation of hypotheses related to spillover effects. We found that both factors moderate the pattern of spillover effects, although attribution information has a more dominant role in consumers' interpretation process of negative information. This study sets the boundary conditions for the impact of negative information, and provides marketers with knowledge of situations in which the negative spillover is likely to be strengthened, attenuated, or even diminished.

Research background

Product-harm crises are product-related incidents of negative publicity in the marketplace due to the malfunction, misuse and sabotage of products (Ahluwalia, Burnkrant, and Unnava 2000; Dawar and Pillutla 2000). Beyond the direct impact on the harmed brand, a product-harm crisis may also affect other affiliated brands. For example, a sudden acceleration problem with the Audi 4000 automobile also negatively influenced the demand for Audi Quattro (Sullivan 1990). This spillover phenomenon can be conceptualized as the impact of external information (e.g. a product-harm crisis) on associated objects (e.g. brands) that are not directly involved (Balachander and Ghose 2003).

Despite the potential impact of such spillover between brands, knowledge about its effect is limited. Many studies on this issue focus on market-level analyses (e.g. Sullivan 1990). Among those that do focus on consumer-related issues (e.g. brand evaluations), few investigate the impact of inter-brand structure or relationships (e.g. strength of association between two brands, brand typicality in a product category) on spillover (e.g. Lei, Dawar and Lemmink 2005; Roehm and Tybout 2004). Essentially, a spillover effect is a network effect, and thus the network structure describing inter-brand relationships plays an important role in predicting the pattern of spillover effects.

Research questions

One underlying assumption in previous studies is that all negative information is alike in nature and induces similar patterns of spillover effects. Departing from prior research, we argue that the characteristics of the information itself moderate the processing of negative information and the spillover effect between brands. One important attribute of negative information is its severity (Herr, Kardes,

and Kim 1991). Extremely negative information draws more attention and a greater level of cognitive elaboration on the information, which facilitates spillover onto related brands (Petty et al. 1997). Next, consumers' attribution of the crisis incident may also potentially influence the pattern of spillover effects. Attribution theory views people as rational information processors whose reactions are influenced by their causal inference (Folkes 1984). Previous research has shown that crises perceived to be avoidable cause more anger and stronger emotional reactions to the harmed brand than crises perceived to be unavoidable (Folkes 1984; Weiner 2000). These induced negative emotions could be generalized to related products/brands (Smith et al. 1999) and strengthen the spillover effect.

Hence, this research investigates the impact of crisis severity, consumers' attribution of the crisis, and their interaction with the inter-brand structure on the pattern of spillover effects. We intend to set boundary conditions for the impact of negative information on brand evaluations, and therefore provide marketers with the knowledge of situations in which the negative spillover is likely to be strengthened, attenuated, or even diminished (Ahluwalia 2000). Furthermore, despite the prevalence of portfolio brands in the marketplace, little empirical research has been conducted in the brand portfolio context. In the current research, we lay the foundation for a theoretical framework of negative information spillover by focusing on the pattern of spillover in brand portfolios.

Experimental design

Three experiments provided tests of hypotheses related to spillover effects. Experiment 1 utilized a 2*2 factorial design, in which two levels of crisis severity (high/low) and strength of association between brands (strong/weak) were manipulated in one brand portfolio. Experiment 2 utilized a 2*3 factorial design, in which three levels of crisis attribution (internal controllable/internal uncontrollable/external uncontrollable) and two levels of strength of association were manipulated in a different brand portfolio. Experiment 3 utilized a 2*2*2 factorial design, in which two levels of crisis severity, attribution (internal controllable/external uncontrollable), and strength of association were manipulated to test the three-way interaction. A series of pretests were conducted to develop appropriate crisis scenarios and select suitable brand portfolios where brands are associated with each other in different levels of association strength.

Experiment 1 and 2

Experiment 1 and 2 investigate the moderating effect of crisis severity and attribution on the spillover effect respectively. We hypothesize that severe crises and crises perceived to be internal controllable can induce a higher level of cognitive activation at the origin brand (where the crisis is exposed), and therefore facilitate a stronger spillover effect conveyed via associative linkages between brands. Results of experiment 1 support our hypotheses that a severe crisis at an origin brand has a greater spillover effect on the strongly associated target brand as compared with the weakly associated target brand, whereas no such differences are found for the non-severe crisis. Results of experiment 2 support our hypotheses that both internal controllable and internal uncontrollable crises have a greater spillover effect on the strongly associated target brand as compared with the weakly associated target brand, whereas no such differences are found for the external uncontrollable crisis. These results indicate that the network structure, namely the strength of association, influences the magnitude of spillover effect only if the crisis is perceived to be severe or it is attributed as internal causes.

Experiment 3

Attribution theory suggests that the attribution process dominates consumers' interpretation process of negative information (Folkes 1984). Therefore, we expect that when severity information and attribution information are both present, attribution information might overshadow the impact of severity on the spillover effect contingent on strength of associations. Specifically, when a crisis is due to internal and controllable causes, consumers may already have very negative attitudes towards the brand. This may create a ceiling effect so that the impact of severity on spillover will be weakened or diminished. However, when a crisis is due to external and uncontrollable causes, a severe crisis would lead to a greater spillover than a non-severe crisis. We test this three-way interaction in experiment 3. The results confirm our hypotheses, yet reveal a different pattern than in experiment 1 and 2.

The results of this study suggest that the impact of negative information on brand portfolios is not homogenous. Rather, it depends on several information characteristics, such as crisis severity and attribution. This study also shows that, when dominant crisis information such as attribution is present, the impact of other crisis information will be weakened or even diminished. Furthermore, this study corroborates previous evidence that attribution information forms the basis for the updating of central consumer judgments such as brand evaluations (Folkes 1988; Klein and Dawar 2004). From a managerial viewpoint, the results of this study help managers to predict the pattern of spillover effects in brand portfolios by looking at not only the inter-brand relationships, but also the characteristics of negative information itself.

The Film Preference Scale: The Effect of Preference and Cultural Capital on Film Going Behavior

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Extended Abstract

Independent film and the independent film audience are neglected areas of research. Using the film preferences scale film audiences are split into four preference groups (independent, crossover, mainstream and no film) and these four groups are compared on a number of quantitative measures (Cultural Capital, Sensation Seeking and Communication behavior (Watson 2004)). This is the first attempt to categorize film audience's types via a scale that can be given to the general public.

The measure of cultural capital is used to elaborate on the notion that there is a class system in film that mirrors the dichotomy found in the traditional art world of high art and popular art. In the case of film, independent film functions as high art compared to mainstream films functioning as popular art. This dichotomy in film will help to explain to a certain extent the perceived inaccessibility of independent film.

Most of what we know about filmgoers falls in the category of demographic information. Little has been done to explore who these people are in a more behavioral way. There is extensive research on audiences for the traditional arts such as symphony, opera, fine arts, ballet, and theatre. Film audiences have been a neglected area of research. Research for the art film audience has received even less attention (Corbett 1999; Meers 2001). Only a small amount of literature has attempted to separate film audiences into distinct groups based on film preferences. These studies have centered on fringe audiences such as those for cult films (Austin 1981), X-rated films (Nawy 1970; Webster 1998), and drive-ins (Austin 1985). For the purposes of this paper, the art film audience is closest to the independent film audience, although it historically encompasses a slightly broader group of types of films. The definition of art films most often used in research comes from Twomey (1956, p. 240), "(art films are) films from other countries, reissues of old-time Hollywood 'classics', documentaries, and independently made films on off-beat themes-in short films that lie outside of the mainstream Hollywood product." Independent films, on the other hand, do not include old-time Hollywood classics or for the most part foreign films.

Research on art film audiences has shown that they tend to have more education, are of higher socioeconomic status, are older, hold more prestigious occupations, and are heavier consumers of cultural activities (Adler 1959; National Research Center for the Arts 1975; Smythe, Lusk, and Lewis 1953)

There is an inherently social aspect to the arts in general and film in particular. Although much of the direct interaction with the art object is one on one, the interaction with others plays varying roles in the experience. The conceptual model in this paper delineates the importance of the passing of information, the socialization that occurs in the process.

Traditionally, most film has not been considered a form of high art. This label has been reserved for symphony, opera, and fine art. It is argued here that the film world operates like many of the art worlds (Becker 1982). There are certain works that are more popular and others that are more alternative. These works appeal to different audiences. The independent film world, in this case, is considered to be high art, whereas the Hollywood film world is considered popular art. This will help explain the differing level of popularity between the two types of films. Given this designation of film groups it follows that the independent film group should have higher cultural capital than either the crossover film preference group or the mainstream film preference group.

The measure of cultural capital used in this study captures the three primary sites of acculturation, which is where, according to Bourdieu, cultural capital is attained. These are: cultural upbringing, formal education and occupational culture, all three being equally weighted (Bourdieu 1984; DiMaggio 1982; Holt 1997). In other studies, measures of cultural capital have included father's occupation and education level only (Holt 1998). They have looked at the relationship of cultural capital to the father's education and occupation only (DiMaggio and Mohr 1985). For this study, the mother's education and occupation is included as well, to take into account the changing influence of word-of-mouth in the workforce, mother's influences on their children, and the cases of mothers as single heads of household.

In order to test if the film scale predicts actual filmgoing behavior, respondents were presented with two lists of films, the 30 top grossing Hollywood films of 2002 and 30 top independent films from 2000-2002.

For this study a 174-item questionnaire composed of Likert style items, categorical questions, open-ended questions, and demographic information was administered to a group of 350 students of a large northwestern U.S. University. Out of the group a total of 301 usable questionnaires were generated. The 49 unusable surveys were incomplete due to unpredictable time constraints.

The results showed that the means for number of films seen in each category (independent and Hollywood) by the independent, crossover, and mainstream film preference groups were significantly different, and the number of films from each category conformed to what was predicted. The independent group saw the most independent films followed by the crossover group and finally the mainstream group. With respect to Hollywood films, the mainstream group saw the most, followed by the crossover and independent groups respectfully.

The study showed that there was a significant correlation between Independent film preferences and both general sensation seeking and the experience seeking construct and that the level of both was significantly higher for this group.

The study showed that there was a difference between the groups with respect to their level of Cultural Capital with the independent group having higher cultural capital than each of the other groups in the study. This fact may begin to account for the differing viewing habits for the three groups when looking at the relationship of independent film to Hollywood film as that of High Art to Popular Art.

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Non-consequential Reasoning in Hedonic and Utilitarian Consumption Decisions

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This work investigates the effects of pursuing non-instrumental information on non-consequential reasoning in the context of hedonic and utilitarian product purchases. Individuals did not differ in their willingness to pursue non-instrumental information in the two purchase contexts; however, once they pursued the non-instrumental information they were more likely to rely on it in hedonic than in utilitarian purchase decisions. This research suggests that individuals feel more accountable for hedonic than for utilitarian purchases and thus, they are more likely to weight non-instrumental information to avoid feelings of guilt.

Is It the Luxury Car or the Super Model that Tempts Him?: The Possibility of Misattributed Arousal

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Research in consumer impulsivity has documented the effect of hedonic stimuli (e.g., dessert) on related behaviors (eating). We extend this line of research in the direction of whether the induced craving towards one hedonic stimulus category (dessert) can be carried over (or misattributed) to intertemporal choices in ostensibly unrelated behavioral domains (investing). In a series of experiments, we found that cues of hedonic stimuli (pictures or scents) led to (1) more choices of vices, (2) impatience in waiting for larger monetary gains, and (3) unplanned purchases.

Goal Abstraction Compatibility and Lexical Fit in Consumer Choice

Ryan Hamilton, Northwestern University

Objects can be described by either their concrete, feature-level attributes or by more abstract, benefit-level attributes. Likewise, a consumer may have a relatively more abstract or concrete mindset in approaching a decision. In a series of studies, we find that choice is a function of consumer mindset such that individuals with an abstract mindset tend to prefer products that dominate on abstract benefits and individuals with a concrete mindset tend to prefer products that dominate on concrete features.

Differential Impact of What is Available and What is Inferred: Promotional Element Salience Effect in Reference Price Promotions

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Conceptual Background

In reference price promotions, consumers are usually exposed to a sale price and a reference price or to a reference price and a discount (we do not investigate situations with all three elements). Thus, savings are presented either directly, in the form of an explicit discount,

or indirectly, by stating the sale price along with the reference price. In the first case consumers infer the sale price. In the second case, they infer the size of discount. Though these two formats may represent economically identical deals, consumers' evaluations are likely to vary depending on the salience of promotional elements.

Levin and Gaeth (1988) found that when ground beef was presented as '75% lean', respondents displayed significantly better evaluations than when it was presented as '25% fat'. Evaluations were different despite the fact that information on the salient attribute automatically provided information about the absent attribute. Salient stimuli have a disproportionate influence on people's judgments (Slovic, Fischhoff and Lichtenstein, 1982). Hence, the first research question is whether promotion format will have a differential impact on consumers' deal evaluations and price estimates. Building on prior findings that consumers prefer to see their gains separately rather than integrated into a price of the product (Thaler, 1985; Diamond and Campbell, 1989), it is expected that consumers' evaluations will be higher for discount present conditions than for sale price present conditions.

The second factor investigated in the study is reference price level. Extant research showed that reference prices have a significant impact on consumers' buying behavior (Kalyanaram and Winer, 1995). For example, it was found that high implausible reference prices substantially increased perceived value of the offer despite decreasing believability of such claims (Urbany, Bearden and Weillbaker, 1988; Mobley et al., 1988). Urbany et al. (1988) suggest that consumers do not reject high implausible reference prices but instead discount them to the level deemed more reasonable. However, this reference price effect may only be true when a high implausible reference price is presented along with a sale price. Compeau and Grewal (1998) suggest that believability of reference prices is of little concern since consumers know that the retailer must sell the product at the advertised sale price. Presenting a discount instead of a sale price in advertisement may inhibit consumers' abilities to estimate the actual sale price and may result in under- or overestimation of the sale price. Moreover, with a high implausible reference price the size of the discount should be large enough to make the sale price (inferred) attractive to consumers. Large discounts will also be perceived with skepticism (along with high implausible reference prices) and are also likely to be discounted to a more reasonable level (Gupta and Cooper, 1992). In this situation consumers may engage in a double discounting that may lead to deal evaluations lower than those in a 'high implausible reference price and sale price' format. Therefore, there may be preference reversal. At plausible levels of reference prices, consumers will have higher deal evaluations when a discount is present than when a sale price is present. However, at high implausible levels of reference prices, consumers will value sales promotions providing information about sale price significantly higher than those providing information about a discount.

Methodology

A 2 (plausible reference price vs. high implausible reference price) x 2 (discount is present vs. discount is absent) between-subjects design was employed to investigate how the level of reference price and the salience of promotional elements affect consumers' deal perceptions. Respondents were exposed to a hypothetical advertisement of a Philips TV set and then were asked to answer a questionnaire. Manipulation checks were conducted to ensure that respondents remembered their treatment conditions and were significantly different in their perceptions of advertised reference prices. Data was analyzed by MANOVA.

Major Findings

A significant interaction between reference price level and salience of promotional elements ($p=0.016$) was found using MANOVA. Upon further investigation, it was found that the interaction was significant only for source credibility ($p=0.031$).

Results of the analysis partially support findings of Urbany et al. (1988). Respondents exposed to advertisement with high implausible reference prices had significantly higher attitude toward the deal (but not perceived value of the offer as in the original study), significantly higher market price estimates, and exhibited significantly lower believability toward claimed savings than those exposed to plausible reference prices. Quality perceptions of stimuli did not differ across groups. Main effect of the salience of promotional elements was significant. When advertisement contained reference price and sale price, respondents' attitudes toward the deal and their perceived value of the deal were significantly higher than when advertisement contained reference price and discount. One interesting and unexpected finding refers to retailer (advertiser) credibility. While credibility of the advertiser was not different at the plausible reference price level, it was significantly higher for the discount present condition than for the discount absent condition at the high implausible reference price level, meaning that double discounting somehow improved the retailer credibility.

Contrary to the hypotheses salience of promotional elements did not have any effect at the plausible reference price level. However, in line with the hypotheses, presenting a discount instead of a sale price in a high implausible reference price condition resulted in significantly lower attitude toward the deal and perceived value of the offer. At high implausible reference price level, salient discount had detrimental effect on respondents' deal perceptions and at the same time significantly enhanced retailer credibility.

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Too Good to be True vs. Too High to be Good: The Role of Product's Price and Form of Incentive in Sales Promotion Evaluations

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Conceptual Background

According to the perceived value concept (Monroe and Chapman, 1987), consumers evaluate market offers based on the ratio of perceived quality to perceived sacrifice. In a sales promotion context, this means that deal evaluations should be positively related to the size of incentive because an incentive would decrease a consumer's perceived sacrifice and, as a result, enhance the perceived value of the offer. However, there are some limits on the size of discounts that retailers can offer during sales promotions. One way to increase the size of an incentive while keeping the sale price of a deal constant is to show a higher regular (reference) price. Blair and Landon (1981) note that consumers can be skeptical of implausible reference prices, and at the same time, be influenced by them. Indeed, Urbany, Bearden and Weilbaker (1988) found that after exposure to implausible reference prices, consumers update their internal reference standards upward. This adjustment leads to a substantial increase in the perceived value of the offer despite decreasing believability of such claims. Therefore, it is expected that when consumers are exposed to overpriced products and bigger incentives, they will have higher evaluations than when they are exposed to normally priced products and respectively lower incentives. However, there will be an interaction if the second factor—the form of incentive is taken into account.

One major difference between the two forms of incentives is that with a monetary incentive consumers do not need to pay the regular (reference) price for the offer, while with a nonmonetary incentive, they do. (For the sake of simplicity the study is limited only to instant sales promotions). Situations where consumers pay only sale price for the offer are identical to reference price advertising, and consumers are likely to have higher evaluations for the overpriced condition. However, when consumers have to pay regular price and get a nonmonetary incentive with the purchase, a high regular price of the offer may result in a perceived unfairness and trigger negative feelings toward the retailer (Xia, Monroe and Cox, 2004; Martins and Monroe, 1994). In this case, consumers' evaluations in the normally priced condition are likely to be higher than those in the overpriced condition (despite greater nonmonetary incentives in the overpriced condition).

Therefore, it is hypothesized that consumers' evaluations and purchase intentions toward instant monetary promotions will be higher when the promoted product is overpriced than when it is normally priced. Conversely, consumers' evaluations and purchase intentions toward nonmonetary promotions will be higher when the promoted product is normally priced than when it is overpriced.

Methodology

Respondents in a 2 (normally priced vs. overpriced product) x 2 (monetary vs. nonmonetary incentive) between-subjects design experiment were exposed to a hypothetical sales promotion advertisement of a Kodak one-time-use color camera and then were asked to answer a questionnaire. Sale prices (either actual or inferred—by subtracting the value of the nonmonetary incentive from the regular price) for all four conditions were identical (\$2). The Kodak brand was used to prevent inferences about low product quality that respondents may make based on a low sale price of the offer. To control for consumers' preference heterogeneity in the nonmonetary condition, a free film processing coupon was chosen as a clear complement to the camera. Data were analyzed using MANOVA.

Major Findings

Contrary to the hypotheses, no significant interaction was found between the product price level and the form of incentive for both deal evaluations ($p=0.603$) and purchase intentions ($p=0.863$). Upon further investigation it was found that respondents did not significantly vary in their deal evaluations ($p=0.502$) and purchase intentions ($p=0.296$) across the two forms of incentives. The only significant main effect found was for the price of promoted product ($p<0.001$). Contrary to Urbany et al. (1988) overpriced condition did not improve evaluations of the deal and purchase intentions. When a product was overpriced, respondents' evaluations of a deal and their purchase intentions were significantly lower than when it was normally priced.

One plausible explanation of those findings is based on consumers' belief that a marketer's goal is to make a profit. When a discount appears to be too high, consumers may engage in attributional processing to account for the behavior and may make some inferences about the quality of a product or the motive of a retailer (Friestad and Wright, 1994). With high offer prices consumers may completely switch their focus from product quality to retailer's motivation and infer that the retailer wants to look good by stating inflated regular prices first and then offering bigger discounts. As people pay greater attention to disadvantages (Sen and Johnson, 1997) and negative stimuli get a greater weight in consumer decision making (negativity bias), sales promotions with overpriced products are likely to result in lower evaluations than those with normally priced products.

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The Role of Meta-cognitive Experiences in Reason-based Choices for the Self vs. Others

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Extended Abstract

Prior studies have shown that people sometimes base judgments on the subjective meta-cognitive experience, for example, the ease or difficulty with which relevant information comes to mind (referred to as "ease-of-retrieval" by Schwarz et al. 1991). For instance, Wänke et al. (1997) have shown that consumers evaluate a BMW less favorably after generating ten reasons to choose a BMW over a Mercedes than with only one self-generated reason. Our research ultimately intends to look into three possible mechanisms for this "ease-of-reasoning" effect. The first two explanations have been offered by prior studies, but there seem to be mixed findings in the literature (see Haddock 2000 and Wänke & Bless 2000 for reviews).

Three possible mechanisms for the ease-of-reasoning effect

The first possible mechanism suggested by prior studies is the 'availability heuristic' based processing. This heuristic-based account suggests that people infer a scarcity of good reasons from the experienced difficulty of generating reasons. According to this explanation, people are more likely to rely on this ease effect under low-elaboration conditions than high-elaboration conditions. If this availability heuristic mechanism operates in the reason-based choice contexts, then the experienced difficulty of generating reasons should have a negative impact on the predicted choices of others as well as the choices made for the self only under low elaboration conditions (or at least the ease effects should be more pronounced under low, rather than high, elaboration conditions). The second possible mechanism involves the perceived validity (or quality) of reasons. According to this explanation, people are more likely to rely on the ease effect under high-elaboration conditions, because subjective difficulty of generating reasons undermines the perceived validity or compellingness of the reasons (Wänke & Bless 2000, Tormala et al. 2002). If this 'reason validity' mechanism operates, then the subjective difficulty of generating reasons should have a negative impact on the predicted choices of others as well as the choices for the self only under high elaboration conditions. In the current study, we suggest another possible explanation that the subjective experience of difficulty tells the person something about his/her preferences directly (i.e., "I can't think of many good reasons, so this tells me something about my own preferences" rather than "I can't think of reasons, so this tells me something about the reasons themselves"). In other words, the consumer may believe that it is inconsistency with his/her own preferences, rather than the validity of the reasons themselves, that makes reason-generation difficult. If this 'preference diagnosticity' mechanism operates, then one's subjective difficulty of generating reasons should be limited to decisions made on one's own behalf. We further argue that only under high-elaboration conditions people would be motivated and make a distinction between one's own feelings and the feelings that others might be likely to have. Therefore, under high-elaboration conditions, when a person makes a choice for the self, the target option will more likely be chosen after only a couple of (vs. many) reasons are generated. On the other hand, when the person predicts others' choices, the person would predict that the others will more likely choose the target option after many (vs. a couple of) reasons are generated, supposedly because the subjective difficulty of generating reasons is no longer diagnostic for others' choices.

Experiment design

Allowing people to generate reasons *then* asking them to make choices on behalf of themselves or predict others' choices will allow us to disentangle these mechanisms. Seventy-nine undergraduate students participated in our experiment with a 2 (reasons: 2 vs. 8 pro reasons) x (NFC: high vs. low) x 2 (choice type: self vs. others) mixed-design where 'reasons' and 'NFC' were treated as between-subjects factors and 'choice type' was treated as a within-subjects factor. Each participant generated either 2 or 8 reasons for choosing New York over Las Vegas as a vacation destination. NFC was measured using the 18-item scale (Cacioppo, Petty, and Kao 1984) and participants were divided into two groups based on a median split for data analysis. After reading a choice scenario and generating reasons, participants were asked which destination they would most likely choose and which destination they thought other students most likely choose (the two choice questions were given in a counter-balanced order). At the end, participants were asked how difficult it was to generate the 2 or 8 reasons (on a 7-point scale) for manipulation check.

Major findings

First of all, our manipulation check on the experienced difficulty of generating reasons revealed only a main effect of the number of reasons as expected: participants in the 8-reason condition reported that it was more difficult to generate the reasons than those in the 2-reason condition. Our analysis of the main data revealed a significant three-way within subjects interaction among 'the number of

reasons,' 'NFC,' and 'choice type' showing that depending on the choice perspective (self or others), the ease effect on the choice outcome differs. This three-way interaction was the only significant effect. In specific, when people made a choice for themselves, those with high NFC relied primarily on their subjective ease experience. They were more likely to choose N.Y. over L.V. after generating 2 (vs. 8) reasons to go to N.Y. However, when they predicted similar others' choices, they relied more on the number of reasons they generated. They were more likely to choose N.Y. over L.V. after generating 8, rather than 2, reasons. On the other hand, those with low NFC, when making a choice for themselves, were more likely to choose N.Y. after generating 8 reasons than 2, suggesting that they did not make use of subjective difficulty in making their decision and simply relied on the number heuristic (i.e., "more reasons are better"). However, when predicting others' choices, they were more likely to choose N.Y. after generating 2 reasons than 8, consistent with the possibility that taking others' perspective generated more cognitive effort. For high NFC people, our results replicate the previous finding that people sometimes use the ease or difficulty of generating reasons as a guide to their choices; however, according to our data, what their subjective difficulty of generating reasons informs may be neither about the scarcity of good reasons nor about the validity of the reasons themselves. It seems to be rather about their diagnosticity for the person's own preferences. Our future study will look more closely into the mechanisms for low NFC people.

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When Behaving Bad is Good: Self-Regulatory Enhancement by Strategic Goal Deviation in Consumption

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Extended Abstract

Most important goals cannot be attained without considerable self-regulation and effort (Cantor and Blanton, 1996). During the process to attain the desirable end state that the personal goal focuses on, consumers need to choose between multiple goals (Kruglanski, Shah, Fishbach, Friedman, Chun and Sleeth-Keppler, 2002), to restrain "irresistible" impulses (Baumeister, 2002), and need commitment to persistently pursue the current goals (Brunstein, 1993; Locke and Latham, 2002). Altogether, the process of goal striving can be quite exhausting leading many times to interruptions of current goal-pursuit (Baumeister, Heatherton and Tice, 1994).

A common assumption in the literature is that in order to reach a specific goal, consumers need to progress through some sequence of steps when making a choice (Bettman, 1979), consistently regulating their activities in alignment with their focal goals (Hacker, 1985). For example, Bettman (1979) proposed that in order to reach goals, a set of sub-goals must be defined, defining a plan to reach the specific goal. Analogously, Kruglanski and colleagues (2002) proposed that each goal can be depicted as a goal-system, where the super-ordinate goal is cognitively connected to its various sub-goals or way-stations en route to that goal. Hacker (1985) considered that any activity that is not organized towards the goal should typically be characterized as trial and error.

Clearly, the systematic pursuit of goals over time can be quite exhausting since cognitive and other resources are spent over time to keep commitment and focus on the current long-term goal (Kruglanski et al., 2002). Thus, controlling self-behavior requires the expenditure of resources that become depleted during the self-regulation process, resembling a muscle's ability (Muraven and Baumeister, 2000; Schmeichel and Baumeister, 2004). And, if the muscle metaphor of willpower generalizes, then because the muscle needs periods of rest and relaxation to recuperate and to strengthen, willpower will also require its moments in the sun. This is the thesis that we examine in the present research.

Many goals that consumers pursue, such as dieting, saving, and exercising, entail inhibitory behaviors that need to be executed over extended periods of time, involving effort and need for high self-regulation. Such inhibitory activity strains willpower, and it does so progressively when the inhibition needs to be maintained over extended periods of time. Long-term projects on which consumers work repeatedly, sometimes with little optimism for a quick or easy finish, strain the limits of self-regulation for practically everyone (Mischel, Cantor and Feldman, 1996). Thus, it is likely that consumers, when pursuing goals that involve inhibitory behaviors for extended periods of time, may need periods of rest and relaxation to recuperate and to strengthen self-regulatory resources.

The issue then is if we always need to perform the behaviors that bring the desired end-state closer, in order to eventually attain it? Or, if there are conditions that is good to temporarily deviate strategically from direct goal pursuit, in order to eventually attain the goal?

For goals that require inhibitory behaviors over extended periods of time, such as in dieting, exercising, saving and so forth, it may be beneficial to temporarily not only abstain from goal pursuit, but actually to perform behavior that runs counter to the overarching focal goal, but which allows the replenishment of self-regulatory resources. Therefore, in the spirit of the muscle metaphor of willpower, we propose that the temporary pursuit of non-regulatory behaviors, even when counter productive to the overarching goal, can act as a mechanism to deal with immediate self-regulatory depletion, can contribute to willpower enhancement, increasing likelihood of goal-pursuit and contributing to eventual long-term goal-attainment.

We hypothesize that in goal-pursuit processes where individuals foresee that high self-regulatory behaviors will be needed to attain the focal goal, intermittent goal-striving processes (i.e., goal-focused activities with goal-relaxation moments) will be preferred, leading to lower levels of ego-depletion and increasing likelihood of goal attainment. By exerting goal-relaxation moments, we also predict an enhancement of motivation to proceed with self-regulatory tasks, as well as an increase in consumers' ability to cope with self-regulatory demands.

Results from five experimental studies demonstrate that the inclusion of *a priori* moments of goal-relaxation in self-regulatory processes, when counter productive to *immediate* goal-attainment, increase the likelihood of long-term focal goal attainment. The findings demonstrate the importance that goal-rest periods are defined *before* initiating self-regulatory activities, i.e., *a priori*. This prior knowledge that goal-rest periods will take place during self-regulation leads to lower rates of ego depletion than when consumers do not have *a priori* knowledge about the occurrence of such goal-relaxation periods. Furthermore, the inclusion of goal-relaxation moments, in which inhibitory self-regulatory processes do not take place (e.g., interruption of dieting behavior to eat "normally" for one day), increases motivation to attain the goal, enhances action likelihood of proceeding with self-regulatory activities, leads to lower depletion, and increases ability to develop coping strategies to deal with self-regulatory issues. Consumers also clearly showed preference for engaging in self-regulatory activities where goal-relaxation periods are included. Taken together, these results provide support that for goals requiring inhibitory behaviors over extended periods of time, the likelihood of eventual goal-attainment is higher when consumers engage in an intermittent goal-striving process, where relaxation-goal activities are entailed, than when they engage in a straight goal process, where all the activities are aligned with focal goal.

Overall, this research contributes to a better understanding of self-regulatory behavior for goal-attainment, emphasizing the importance of temporal activity/planning in goal-striving. Because goals play an essential role in consumer behavior (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 1999), are present in most behaviors of daily life (Cantor and Blanton, 1996), and its pursuit involves coping with challenges, temptations and frustrations (Mischel, Cantor and Feldman, 1996), this research sheds some light on when it is good in the long run to be sometimes bad in the short run.

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Improving Consumer Quality-Efficiency By Using Simple Adaptive Feedback in a Choice Setting

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This paper proposes a feedback control based adaptive scheme for providing choices for users in a web setting. We hypothesize that using this scheme for updating the number of choices presented produces an efficient method of user interaction. We conducted an experiment with seventy-five subjects who had to choose a computer they would buy, given monetary constraints from a large choice set. We used various algorithms for number of choices to be presented to the users in a time-sequential manner. One algorithm was the proposed Simple Feedback Algorithm, which was proven by the data collected to be the most quality-efficient.

The Negative Stigma of Coupon Redemption

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The present research explores the possibility that the positive act of redeeming coupons to save money is a socially stigmatized behavior. Further, we suggest that not only does a stigma exist for the consumer who redeems a coupon but that the negative stigma extends to influence other shoppers in close proximity to the consumer. The results of a laboratory and a field investigation confirm that coupon redemption is a negatively stigmatized behavior and that its negative implications extend to impact other non-involved bystanders.

Relationship Stages and Consumption Patterns: Variations in Object Attachment and Importance of the Brand

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Consumers' interpersonal relationships have often been excluded as explanatory variables in consumption behavior (Richins, 2001), despite their ability to affect consumption practices (Johnson and Thomson, 2003). As intimate interpersonal relationships relate to consumers' happiness, feelings of self-esteem, fulfillment, goal achievement, and general well-being (e.g., Leary, 1999; Leary and Downs, 1995; Peplau and Perlman, 1982; Mikulincer, *et al.* 2003) they are likely to influence both the type and the volume of products consumed.

We propose that the effect of interpersonal relationships on consumption behavior can be observed by taking into account different relationship stages. For example, research has shown that divorced men and women dine out more often than their married counterparts, and women spend more money on shoes and hair care if they are divorced rather than married (Silverstein and Fiske, 2003).

If consumption patterns differ across stages of the relationship cycle, marketers could approach consumers with more targeted advertising messages when their relationship stage could be identified. Similarly, consumers could better protect themselves from persuasive messages by recognizing that a particular relationship stage might leave them vulnerable to such claims.

The purpose of this paper is to present a framework of consumption patterns across relationship cycle stages. We propose four different relationship cycle stages—single life, infatuation, committed relationship, and dissolution—and relate them to object attachment and the importance of brands. Each stage is signified by a distinct combination of object attachment and brand importance, in which brand importance can be high or low and object attachment broad or narrow, and deep or shallow. Breadth of attachment denotes the volume of objects that the consumer is attached to, whereas depth signifies the meaningfulness of the attachment. Brands are separated from objects, as they are vehicles of self-expression used for the creation of an ideal-self (Hogg *et al.*, 2000).

Consumer lifecycle stages and consumption

In the *single life* stage consumers are seeking to define their self-identity. An identity is effectively communicated through the brands the consumer chooses. For example, a woman can choose to be a sporty Esprit girl, or a classy Armani woman. Product categories that are often used for the purpose of communicating one's identity are those that are highly observable in nature, such as clothing, beauty products, and services, which can communicate the status and attractiveness of the owner. Therefore, we predict the importance of brands, as well as the object attachment to increase. More specifically, we predict that the object attachment increases both in breadth (as there are many objects the consumer is likely to be attached to) and in depth (as the meaning the consumer attaches to objects is likely to be very elaborate).

In the *infatuation stage*, a consumer has found a potential partner that s/he is infatuated with. To maintain harmony and ensure the success of the relationship, consumers often try to communicate their ideal self-identity to their partner. As a result, the importance of brands (as they signal status and quality) is likely to remain high. However, the breadth of the attachment to objects is likely to decrease. With the advent of the new partner, the objects no longer play such a central role they used to do. Thus, as compared to the single life stage,

in which object attachment was broad and deep and brands important, the broadness of the attachment as well as the importance of brands, is likely to decrease in the infatuation stage.

In the *committed relationship* stage consumers focus their attention on the relationship they have. In this stage, the breadth of object attachment decreases, as consumers are shifting their attention from objects to the relationship, and no longer feel the need to communicate a distinct identity. In contrast, the depth of object attachment increases, since the objects acquire bring additional symbolic meaning that is likely to be linked to the relationship (e.g., romantic dinners or holidays). Similarly, the importance of brands decreases, since consumers no longer need brands as much to reinforce their ideal-self.

During the *relationship decline and dissolution* stage consumers begin to separate themselves from the relationship identity, and start seeking a new individual identity. As a consequence, the breadth of their attachment to objects grows in view of the fact that consumers begin to experiment with new products. At the same time, the depth of the attachment decreases, as the objects are just trials, i.e. not meaningful *per se*. Simultaneously, brands are increasing their importance, since consumers start paying more attention to what brands can signal about their identity and use it for creating a new identity.

The existence of a link between a consumer relationship stage and his or her consumption pattern has several implications for both marketers and consumers. Consumers are likely to be more influenced by certain types of persuasive messages in particular stages of their relationships. Marketers could use this information to their advantage to better target those consumers who are likely to be most receptive towards the message. For example, consumers in the decline stage are more likely to be receptive towards innovations and products that involve excitement. As they seek for a new identity they are willing to experiment with a variety of products. Brands of the products, on the other hand, should be communicated to single consumers or those in the beginning of a relationship, as they are more susceptible to use a brand as a signal of status and quality.

Consumers, on the other hand, could overcome vulnerability associated with particular stages (such the decline stage), if they can link their feelings to a particular stage. Recognizing that consumption might be a reflection of a particular relationship stage that might leave the consumer insecure can help the consumer limit or control excessive spending.

Attributional Processes during Product Failures—The Role of the Corporate Brand as Buffer

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Information about product failures is expected to deteriorate brand attitudes. However, our research indicates that the harmful impact is attenuated if the responsibility for the failure can be assigned to a superordinate brand. We found a significant interaction between the favorability of product information and the strength by which a product brand is endorsed by a corporate brand. Negative information reduced attitudes towards the product brand but only when the product brand was not strongly endorsed by a corporate brand. These findings call for the incorporation of the corporate brand's function as buffer into the models of brand architecture.

People We Love to Love and People We Love to Hate: Predicting Desired Outcomes of Reality TV Scenarios

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This study seeks to uncover the qualities of participants that people look for when deciding on a reality TV contestant to root for or root against. We examine the relationship between a number of respondent ratings (e.g., similarity to self, attractiveness, intelligence) and the respondents' desire to see the contestant win or lose. We expected, and found, that preference for contestant success depended on the type of reality show (we tested four basic types: relationship drama, sadism, trickery and glamour).

The Sphere of Pure Consumption: Outsourcing the Production of Sacred Commodities

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This paper explores the phenomenon of outsourcing of production of sacred 'commodities'. The example of the international markets for adoption is examined as one manifestation of such outsourcing. The creation of distance and separation between the 'production' and 'consumption' cycles is offered as one of the ways consumer markets seek an utopian market where production does not taint consumption. The industrialised late capitalist economies are seen as becoming a sphere of pure consumption, while the less industrialised economies in transition are seen more and more as bearing the lion's share of production of these 'products'.

Market Agents' Roles in the Maintenance and Transformation of Rituals

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Extended Abstract

Following Rook's (1985) seminal work on ritualistic dimensions of consumption, numerous studies investigating the content, context, and major elements of different rituals appeared in the marketing literature (e.g. Lowrey and Otnes, 1994; Sherry and McGrath, 1989; Wallendorf and Arnould, 1991). These studies demonstrated symbolic significance of rituals and reported their dynamic nature. However, while it is noted that "the marketplace significance of rituals ... is striking" (Rook 2004, p.315), very few studies to date examined the role of market agents in the maintenance and transformation of rituals. The exceptions include the studies looking at the role of retailers (McGrath 1990; Otnes 1998; Sherry and McGrath 1989) and the relationship between advertising and consumption rituals (Otnes and Scott 1996). Motivated by this gap, this study seeks to identify the market agents and explore their roles in reproduction and transformation of rituals, using dowry practice—a form of marriage payment—in Turkey as a case study.

There are two reasons for our focus on the dowry practice. First, dowry is a long-standing and commonly performed wedding-related ritual in Turkey and many other Asian countries, including India and China (e.g. Tambiah, 1973; Croll 1984; Siu 1993; Bhopal, 1997). While the content of dowry varies from culture to culture, in general, it involves the gifts given to the bride, the groom, and the groom's family by the bride's parents. Irrespective of its content, it is a highly symbolic ritual that marks the transition from childhood to adulthood and from being a daughter/son to a wife/husband. Second, several studies report major transformations in the nature and content of dowry ritual in different cultures it is practiced (e.g. Rao, 1993; Caldwell et al., 1983; Banarjee 1999; Yan 1996). A recent study demonstrates that Turkish marriage dowries have undergone major changes as a result of the country's economic development and urbanization (Sandikci and Ilhan 2004).

Traditionally, Turkish dowry is confined to the textile products such as embroidery, clothing, bed linen, and carpets that are manually manufactured by the bride-to-be (e.g., Çelik, 1987, Tezcan, 1997, Öztürk, 1983). However, as a result of the changes in the social roles of women, the weakening of traditional lifestyles, and the emergence of independent manufacturers, more and more daughters and their mothers began to either buy ready-made dowry pieces or outsource the artifacts. Today, a prolific and expansive dowry market, composed of different agents producing various dowry pieces exists in Turkey. Our analysis indicates that there are several players in this market, including independent women, retailers, schools and institutes, collective exhibitions, and media that have the power and the means to both reproduce and transform dowry ritual through their design, production, and marketing activities.

So far, we collected data through a series of semi-structured, "long interviews" (McCracken 1988), observations, photographs, and supplemental materials such as newspapers, web pages, and business flyers. Depth interviews were conducted with four dowry shop owners and four independent women who work as freelance manufacturers in Ankara. The informants vary in terms of the size of the businesses, type of dowry preparation service they provide, and number of years in the dowry market. We have also visited dowry and marriage planning fairs both in Ankara (May 2003, 2004) and in Istanbul (February 2005) where we had the chance to observe different players in the market.

Preliminary analysis suggests that the market agents play three different roles: to mediate, consult, and innovate. The market agents assumed the role of the mediator as a result of the proliferation of dowry meanings. Traditionally, dowry included a pre-determined, fixed set of artifacts. However, as a result of urbanization and changing lifestyles dowry preparation became increasingly subject to negotiation (Sandikci and Ilhan 2004). While market agents transform the rituals through new or modified artifacts, scripts, and performances, they also reproduce the ritual through marketing 'classic' pieces. Overall, our study indicates that market agents have the ability to transform the dowry ritual and also the means to control the rate and extent of the diffusion of new artifacts, scripts and performances.

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Spiraling Downward: An Illustration of Social Breakdown Theory and Its Relationship with Self-Concept

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Extended Abstract

Social breakdown theory (SBT) suggests that an individual's sense of self, his/her ability to mediate between self and society, and his/her orientation to personal mastery are functions of the kinds of social labeling experienced in life (Kuypers and Bengtson 1973). It contends that the media can be instrumental in creating negative social labels that adversely affect the self-concept of susceptible older adults. The result is a downward spiral that finds victims accepting the view that they are incompetent, ailing, and useless to society and subsequently believing and behaving accordingly. Kuypers and Bengtson (1973) argue that the elderly are more vulnerable to social labeling because of the "nature of social reorganization in late life" (i.e., role loss, vague or inappropriate normative information, and a lack of reference groups). Thus, the model has the potential to clarify why older individual's self-concepts may change in later life and the consumption related consequences of such changes (Moschis 1994).

While SBT is yet to be empirically tested in its entirety due to its dynamic nature, specific relationships between variables lend themselves to falsification. Our efforts were in a similar vein, testing specific relationships and the moderating effects of select variables.

Conceptualization

Over their life course, older adults are likely to face a variety of life transitions that require the acquisition of new norms, behaviors, and roles. SBT addresses the issue of how one's changing social world might result in changes in one's self-concept (Moschis 1994). The SBT model acknowledges that one's social system is in constant flux as it reflects new roles, norms, reference groups, and statuses characterized by different stages in one's life (Kuypers and Bengtson 1973).

Social roles are sets of expectations or guidelines for people who occupy given social positions, such as those of a widow(er), grandfather, and retiree. Yet, there appears to be little evidence of clearly-defined expectations concerning what the growing number of older people should do during their later years, as a result of transitions into various types of roles. The difficulty in determining the socially appropriate cognitions and behaviors for older adults is likely due to a number of factors. The transition to "old age" tends to be vague, amorphous, and unregulated, as the scarcity of rites of passage ceremonies that benefit children and younger adults reflects (e.g., graduation, marriage) (Rosow 1974). Additionally, the heterogeneity of older adults adds to the complexity of defining their social roles.

Kuypers and Bengtson (1973) assert that when certain social reorganizations occur in late life, the individual is deprived of feedback concerning "... who he is, what roles and behavior he can perform, and, in general, what value he is to his social world" (p. 182), due to a lack of normative guidance, role loss, and a lack of appropriate reference groups. As a result of the subsequent "feedback vacuum," the elderly are vulnerable to, and dependent on, external sources of self-labeling (e.g., the mass media). Moreover, these external cues tend to communicate negative, stereotypical messages of the elderly as useless and obsolete. In short, Kuypers and Bengtson (1973) contend that the effects of ambiguous role conditions leave older adults susceptible to the negative cycle of social breakdown syndrome because they rely on negative, external labeling that gradually erodes their self-concepts; ultimately, they accept a self-concept of a person who is useless, obsolete, and inadequate. Kuypers and Bengtson (1973) predict that the consequence of this pattern is an atrophy of coping skills. However, they contend that SBT's downward cycle can be broken and even reconstructed through certain personal circumstances and/or interventions (e.g., his/her health, financial resources, and housing situation).

The present study considers the basic foundation of the SBT model within the context of the life course framework. It proposes that various unexpected and anticipated life events that older adults encounter require transitions to new and not well-defined roles. Resulting feelings of role loss or discontinuity will lead to a susceptibility to negative labeling (i.e., via media messages) that weakens one's self-concept and results in the initiation or intensification of emotion-focused coping strategies (Folkman and Lazarus (1980). This progression may be moderated by one's financial status, health, and education.

Method

The data used in this study was based on a national mail survey of 695 U.S. consumers who were part of a panel. Because SBT applies only to elderly individuals, this number was reduced to 314, by limiting analysis to only those respondents 60 years or older.

Regression analysis was utilized to test the relationships between role discontinuity events, declining self concept, and emotion-focused coping strategies. The moderation effects of media, education, income, and health were also tested.

Major Findings

The hypothesis that the relationship between one's self-concept and emotion-focused coping strategies was supported. The mass media measure did not emerge as a significant moderator of the relationship between role discontinuities and declining self-concept. A key finding of this study was the moderating effects of health and education as they relate to anticipated life discontinuities and one's self-concept. Apparently, the impact these factors might have on the elderly's stability of their self-concept due to role discontinuities in later life has important societal implications.

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Developing and Testing the Cultural Embeddedness of Products (CEP) scale

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Extended abstract

Background

National culture seems to be an increasingly important variable in consumer behavior research. First, the variety of products from all over the world is growing in most Western markets. At the same time, there is now stronger political pressure to display the origin of products, especially within the European Union. Moreover, previous speculations about convergence of national cultures (e.g. Levitt 1983), are countered by recent evidence showing that many cultures are in fact diverging along several dimensions (de Mooij 2000; de Mooij 1998).

Research on cultural meaning of products has typically adopted a qualitative anthropological approach (Applbaum and Jordt 1996; Thompson and Haytko 1997). Past research has provided useful insights of how consumers ascribe cultural meanings to specific products. However, in order to study larger numbers of products and exploit the advantages of multivariate statistical analyses, we need quantitative measures of focal concepts. In this research we develop a scale for measuring the type- and extent of national cultural meaning embedded in products, the CEP-scale.

Defining the CEP construct

CEP is an individual level variable and refers to the degree to which a product category (e.g., pizza, meatballs, orange juice, TV, jeans, etc.) is perceived to be embedded in a given national or ethnic culture. The dimensionality of the construct was uncertain ex ante. Our research strategy was to develop a broad set of scale items and look for different dimensions by means of factor analysis.

We used three theoretical frameworks in developing the scale items: theories on transferal of cultural meaning to products (McCracken 1986), theories on symbolic interactionism (Solomon 1983), and social identity theory (Kleine et al. 1993). Furthermore, we consulted two experts on national culture and consumer behavior, one academic and a marketing director of a multinational consumer goods company. The items were developed to capture the interaction of meaning in consumer products with the culturally-constituted world and consumers' self-concepts. The initial list included 17 items, such as "when consuming this product, I feel that I am part of the national tradition" and "this product is probably found in some folk tales, songs, or jokes (of this nation)".

Method and major findings

The CEP Scale was tested on two non-student samples in Moscow, Russia (N= 201 and 238). Five products were included in both tests. Products were selected systematically to provide variation in the expected level of cultural embeddedness: ketchup (low), soft drink (low), vodka (high), mors (a special kind of juice based on berries; high CEP), and pelmeni (a special kind of meatball; high CEP).

Based on the first dataset we performed exploratory factor analyses in order to explore the dimensionality of the scale. Regardless of extraction- or rotation schemes, the analyses tended to converge in two factors, but with some sign of a third factor (explained variance, all factors: about 65%). The two major factors seemed to represent a descriptive CEP dimension (items such as: "This product could be

used by foreigners, e.g. in movies or stories about Russia, in order to describe something typical Russian”), and a personal CEP dimension (items such as: “as a Russian, I probably have other thoughts and feelings for this product than other people”). One or two items, though, tended to load on a third factor. These items referred to a public aspect of CEP (item: “If other Russian were to see me using this product, he or she would perceive me as a typical Russian”). This third factor was interesting from a theoretical viewpoint, because previous research has shown that the self-concept has a private and a public dimension (e.g. Richins 1994).

Hence, we developed three more items in order to cover a potential public aspect of CEP. In a new study of Russian consumers (N=238) involving the same five products (ketchup, soft drink, vodka, mors and pelmeni), the revised scale was tested for both a two-factor and three-factor structure via LISREL.

The results tended to support a three-dimensional structure for the CEP Scale. There was a better fit for the three-dimensional model, in particular for two product categories-vodka and mors. The fit indicators for the three-dimensional model were CMIN/df=2.445, NFI=0.859, CFI=0.910, RMSEA=0.078 for vodka and CMIN/df=1.747, NFI=0.876, CFI=0.942, RMSEA=0.092 for mors. Preliminary evidence of discriminant and nomological validity was found by correlating the three CEP dimensions with related constructs such as the CETSCALE (descriptive CEP: $r = .044$, $p = .544$; private CEP: $r = .281$, $p < .01$; public CEP: $r = 0.246$, $p < .01$) and age (descriptive CEP: $r = -.05$, $p = .488$; private CEP: $r = -.168$, $p < .022$; public CEP: $r = -.106$, $p < .138$).

Moreover, the three dimensions of the CEP-scale correlated differently with these other variables. This finding supports the validity of a multidimensional definition of the construct.

Implications

The CEP-scale may prove to be a very useful scale for cross-cultural consumer research. In addition to measuring the extent of cultural embeddedness of a given category, researchers may use the scale to identify the *type* of embeddedness involved: descriptive, personal or public. Future research should validate the scale on other samples in other countries and in other product categories. Most important, research is needed on the effects of the different CEP-dimensions on information search and processing, attitude formation and choice.

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Self-Gifting vs. Gifting to Others: An Examination of Psychological Orientation Differences in the Domain of Gift Giving

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Extended Abstract

In the past, gift giving theory and research had typically been dyadic or interpersonal in nature (e.g. Belk, 1979). Nonetheless, it was acknowledged that people may sometimes give gifts to themselves, and in 1990 the first empirical investigation on the topic of giving gifts to oneself was conducted and self-gifts were conceptualized as (1) personally symbolic self-communication through (2) special indulgences that tend to be (3) premeditated and (4) highly context bound (Mick and DeMoss 1990b, p.328).

Since its inception into the marketing research domain, it has been suggested that the self-gift phenomenon may be widely occurring in American society (Mick and DeMoss 1990a, 1990b) and two predominant contexts of self-gift behavior have been identified: reward and therapy (Mick and DeMoss 1990a, 1990b, 1992). Other research has substantiated the notion that self-gifts are a fairly common and important phenomenon particularly in western consumer behavior. According to social researchers, Western individuals have become increasingly self-oriented in their purchases and consumption behavior (Mick et al. 1992). Similarly, McKeage et al. (1993) believe that people have been giving gifts to themselves since the early beginnings of self-indulgence. Mick et al. (1992) advise that if self-gifts are as prominent in American society as some past research has suggested, then it’s a phenomenon marketers cannot afford to ignore or misunderstand.

Specifically, McKeage et al. (1993) suggest that future research might examine affective responses to self-gifts versus gifts-to-others. Additionally, Mick and Faure (1998) suggest that therapeutic self-gifts may result from a different type of psychological process than reward self-gifts. Extending Gould and Weil’s (1991) study of gender differences in buying gifts for same sex friends versus opposite ones, (they found that males described themselves differently in terms of masculine and feminine traits when buying gifts for same sex friends

as opposed to for opposite-sex friends, while females tended to be more consistent across these two situations,) we predict that psychological gender orientation will be triggered differently based on the gifting scenario (self-gift vs. interpersonal gift) and such psychological differences will have affective and cognitive implications for consumer decision making in gift buying situations. Further, we hypothesize that these differences will exist between the two contexts of self-gifts as well (reward and therapy).

When measuring gender orientation, prior research has suggested that people who score high on the feminine dimension are said to be nurturing whereas people who score high on the masculinity dimension are said to be more instrumental. Similarly, we would like to add to the self-gifting literature by examining affective differences (nurturing vs. instrumental) that may exist between the two self-gifting contexts and interpersonal gift giving situations by measuring individual's gender orientation in these different contexts. Psychological gender orientations have been shown to substantially mediate many of the gender differences in a range of behaviors in that the more women resemble men along gender dimensions, such as masculinity and femininity, the more similar their behavior (Helgeson, 1994). Models of psychological androgyny have supplanted the prior bipolar models of gender, in the sense that both sexes are viewed as capable of having both masculine and feminine qualities (e.g. Bem, 1974)

Therefore, we hypothesize that when gifting to a friend, individuals will feel more nurturing and score higher on the feminine dimension, and when self-gifting, they will feel more instrumental and score higher on the male dimension. Additionally, between the two self-gifting scenarios we predict that the therapeutic (reward) situation will result in higher feminine (masculine) scores than in the reward (therapeutic) situation. To test our hypotheses that gender orientation changes depending on the gift-giving scenario, we conducted a pretest with 34 subjects and found strong support for our predictions. In the pretest we also observed that subjects seemed fatigued filling out the full BEM Scale (60 items) three times. Thus, we ran the ANOVA with a reduced 20 item BEM scale (Barak and Stern, 1986) and still found significant results. We then used this reduced BEM scale, confirmed by a Factor Analysis, in our main study with 85 new subjects. The method was similar to the one used by Gould and Weil (1991). A within subjects design was used where subjects randomly received counterbalanced questionnaires and were assigned to three gift giving scenarios: self-gift reward (SGR), self-gift therapy (SGT) and interpersonal gift (IG). Subjects were told to imagine a certain gift-giving scenario and then asked to fill out the BEM scale; they repeated this task for each of the three gift scenarios. Subjects were also asked a number of items designed to assess subjects' feelings when comparing the different gift giving experiences.

A one-way ANOVA with scenario condition (SGR, SGT and IG) was run on the measure of gender-orientation based on the BEM scale inventory score. The analysis produced significant results ($M_{SGR}=-0.88$ vs. $M_{SGT}=5.61$ vs. $M_{IG}=14.27$, $F(2,230)=31.808$, $p<.001$). The means support our predictions, as the gender orientation is significantly different in all three situations and more feminine in the self-gift therapy situation as compared to the self-gift reward situation (in which it is more masculine and not feminine at all). Further, we also ran a one-way ANOVA with scenario condition split at two levels (self gift (SG) and interpersonal gift (IG)), the results support our prediction that gender orientation of the individuals varies based on the gift context an individual faces ($M_{SG}=2.36<M_{IG}=14.27$, $F(1,230)=49.716$, $p<.001$). Additionally, as predicted, in the interpersonal gift situation, individuals' gender orientation is more feminine than in that of the self gift situation where it is more masculine.

Our study makes two important contributions. First, it adds to the self-gifting literature by proposing that psychological gender is one aspect that differentiates the two main contexts of self-gifting. Second, this is a pioneering study that directly compares self-gifting and interpersonal gift giving and shows how they differ with regards to individuals' psychological states. Future studies should examine other affective and cognitive differences that may exist in this domain.

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Perceptions of Counterfeit Consumers

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Counterfeit products, such as fake Luis Vuitton handbags and Oakley sunglasses have become widely available in the marketplace to consumers worldwide. The international trade of counterfeit products has been estimated at over \$100 billion per year, or 3-6% of sales overall. As a result, it is estimated that corporations have experienced a global loss of \$200 billion both through lost sales and damage to brand equity (Review of Business 2001). Although the magnitude of this phenomenon is staggering, consumer research in this area has remained sparse. The current research aims to be filling this gap.

Consumers often purchase luxury or prestige products for their ability to communicate information regarding their social class, or to indicate their membership in a valued reference group. Previous research has shown that consumers who purchase expensive luxury items often place greater importance on the status or image associated with the product than with the product itself (Dubois and Duequesne 1993). Some consumers of counterfeit luxury products may be attempting to capitalize on the symbolic nature of a prestige brand without paying the premium price. If luxury products and prestige brands convey information about the owners' social status to others, consumers of authentic looking counterfeit products are sending inaccurate information about their social status. Social Identity Theory (SIT) holds

that people will form negative impressions of individuals deliberately attempting to misrepresent their social status to others. The current research applies SIT to investigate perceptions of individuals that choose to purchase and display counterfeit products.

Social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979) focuses on explaining the dynamics of intergroup relations, and has been applied to better understand the strategies members of low status groups use to increase their status both individually and collectively. According to this theory, people gain self esteem from their membership in social groups, and will pursue goals they believe will increase or maintain the status of their social groups. According to SIT, one way this is manifested is in the evaluations people make of in-group vs. out-group members. Individuals tend to favor or make more positive evaluations of members within their social group (in-group members) than members of other groups. Although the misrepresentation of one's social status through the purchase of counterfeit products violates social norms, people's judgments about counterfeit consumers, according to SIT, will depend on whether those counterfeit consumers are in-group or out-group members. This study tested the hypothesis that individuals will make less favorable evaluations of counterfeit consumers when those consumers are members of an out-group, compared to an in-group.

The sample consisted of 304 undergraduate students from a large Southeastern university. Respondents were asked to complete a survey, ostensibly about an online dating service, and evaluate an online dating profile containing a photo of either a Caucasian or African-American male target and information about his hobbies, likes/dislikes, and income. In addition, the passage also contained information about one of three possible products that the target had recently purchased (high status: Rolex watch, lower status: Seiko watch or counterfeit: replica of a Rolex watch). After reading the passage, respondents were asked to evaluate the target on a number of attributes: desirability as a date, desirability as a marriage partner, physical attractiveness, social status and trustworthiness.

As expected, MANOVA revealed a significant main effect of product status, such that targets portrayed as having recently purchased, and wearing, a counterfeit Rolex watch were rated significantly less favorably on all five dependent variables than those wearing either a Seiko or authentic Rolex watch. Consistent with our main hypothesis, a significant three-way interaction of participant race x target race x product type was observed when analyzing Caucasian and African-American respondents. In other words, when the subject's race matched that of the target, respondents rated the target wearing the counterfeit product more favorably than when the race of the target differed from their own. Results were similar for both the Rolex and Seiko watch. Now tell the reader in words what the three-way means. The results provide support for the efficacy of Social Identity Theory in understanding status consumption, and the hypothesis that perceptions of consumers of counterfeit products depend on the respective group memberships of the consumer and the observer. This study also suggests that consumers of counterfeit products are actually not acquiring the prestige and status they are seeking. In fact, their choice of counterfeit products may actually negatively influence the image these consumers project to others.

The Tiger Roars: Tribalism in a Non-traditional Australian Sport

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Extended Abstract

The decline individualism and the rise of tribalism have now been noted by many researchers, (Maffesoli, 1996; Cova, 1997; Cova and Cova, 2001; Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001). Tribes according to Maffesoli (1996) are held together through shared emotions, life styles, moral beliefs and consumption practices. Additionally there has been much research, building on the idea of the "subculture of consumption" as defined by Schouten and McAlexander, (1995) as "a distinct subgroup of society that self selects on the basis of a shared commitment to a particular product class, brand or consumption activity". The definition was further expanded by Kozinets (2001) to groups whose members define themselves within a broader cultural context, finding meaning and community largely in terms of holding contrasting positions against that cultural background.

The traditional idea of community has also been challenged in today's world with increasing geographical mobility (Thompson and Holt, 1996) in a sense blurring the boundaries. What we are now seeing is the tribes or community being formed with no geographical boundaries (Tambyah, 1996). Many tribes today are based on sport and other leisure pursuits. Belk and Costa (1998) refer to these as transient consumption communities which result from serious leisure pursuits and are defined by shared experiences objects and actions.

This paper explores tribalism in the martial art of karate. Shotokan Karate a traditional Japanese martial art form has been practiced in Australia for less than 30 years, therefore is not considered a traditional Australian sport, but does have a significant following. Using ethnographic evidence gathered at the last World Championships in Durban South Africa, this paper introduces and showcases elements of tribalism and of the subculture of consumption which are evidenced by following the Australian team over three days of competition. Over the three days of competition we see evidence not only of tribalism in karate in general but clearly see it manifesting in the behavior of the national teams of various countries. These competitors and spectators share a passion for the sport. It gives them a sense of identity. The spectacle of the sport is enhanced by the opening ceremony. We see evidence of rituals, flags, chants setting the tribes apart, but conversely we see the shared meanings in rules of competition, karate gi (uniform) and an overall passion for the way of life.

The importance of karate as a way of life for the karateka was further evidenced in post competition interviews that were carried out, which reaffirm Maffesoli (1996) idea that "the accent is on that which unites, not that which separates". So while we clearly find differences between nations in their pursuit of competitive success they still define themselves based on their sport, showing a shared commitment to the sport. Many respondents spoke of their karate family, which for most was a global family, crossing many national boundaries.

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Experiencing Motherhood: The Importance of Possible Selves to New Mothers

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Long Abstract

Background

We report a small-scale exploratory study that investigated the interrelationships between consumption, identity and choice using the theoretical lens of *possible selves*. Mothers-to-be and new mothers are faced with important choices, as consumers, at a major transitional stage in their lives. We examine the impact that women's experiences of consumption choices had on the processes of their identity formation and stabilization as mothers ('the kind of mother I want to be', 'the kind of mother I don't want to be').

The transition to motherhood (Goldberg 1988:2) is a time when women learn about their new role and identity as mothers, experience changes in patterns of consumption as well as significant changes in their work/life balance (e.g. Fursman 2002). Identities may be challenged as different roles are experienced in competition (e.g. Fursman 2002), along with changes in women's relationship with others (Smith 1999a;b) and difficult consumption decisions (Prothero 2002).

New motherhood as a transitional stage can be linked to 'possible selves', which describe future possibilities not central to our current identity (Antonucci and Mikus 1988:69-73). Possible selves provide consumers with goals, aspirations, motives, fears and threats and the self-relevant information that individuals need to organize and give direction to their lives (Markus and Nurius, 1986). Women may have preconceived ideas about their 'possible selves' (Antonucci and Mikus 1988: 69-73) as they approach pregnancy and motherhood-'what kind of mother do I want to be?' and just as importantly, 'what kind of mother do I not want to be?' This study provided an opportunity to explore how women's choices in the early stages of motherhood are used to manage this process.

Method

Women were recruited for a small-scale pilot study on the basis that they had recently given birth to their first child. We used semi-structured interviews to identify the main themes and patterns of interest, and explore the choices made by our participants and the context in which these decisions were made.

We plan to develop our methodology on the basis of this pilot study and use a quasi-longitudinal approach. We hope to recruit twenty-four expectant new mothers and interview them at key stages in the transition to motherhood. Our qualitative approach will also incorporate diaries and projective techniques. Using a quasi-longitudinal approach will capture experiences of maternity and support services, as well as evolving experiences of mothering linked to consumption and identity as they are made, rather than relying on retrospective accounts, which could provide inaccurate accounts of pregnancy.

Findings

Our preliminary findings identify some of the key ways in which women's hopes, fears and expectations of mothering (possible selves) have impacted on the choices and decisions they made. We identify some of the key choices that our participants made at certain stages of their pregnancy/motherhood and identify the role of possible selves: in terms of the mother/parent that they wanted to be (ideal), their thoughts about the kind of mother they did not want to be (negative self), balanced with the pressure to fit with others' expectations (ought self).

The issues explored included pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding, attitudes towards immunization, specific consumption activities (for baby and/or for mother) and the interplay of actual experiences relating to new mothers prior attitudes and beliefs in the form of possible selves. New mothers' hopes and fears were exhibited in consumption decisions such as whether to purchase particular products (e.g. dummies/pacifiers), and whether to fit in with society's expectations (e.g. gendered products and colors) but also key experiences associated with motherhood such as the wish to breastfeed, yet the experience of difficulties in establishing breast-feeding. Our participants found themselves balancing their needs and expectations with those from a variety of sources (e.g. friends, family, work colleagues, health service professionals) and this was particularly challenging in some circumstances.

Discussion

The concept of possible selves provided a useful means to explore our first time mothers' experiences and the way in which they negotiated their way around some key decisions associated with new motherhood. This approach provides the potential to highlight women's expectations and the sources from which they take advice. Our research could demonstrate how women cope when their actual experiences of mothering (actual self) do not align with their hopes and expectations of mothering (ideal self), or the kind of mother I think I should be (ought self), and sometimes involve aspects of mothering they had originally hoped to avoid or reject (undesired self). These

hopes and fears can include consumption decisions such as whether to purchase particular products (e.g. pacifiers), and whether to fit in with society's expectations (e.g. gendered products and colors) but also the kinds of experiences highlighted within this paper such as the wish to breastfeed, yet the experience of difficulties in establishing breast-feeding.

Many of the decisions which women face at this time are likely to be influenced by the 'ought self' which are informed by discourses generated by social networks and public policy campaigns/ health care professionals about what constitutes 'a good mother' as well as family members and the social networks of new mothers. The discrepancies and psychological distances between a range of selves (e.g. ideal/actual; ought/actual and undesired/actual self—see Higgins et al. 1987) clearly had an influence on the consumption experiences of our mothers as well as their overall well being. The research contributes, theoretically, to our understanding of possible selves relating this concept to consumption choices into public services. It also contributes to our understanding of identity formation processes amongst new mothers—how identities are acquired or imposed; and the consumption practices in daily life (Reckwitz 2002; Warde 2003) which underpin the acquisition of the identity of mother.

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Beauty, Brains, or Brawn: Idealized Male Images in Advertising

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Extended Abstract

A number of researchers have examined the influence of the media, particularly advertising, on American perceptions of physical attractiveness and beauty, and the implications of that relationship on attitudes and self-perceptions. Most agree that advertising presents idealized images of individuals and the American lifestyle (Richins 1995). Enhanced by special effects capable of minimizing the least imperfection, many models and actors project virtually unattainable levels of beauty and physical attractiveness. Some even suggest that the thin and beautiful female model so pervasive in cosmetic and apparel advertising contributes to the development of eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia (Richins 1991; Cattarin, Thompson, Thomas, and Williams 2000).

Social comparison theory (Festinger 1954) has been used to investigate the process by which people compare themselves with individuals in ads. Festinger (1954) proposed that humans have a drive to evaluate themselves through comparisons with others. Negative effects may occur when comparisons are made with others perceived as superior on a dimension of interest (upward comparisons) (Major, Testa, and Bylsma 1991), and these comparisons may be primarily automatic (Lyubomirsky and Ross 1997). Research indicates that for women, comparisons to idealized advertising images result in lower satisfaction with physical attractiveness (Cattarin et al. 2000; Richins 1991), decreases in self-esteem (Martin and Gentry 1997), and increases in moods such as depression and anger (Cattarin et al. 2000).

It appears that men as well as women make social comparisons to advertising imagery and that these comparisons impact male self-perceptions. Gulas and McKeage (2000) demonstrated that idealized images of financial success negatively reduced male subjects' level of self-esteem whereas idealized images of physical attractiveness had no significant effect. It may be then that men are subject to upward comparisons when idealized images reflect relevant features other than physical attractiveness. For example, media images that portray desirable characteristics such as athleticism or intellect may be influential in affecting male self-perceptions. The present study represents an exploratory effort to identify the types of idealized male images prevalent in contemporary print advertising from the perspective of the individual consumer, both male and female.

Method

Male fashion photos were chosen randomly by the researchers from recent issues of men's lifestyle magazines and retail catalogues. The selected photographs featured full-color, full-body shots of a single model (no other people or animals). All commercial text and graphics, including background and brand names, were removed using photo editing software. Eighty-six pictures were included in the final set. Participants were asked to sort the photographs into as many piles as they deemed appropriate on the basis of similarity of

appearance and to select the single photograph from each pile that best represented all of the photographs placed in that group. The participants were then asked to provide a word or short phrase of their own that best described the type of look depicted by each group of photos. Finally, each exemplar was rated in terms of overall attractiveness and a list of adjective descriptors (e.g., handsome, attractive, powerful) using a 5-point scale ranging from low (1) to high (5).

Results

Five distinctive clusters emerged from multidimensional scaling analysis.

Classic/ Elegant: This category portrayed male models who were elegantly dressed, very well groomed, and with serious facial expressions. These images were rated high on descriptors such as sophisticated, intellectual, classy, confident and intellectual.

European/Fashion Forward: This cluster of images was described as stylish and bold in their commitment to make a fashion statement. The reference to Europe may indicate that the models were considered less typically American-as though coming from the old continent of high fashion and extravagance. The images rated high on sophistication, mysteriousness, and intelligence.

Trendy/Casual: These images scored high on descriptors such as athletic, healthy, casual, outgoing, and rugged. This look was perceived as youthful and highly attractive.

Guy Next Door/Athletic: The guy next door appears to be the antithesis to the Classical/Elegant Look. These male images ranked high on friendliness, strength, and masculinity. On average, the models were perceived as attractive, but somewhat ordinary and regular.

Machol/Masculine/Sporty: Participants described this group as macho, strong, outdoorsy, healthy, yet more stylish than the Guy Next Door. The models in this group were closely linked to sex appeal, power, good health and an outdoor lifestyle.

Implications for Future Research

The results of this analysis suggest that consumers tend to categorize idealized print images of men in terms of types of attractiveness that emphasize lifestyle characteristics. As such, men may compare dimensions other than overall physical attractiveness with that of the models depicted in advertising directed toward them. Further research is needed to better understand which comparison dimensions are most relevant in eliciting upward and downward comparisons for men and under what conditions. It may be particularly worthwhile to study the extent to which idealized male images negatively impact self-esteem for pre-adolescent and adolescent males.

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Image Consumption: The Study of Bridal Photography, Semiotic, and Feminine

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ABSTRACT

The growth of the bridal photography industry could be a miniature of Taiwanese anthrop-sociology development records. In the past, the conservative bridal photography showed exaggerative make-up and bridal costumes that represented a semiotic of contemporary fashion. However, along with the import of Western information a new aesthetic awoke and educated Taiwanese women to reach an ideal state of self-confidence and autonomy. The research was drawn on the premise that the awareness of feminism was an effect of media exposure to women of new images and an overall development of anthrop-sociology as well. A researcher developed survey instrument and a visiting survey were designed and used to collect data from 550 randomly selected customers from the cluster of bridal photography salons. The finding revealed that modern Taiwanese women thought that they could be independent decision makers and were keen-witted and capable. They would ask for bridal photography based on the value of commemoration and self-expression and agreed that bridal photography represented beauty, romance, and happiness. Also, bridal magazines and friends'/relatives' recommendations were the best information resources.

INTRODUCTION

In preindustrial society, bridal photography was not a must-have commodity when two families prepared a wedding ceremony for the new couple-to-be. During that time, bridal photography was only taken at a groom's front yard on the formal wedding day. However, along with anthrop-sociology development and the economic boom, the modern couple-to-be sees bridal photography as one important step of the wedding ritual; they view bridal photography as their own business rather than old people's. They visit many bridal photography salons to try on the most fashionable wedding gowns, check the samples, discuss their preferred style with sales representatives, and pick a date prior to the formal wedding ceremony to take shots—it usually is an all-day long and very complex process. All they wanted to pursue was an ideal look for a day that could preserve and fulfill a romantic affair. Lewis (1997) indicated that “wedding photographs are powerful because they are traditional, professional, personal, and seemingly accurate renditions of reality as they help couples remember a key period in their social and personal lives” (p168).

Miller (1995) indicated that consumption could reflect cultural diversity, meaning, and value. Bridal photography consumption and popularization was just an angle which reflected the historical record of the growth of Taiwan society that our people gradually awoke along with the social-economic developing; they were aware of personal meaning and value in the material culture. Also, while foreign media such as modern art, movies, TV shows, and advertisement were introduced, they were disciplined to have different perspectives defining their own values of wedding photography as well as feminine social meaning.

The research draws on many researchers' premise that how consumers create meaning in their lives toward aesthetic, body image, and design operates interdependently along with anthrop-sociology development and advertising. The purpose of the study was to explore the interaction among the awareness of feminine self-esteem and self-actualization, semiotic, and bridal photography which might affect the new generation to abandon traditional concepts of the burden of marriage and create a new wedding ritual practice of creating an atmosphere of happiness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Development of the Bridal Photography Industry

Once, taking pictures was luxury and seldom happened, in the preindustrial era, only wealthy families could have the chance to take snap shots for fun or even possess a camera. However, most middle-low income families might invite a photographer to take shots for very formal and important situations to record family events such as births, weddings, and funeral ceremonies...etc. The purpose was to prolong a family memory and to unify the sentimental power of the family or a clan to the next generation (Bourdieu, 1990). Hence, it could be understood that photography, in the past, served only a social function instead of satisfying individual demand.

Adrian (1999) indicated that, before 1980, bridal photography salons did not provide full service but only rented white gowns. After several years, some bridal salons such as Lao Mai and Chongshi set the full wedding service package that included photography, head-to-toe styling, florists, and white gowns. Through a successful marketing strategy with advertising and promotion, the bridal industry soon developed their business. The sudden changed was unavoidable for those old-fashioned photo studios that became aware that proper weddings could not be achieved without an integral service package. Based on the demand, the number of full service bridal salons had rapidly grown to over 200 in the Taipei metropolitan district by 1997.

The minimal full package that the modern bridal photography salons provide usually includes at least 20 sheets of 12-15 inch enlargement pictures in an album, plus one additional 36-40 inch enlargement photo with frame which can be displayed on the formal wedding day. However, the price was not very easily met by the new couple-to-be; usually the bridal salons charge at least NT\$30,000 for the minimal full package in Taipei. The price was a little bit lower outside of the region.

New Feminism

The social status of women was very low historically in Taiwanese society. The economic boom, that caused feminine involved into working position, led an overall social-economic upgrade in education, income, entertainment, and cultural business. The development modified personal value to pursue higher self-esteem and self-actualization. Moreover, the import of foreign media such as movies, TV shows, magazines, and advertisements exposed people to different perspectives of feminine value, visual communication, and aesthetics (Figure 1 & 2). The women were introduced to a new feminism that changed their sense of aesthetics and their eyes fell on personal appearance and performance. Swinth (2002) pointed out that women in the media were both symbols and icons which helped create a new modern social order and set a new image for women to achieve and imitate.

McCracken (1986) indicated that when a viewer/reader glimpsed an object, a process of transfer would happen to the person. Hence, when the bridal photography industry emerged women became visualizations of ideology, and because of the Cinderella factor, women invested themselves to achieve the ideal beauty and self-realizing image in the bridal photographs as portrayed in public media (Figure 3 & Figure 4). The forming process of the new feminism was socially produced by the new image in the media. It involved a relationship of sharing meaning between people and objects via the power of symbols to communicate images and ideas which would be considered as cultural conventions (Kang, 1997).

Semiotics and Bridal Photography

Otnes and Scott (1996) declared that ritual semiotics were expressions that were designed to identify and transfer metaphors, moods, and arguments for products' image in particular motifs and for different occasions. Also, the identities and transfers could evaporate into our social constructions which would shift the audiences' capabilities and preferences to interpret products' image (Christensen & Askegaard, 2001). Therefore, the traditional bridal appearance was gradually changed when the new bridal image was introduced to us through bridal photography in bridal salons, along with the progress of Taiwan society.

According to bridal yearbooks, the traditional bridal photography was composed of black-and-white pictures, which did not have many poses and gestures. The new couple, in the past, was required to stand straight without any close touching (Figure 5) because marriage

meant a turning point for the two persons with new social responsibilities. The heavy and ugly bridal make-up style represented the idea that the woman had a new responsibility to take care of the whole family after removing the mask. However, in the new era, of the new feminism, the bride would like the emphasis to be on showing her inner beauty (double eyelids were no longer a standard of beauty in 21st century of Taiwan) (Figure 6) and her determination to look after a romantic and happy marriage. Their postures and gestures were no longer conservative (Figure 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, & 12), they particularly imitated models in the Western media because they wanted to show that they were sexy and confident. Furthermore, the new semiotic of bridal photography have revealed a reality that women had announced their autonomy from male dominance.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to discuss the moving of the modern Taiwanese's perspective towards aesthetics, body image, design, as well as feminine awareness that could be told through modern wedding photography. Questionnaires and visiting surveys given to both consumers and bridal salons' managers were adopted as survey instruments to collect data. The survey's instruments consisted of demographic data, motivations to have wedding photography taken, brand images, senses of beauty, perspectives towards feminism, photography styles, product values, and symbolic meanings of bridal photography. Fifty consumers, ages 18-35, were chosen to do the visiting survey on the streets; five professional bridal salons' manager accepted our invitation to complete the visiting survey. Moreover, a sample of 500 visitors was randomly selected to fill in the survey from Aug. 29 to Sept. 11, 2003. The data from the questionnaires was analyzed by using procedures of the SPSS 10.0.

Findings of Visiting Survey

The Visiting Survey of Bridal Salons' Managers

The motivation to take bridal photography. According to Fand-Yu Lin, the Tia bridal salon's manager, *bridal photography represented and public ritual more than a personal demand because it meant a man and a woman decided to join hand in hand for the rest of their lives.* Vanessa bridal salon manager, Su-Ching Chiou, said that *bridal photography meant a lot for a couple because it represented that fact that they stepped into another phase in the journey of their life. That kind of joy, happiness, and excitement, which they strongly wanted to share with their relatives and friends, existed only in that moment and would not return forever. A groom might be deeply touched suddenly and feel his responsibility to his bride when he saw his lady appearing in a stunning dress. Hence, we would seriously undertake to provide the best service for each new couple.*

With regards to preserving the traditional custom, Mei-Lin bridal salon manager Xuan-Min Huang shared her personal experience that *some new couples would not dare to disobey their seniors and not have bridal photography done because their seniors seriously considered it to be a public ritual that proved the joining of two families. However, some new couples chose not to prove their marriage by having bridal photography done; they omitted the complicated process because they believed that the happy marriages need to be carefully cultivated and are not guaranteed by stunning wedding gowns or a series of delicately designed bridal pictures..*

Marketing of aesthetics. Most bridal salons' managers held quite similar perspectives in that they totally agreed that aesthetics was interdependent with anthrop-sociology development and advertising. According to Vanessa bridal salon manager Su-Ching Chiou *both staffs and consumers' sense of beauty could be informed from outside resources such as Western magazines or contemporary artworks. For example, she suggested that a bride could hold a silver tray or a designed basket with candies in it instead of the traditional wooden tea tray which was not quite in harmony with the stunning bridal style, to thank their guests at the end of the wedding.* She insisted on providing a different wedding to her customers by adding small changes that created a new aesthetics.

Moreover, Bazaar bridal salon manager, Che-Ming Lin intimated that most customers would hand him newspaper or magazine clippings that they wanted to imitate. He would further communicate with his consumers to shape a neat style which matched the current fashions and revealed their personalities as well. The most important thing was for the customer to not blindly chase the fashion; a good style also had to give a sense of the customer's individuality.

The new feminism. Most brides-to-be would gather many information before they took shots, and also they would positively participate to discuss their make-up, decorations, poses, and angles with the bridal salon staff. It was totally different from the tradition that women could not have any opinions for her marriage. Taipei Fashion bridal salon manager Mon-Yang Lu shared his experience that *grooms-to-be would express an attitude of indifference toward bridal photography. Nevertheless, brides-to-be show a determined attitude to announce their authority to direct the production of bridal photographs.* Vanessa bridal salon manager Su-Ching Chiou expressed that *the new women possessed a better ability to earn money; they could afford ideal bridal photographs. Modern women would ignore their future parents-in-law suggestions because they did not want to pretend they were satisfied with their arrangements.*

With regards to make-up and dress, Mei-Lin bridal salon manager Xuan-Min Huang pointed out *the modern bride did not like the bridal fashion of the past because it was a ridiculous custom where by the bride was packaged into a different person with heavy make-up, exaggerative decorations and gown. She indicated that light make-up and simplified gowns were the current trend. Brides especially like to show their backs in backless gowns which was not allowed in the past.* And Tia bridal salon manager Fang-Yu Lin said that *modern bridal photography reflected the new feminism in that brides were willing to show their attractive figures with décolleté gowns and that they were eager to show their beauty, character, and thought. They disagreed that "a woman without talent was the highest virtue" but they wanted to pursue self-esteem, self-actualization, and self autonomy.*

The Visiting Survey of the Consumers

The motivation to have bridal photography done. Most people agreed that taking bridal photography was a ritual to record a romance of two persons. "I want to capture a record of my beautiful appearance when I am still young. Bridal photography can help me to reach an ideal state where I will wear a gorgeous gown and delicate make-up. I feel very happy and proud when I see that I can be as beautiful as a superstars" (visitor#10). However, some people were concerned that bridal photography was a necessity although it would cost them a hefty expense. They thought "If I did not have to worry too much about the expense, I think I would feel more positively about bridal



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

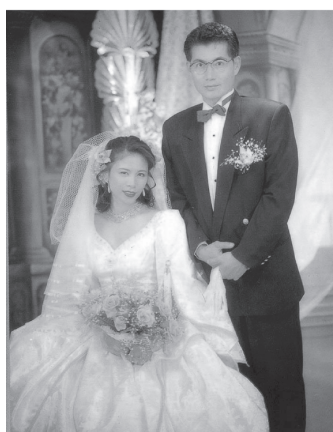


Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

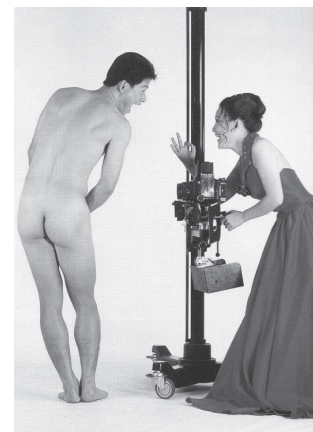


Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12

photography. But it usually takes at least twenty-five thousands dollars or more for a package service; it is a great amount for me" (visitor#9 & 13).

The male consumers saw the bridal photography as something for only women. However, they were willing to give it a chance if they were physically fit. One visitor said "I am willing to have wedding photography taken to keep my handsome appearance as a memorial gift if I lose my weight" (visitor#4). However, some visitors did not like bridal photography because they thought the pictures were not very natural. For example, "I saw a totally different person modified by Photoshop. I think those pictures were only a fiction" (visitor#11).

Marketing of aesthetics. Price usually was the main concern for consumers before they decided to sign a contract with a certain salon. However, besides pricing factors, brand image, the photographer's sense of beauty, and the skill of photographers were influential factors for the prospective customers. One visitor said that "I feel insecure choosing a salon with an unknown brand name. Besides this, I will check the styles they created because I worry they do not possess enough sense of beauty" (visitor # 17). They also concerned that "the photographer is able to communicate with me, he must figure out and sense what kinds of style will match me because I do not want to get pictures that show no feeling of me" (visitor#12).

Nevertheless, some consumers were hardly able to sense or to judge what image those salons wanted to transmit "My friend introduced 'France Paris' to me because that name sounds in very classy, but I did not see any difference compared to the others" (visitor #19). Or, "I do not have strong feelings about bridal photography, but I only know 'Hidden Love' is a very romantic name" (visitor#10).

The new feminism. Sex appeal and self-expression were two important subjects of concern for the modern bride-to-be. They did not like the conservatively composed bridal photographs that bride and groom standing up straight without any smiles. They thought "I want to wear the different styles because I usually only wear one style in my daily life" (visitor#20). Or, "I do not care how others will judge me, because I want to have a different style to express myself from others" (visitor#12). To express sex appeal could be a one way to obtain self-esteem and self-actualization for modern women, "I especially prefer décolleté gowns because they makes me look very sexy and modern" (visitor#14). However, some visitors asserted that they would not choose gowns for their shot because "when I put on wedding gowns I look much older than my real age; I would rather put on casual dress for bridal photography. Besides, if we can wear comfy clothes such as jeans with T's in bridal photographs, we can have a free and relaxed attitude for our marriage" (visitor#11 & 23).

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Results

According to the statistical testing for the 455 returned questionnaires, the following research results were noted:

The majority of the respondents were female (69.5%), 30.5% of respondents were male. The largest group of respondents were from Taipei city (66.6%) and the age grouping of respondents were between 19-25 years of age (55.4%), 26-30 years of age (15.6%), and 31-40 years of age (18.0%). In addition, regarding the respondents' educational background, 46.6% respondents held bachelor's degrees, college degrees 26.4%, and high school degrees 18.2%.

The marital status of most respondents was single (73.2%) and the motivation of need was the main reason to consult with bridal photography salon (59.3%). Professional expertise of a photographer was the major reason to choose a bridal salon (42.4%), recommendations from friends and relatives were the second (29.0%), and price was the least concern for the prospective consumers (4.8%). Most respondents passively collected information (23.3%) because it was not a necessity in daily life. The reliable resources were bridal magazines (47.9%), friends and relatives' recommendations (43.1%), bridal shows (31.6%), and consultation with sale clerks (30.3%).

The main reason to have bridal photography done was commemoration (89.2%). The consumers asked for photo albums (47.7%), designed greeting cards and wedding invitations (43.5%), and photo discs (43.7%). With regards to the Western brand image, the respondents thought it was romantic (53.2%), fashionable (45.7%), and elegant (46.6%).

Both males and females agreed that modern women were independent ($M=3.81$, $SD=0.77$), keen-witted and capable ($M=3.59$, $SD=0.75$), and major decision makers ($M=3.49$, $SD=0.80$); nevertheless, they disagreed that women were commander ($M=2.92$, $SD=0.85$). The men slightly disagreed and reached significant difference that women could be powerful people ($t=-3.08$, $p=0.002$), were independent ($t=-2.99$, $p=0.003$), and decision makers ($t=-4.03$, $p=0.000$). In the other hand, the women respondents disagreed that women enjoyed wearing less ($t=3.44$, $p=0.001$), had only a beautiful and gorgeous appearance ($t=2.80$, $p=0.005$), and attracted men by appearance ($t=2.56$, $p=0.11$).

Most respondents associated bridal photography with beauty and self-confidence ($M=4.11$, $SD=0.77$), marriage ($M=4.02$, $SD=0.72$), and romance ($M=3.89$, $SD=0.71$). The youthful respondents translated bridal photography into romance ($t=2.34$, $p=0.02$), and showed difference concerning price ($t=1.96$, $p=0.05$), service ($t=2.41$, $p=0.016$), and quality ($t=3.38$, $p=0.01$).

With regards to the pattern of bridal photography, most respondents preferred backgrounds featuring Western attractions ($M=3.93$, $SD=0.83$), Western-style gowns ($M=3.59$, $SD=0.83$), and realistic photo styles ($M=3.60$, $SD=0.77$). In the contrast, the respondents were least interested to nude bridal photography ($M=2.65$, $SD=0.89$). The single respondents had significantly different feelings toward backgrounds featuring Western attractions ($t=-2.82$, $p=0.005$), the Western-style gowns ($t=-3.11$, $p=0.002$), and Japanese Kimonos ($t=-2.97$, $p=0.003$).

Most respondents strongly agreed that bridal photography was beautiful ($M=4.07$, $SD=0.69$), delightful ($M=3.97$, $SD=0.72$), and attractive ($M=3.76$, $SD=0.70$). Moreover, they agreed that bridal photography was commemorative ($M=4.21$, $SD=0.70$) and self-expressive ($M=3.70$, $SD=0.81$), but they least agreed that it was ambiguous and alluring ($M=2.88$, $SD=0.91$). The youthful respondents revealed strong agreement and significant difference that bridal photography represented self-expression ($t=4.48$, $p=0.000$), commemoration ($t=4.05$, $p=0.000$), and association with location ($t=2.35$, $p=0.019$).

Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings and results of the data analysis.

The typical respondents lived in Taipei city and Taipei County, were female, 19-40 years old, and possessed at least a college degree or higher.

Most respondents were single, were highly interested in consulting bridal photography salons and were not much concerned about the price because they valued the function of commemoration more than anything else. Also, they preferred bridal salons that offered photo albums, designed wallet-size greeting cards, and wedding invitations.

Professional wedding magazines, friends and relatives' recommendation, and wedding exhibitions were the main resources for the prospective consumers. Nevertheless, the prospective consumers would choose services in a certain salon based on the photographers' expertise.

Most respondents agreed that modern women were independent, keen-witted and capable to handle major tasks alone, but women respondents agreed least strongly that women retained their positions in the workplace by wearing sexy dresses and maintaining a good-looking appearance.

Most respondents said that bridal photography was gorgeous and romantic. They believed personal glamour shots could present their personalities and commemorate their marriage. The youthful respondents were less concerned about the price factor but more interested in well-decorated banquet halls. It could attribute to modern feminism that women were daring to pursue and satisfy their personal desires.

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Framing the Negative: Consumers and Consumption

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Consumer researchers have conventionally studied the link between self-concept and consumption choices within a positive frame (Grubb and Grathwohl 1967; Sirgy 1982; Solomon 1983; Belk 1988), thus generally neglecting the negative circumstances of consumption. Others have long recognized that consumption is more convoluted than a mere response to need, want, or desire as people are also motivated by negative emotions (Bourdieu 1984; Miller 1997; Wilk 1997). Consequently, consumer researchers must also understand those states of mind that negatively impact upon consumption practice.

Negative consumption, or anti-choice, depicts those products a consumer chooses not to buy (Hogg 1998) and researchers suggest that the conceptualised feared self (Markus and Nurius 1986; Ogilvie 1987), a negative possible self, is an effective concept to explore negative consumption (Patrick, MacInnis and Folkes 2002). However, no consumer research to date has employed the *actual* feared or undesired self in negative consumption.

Using an exploratory, emic research design this research sought an increased understanding of the role played by the feared self and, subsequently, the role played by negative product-user stereotypes (Hogg and Banister 2001), in negative consumption. In-depth interviews were employed to gain an understanding of negative consumption behaviour of beverages consumed within a social consumption context. The findings support previous assertions that choosing not to consume a product is just as relevant in shaping our self-identities as positive consumption, and that choosing to *not* consume those products associated with the feared self does play an integral part in shaping our social, public, and private self-identities.

However, this research also discovered a further significance of the feared self within the realm of negative consumption. The findings discovered that the role the feared self played was dependent on the experiential nature of the feared self, and that the conceptualised feared self is not as influential on negative consumption as previously considered.

Rather, it was those feared selves that were experience-based that played a greater role. Renamed as the *escaping self*, to differentiate from the conceptualised feared self, experience-based feared selves appear more powerful as indicators of negative consumption. Denoted by flights from both past and current selves considered unfavourable or undesirable by the respondent, the *escaping self* differed from that of a conceptual feared self because respondents became more involved in its suppression.

Furthermore, it appeared that the undesired *other*, or a negative product-user stereotype, emitted the greatest influence on negative consumption. Respondents commonly associated their avoided products with negative images of the typical product-user. Those beverages that were avoided due to a link with a negative stereotype produced a heightened emotional response and an enduring avoidance.

It was discovered that the negative image of appearing as someone that they are not, or someone perceived to have lesser qualities than themselves is, for these individuals, more fearful. Therefore, negative consumption appeared more influenced by the undesired *other* rather than the undesired self.

This research undertook a more dimensional analysis of the undesired self than previously employed, and in combination with an emic approach, allowed a deeper understanding of the feared self's influence on an individual's avoidance behaviour. This enabled a gained understanding of the role played by the undesired or feared self in negative consumption. It also discovered that conceptual feared selves differ from experiential feared selves (*escaped selves*) in their relative influence over negative consumption.

Additionally, this research provides an enriched comprehension of negative stereotypes, the role they play in negative consumption, and their relationship with the feared self, and suggests that the influence negative stereotypes exert over consumer avoidance behaviour operates at a higher level than that of the feared self.

Such increased understanding of how negative selves influence negative consumption will assist in marketers' positioning strategies. Marketers also need to be aware of the relative influence of the feared self, escaping self, and negative stereotypes in consumers' negative consumption behaviour. Identification of these negative selves or stereotypes would assist in implementing advertising and communication strategies well removed from representations of these undesired selves or others.

The contributions also extend to the consumer. This, and further exploration of negative consumption, will give consumers' confidence that the full scope of their consumption practices have been acknowledged, and that researchers recognise negative selves and their impact upon the preservation and enhancement of self-concept. Furthermore, this emic research highlights the relative impact of consumers' negative self-identities and negative stereotypes as perceived by them, and their relative impact upon their consumption choices.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

The McDonaldisation of Enchantment and Consumers Practices of Re-enchantment: A Dialectic View of Transformative Consumption

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We glide through contemporary shopping malls, our senses filled by a dazzlingly and dizzying array of sights, sounds, and seductive sales pitches. We choose our themed meals from a palette of standardized choices fortified with all kinds of differentiating symbolic additives. Our living spaces, conversations, and personal styles become increasingly interlinked with the ceaseless flow of calculated commercial images that promise an aura of mystery, sensuality, and authentic difference. In the midst of this consumer culture flux, lies Nietzsche's fabled myth of the eternal return: a perpetual repetition of unfulfilled quests and disappointing outcomes that are undertaken in hopes of attaining an elusive ideal. This session will place an analytic spotlight on this dialectical cycle of enchantment?rationalization?disenchantment?re-enchantment and the kinds of consumer desires and transformative consumption projects that it engenders. The papers in this session will analyze how this dialectic motivates particular forms of transformative consumption that are geared toward not only self-transformation but also to transformations in the very structure of market relationships.

This dialectic between disenchantment and enchantment has been a recurring analytic subtext of culturally oriented consumer research. Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry (1989) chart the tensions and movements between sacred and profane consumption that animate everyday consumption and imbue special possessions with their invocative power. Arnould, Price, and Otnes (1999) reveal how natural servicescapes enable consumers to experience a magical transformation conspicuously absent from the rationalized flow of their everyday lives. Firat and Venkatesh (1995) trace out modernity's disenchanting and rationalizing trajectories and anticipate that the conditions of postmodernity will engender a new liberatory project of creative, playful, and enchanted consumption. Kozinets (2001) argues that ardent Star Trek fans (Trekkers) seek to align technological utopian promises of science with the emotionally charged realms of fantasy, myth, and mysticism. Kozinets (2002) analyzes the empowering and enchanting rituals that emancipate Burning Man participants from their usually distanced, prosaic, marketized social experiences. Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry (2003), find successful retro branding invoking the storied forms of myth that blend quests, nostalgic longing, and irresolvable mysteries into storied realms of enchantment whose delights draw from the past. Thompson (2004) argues that the natural health marketplace leverages the ideal of mystical enchantment through its mythological blending of Gnostic appeals to spiritual transcendence of the body and Romantic appeals to the magical and revitalizing properties of nature. Kozinets et al (2004) analyze ESPN Zone as a liminal and ludic space where consumers escape their routinized work lives by engaging in deep play; in this way, these consumers can see themselves as a part of a wondrous and transcendent spectacle, linked to fantasy, celebrity, and magical moments of athletic achievement. Muniz and Schau (2005) contend that the enduring loyalties and passions expressed by members of the abandoned Apple Newton community are steeped in an ethos of technomysticism and religiosity.

This family of studies can be parsed into two related but distinctive thematic categories. The first addresses how consumers rework and refashion the cultural/symbolic resources offered by the

marketplace to mitigate feelings of disenchantment. These studies emphasize the co-creation of meaning and suggest that consumers enchant consumption objects by situating them within layers of emotional and autobiographical significations. Consumers also actively created their own enchanted worlds of consumption through their participation in consumption communities and a multitude of liminal consuming spaces. The second set of studies analyze the ways in which the commercial market has responded and adapted to these ephemeral consumer desires for enchantment, via strategies such as retro branding (Brown et al 2002), using computer technology to create interactive domains for fantasy enactment (Davis 1998), and designing so-called "cathedrals of consumption," such as Las Vegas spectacles, themed shopping malls, theme parks, themed restaurants, cruise ships, magnificent high tech athletic stadiums, various forms of superstores, and state-of-the-art movies theaters (Ritzer 1998).

However, another turn of this dialectical cycle is now underway: a growing legion of consumers are expressing dissatisfaction with the pre-packaged experiences of enchantment that are made readily available within these cathedrals of consumption (e.g., Thompson and Arsel 2004) and are seeking out transcendent consumption experiences that convey the aura of magic and authenticity (Arnould, Price, and Otnes 1999; Kozinets 2002; Thompson and Tambyah 1999; Thompson and Arsel 2005). While specific studies have explored specific moments in this dialectic, little consideration has been given to the dialectic relationships that exist between these consumption modalities or discussed the transformative impulses that emerge from this cycle. The aim of this special session was to cast a theoretical spotlight on this broader set of dialectical relationships.

SESSION OVERVIEW

The dialectic between rationalization and enchantment can be traced to the formative stages of the modern capitalist system. From the outset, the rationalizing impulses of Fordism co-existed with the enchanting consumer dream worlds offered by department stores, arcades, and theme parks (Benjamin 2002; Leach 1993). This very tension also provides the genealogical and conceptual link between two of the more influential books ever written on the capitalist system: Max Weber's (1904/2001) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and Colin Campbell's (1987) *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism*.

Weber famously argued that the Protestant ethic, with its emphasis on hard work, delayed gratification, and rational self control, set the cultural stage for the high degree of capital accumulation and investment that capitalism required to flourish. Moreover, the Protestant ethic was highly compatible with the bureaucratic rationalization of production and economic relations that fueled the growth of the capitalist economy. Weber also laid the foundation for many contemporary cultural critiques of capitalism by warning that the expansionist tendencies of capitalism had the potential to create an iron cage of rationality that would disenchant the world and empty the human soul. Campbell's (1987) companion work argues that the Protestant ethic also demanded an intensive reflection on one's inner life and passions for the ostensible purposes of quelling any vestige of sinful thought. Campbell suggests

that this form of reflexive self-monitoring paradoxically stoked the imaginative hedonism and other forms of consumer fantasy that function as the cultural drivers of modern consumption.

George Ritzer (1993, 1998, 2001) further develops this dialectical relation by analyzing its contemporary manifestations in a postmodern economy oriented toward service (rather than manufacturing) and where lifestyle choices and consumption interests have become defining aspects of identity. According to Ritzer, the iron cage of rationality has taken the form of McDonaldization—that is, a process by which the principles of the fast-food industry—efficiency, predictability, calculability, and control through technology—are being applied, across the globe, to more and more sectors of social life. Across myriad contexts, Ritzer shows how these rationalizing principles have led to a high degree of cultural homogenization and also have transformed the very nature of work and consumption.

In his more recent work, Ritzer (2005) makes a dialectic turn by positing that McDonaldization also inspires consumer desires for enchantment, which the capitalist market then attempts to satisfy through a plethora of “cathedrals of consumption.” These consumption cathedrals are designed to attract and enchant consumers and thereby inspire purchases of the magical goods and experiences being proffered. Through this argument, Ritzer culls a postmodern synthesis from Weber and Campbell seminal explanations of rationalism and romanticism. The rationalizing tendencies of McDonaldization foster potent desires for experiences of enchantment. A staggering variety of themed servicescapes now stand ready to give consumers what the experiences of enchantment that they have been structurally predisposed to want. Paradoxically, these cathedrals of consumption adhere to the logic of McDonaldization by delivering commercialized and pre-packaged forms of enchantment and therein lay their most fundamental shortcoming.

Ritzer (2005) contends that enchantment emerges from moments of unpredictability and spontaneity but these qualities are antithetical to the imperatives for technological control and consistency that characterize branded servicescapes. As a result, these themed consumer environments can only offer rationalized simulations of enchantment and they consistently fail to deliver the feelings of awe, wonder, and surprise which are intrinsic to fully captivating experiences of magical consumption (see Arnould and Price 1993). The simulations of enchanting places are never quite authentic and never quite fill consumers’ experiential void. These conditions then set the cultural stage for a continuous cycle of consumer expectations and disappointments (a self-perpetuating cycle much like Campbell’s explanation of insatiable consumer desires). Trapped within the McDonaldized world of consumerism, individuals tend to see few ways out of the system and hence continue to pursue a futile project of enchantment through the paradoxically rationalized and predictable dream worlds produced by corporate capitalism. For Ritzer (1999) and many like-minded social critics (Lasn 1999), consumers are trapped in a resilient, multi-faceted, and hence pernicious iron cage of rationality.

This pessimistic account suggests that the dialectic between disenchantment and the quest for enchantment is a kind of closed loop that cycles through in perpetuity. Ritzer sees a glimmer of hope in an irrepressible impulse for creative self-expression. Ritzer, much like Lasn (1999), views creativity as the humanistic monkey wrench that can jam the system and open up venues for resistance and escape. In effect, consumers are seen as either being fully constrained with the iron cage of McDonaldization or they helplessly bang against its bars hoping to create an opening wide enough for an escape into some never quite specified Utopia. The papers in this session explore a different set of implications that follow from

this cycle of enchantment?rationalization?disenchantment?re-enchantment.

Ostergaard and Jantzen opened the session with a brief distillation of Ritzer’s “cathedrals of consumption” thesis. Next, they analyzed specific experience economy exemplars from a postmodern perspective to argue that Ritzer’s pessimistic view is premised on an outmoded modernist view of authenticity. Drawing from Baudrillard’s order of simulacra, they proposed that the very nature of enchantment has been transformed in ways that defy the assumptions of the Weberian tradition. Next, Thompson and Coskuner analyze an emerging form of marketing relationships- Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) through interviews with producers (e.g. farmers) and CSA members. Their analysis shows that CSA farmers and consumers are linked in a common project to create a new market form that forges an ethos of communal participation; that reintegrates consumers into the production process; and that rekindles connections with the magic of the land and food. Through the CSA model, farmers and consumers understand themselves as transforming the market system in a way that obviates the ills of corporate-dominated agri-business and more specifically the corporatization of organic farming. These same actions also imbue food consumption with an aura of magic that emerges through a symbolic contrast to the far more convenient and predictable world of processed foods and fast food chains. Sherry and Kozinets analyze the ways in which desires for spiritual epiphanies and sanctifying (and community building) experiences which traditionally have been fulfilled by organized religions are now actively constructed by consumers in spheres far removed from religious institutions. These re-enchanting practices map onto postmodern consumer trends by emphasizing a decentralized, grassroots, DIY participatory where there is no singular authority orchestrating the form that sacred experiences may take. Kozinets and Sherry argue that these consumer-centric actions are a re-enchantment of religious experiences and a means to reclaim experiences of the sacred from the rationalizing impulses of organized religion.

SHORT ABSTRACTS

“Is Re-Enchantment just Enchantment?: Towards an Understanding of a Second Order Enchantment”

Per Ostergaard and Christian Jantzen

Ritzer’s (2005) proposals for re-enchanting a disenchanted world are grounded in Weber’s (2001) arguments about the rationalization of the western world. Ritzer makes a direct comparison between the cathedrals of consumption and the cathedrals associated with organized religions. The enchantment in pre-capitalistic era is presumed to be quite similar to enchantment today. Is this comparison historically viable? We investigate this question through the lens of Baudrillard’s (1993) writings on simulation and simulacra.

“Politicized Consumption Community and Consumers’ Practices of Enchantment”

Craig Thompson and Gokcen Coskuner

This study analyzes a politicized form of consumption community in order to extend theoretical understanding of the enchantment-disenchantment dialectic. Community Supported Agriculture is a system of shared risk and consumer involvement (and commitment) quite distinct from conventional channels of food distribution. By vesting consumers in a specific organic farm and by encouraging consumers to get closer to the land, the CSA model immerses consumers in a world of unpredictability, surprise, and spontaneity that is quite conducive to experiences of re-enchantment.

“New Religions, Temple Burns, and the Reenchantment of Belief”

Robert V. Kozinets and John F. Sherry, Jr.

This study depicts the grassroots, themed, creative behavior of consumers at a popular American anti-market festival and analyzes them as ritualistic and touristic processes that decommo-
dify, resacralize, authenticate, and reenchant the processes of belief and meaning-making that have most commonly been provided by organized religions. Although the Burning Man festival has been explored as an autonomous zone of self-expressive communal and social regeneration, the significance of its sacred dimensions holds insights for consumer researchers interested in exploring meaning-making, authenticity, the sacred and reenchantment in contemporary religious expression.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

What's On Your Mind? Neuroscientific Approaches to Studying Consumer Choice

William Hedgcock, University of Minnesota

Akshay Rao, University of Minnesota

SESSION OVERVIEW

Consumers routinely make choices between multiple alternatives. There is a long tradition of research in several disciplines (i.e. Economics, Psychology, and Marketing) that provides normative and descriptive insight into how consumers should and do make these choices. Notably, the emergent literature on choice has veered away from standard expected utility theory and its associated axioms based on numerous observed violations of the predictions of the theory as well as the axioms. For instance, Prospect theory has now become the received view in much of marketing research on consumer choice.

Our session was designed to address a set of issues that derives from this perspective. Decision-making is a complex process that can involve emotional as well as computational elements. In particular, the assessment of risk, the making of tradeoffs, the role of social cognitive strategies, arousal due to anticipation and other aspects of a decision may play a role in the observed violations of expected utility theory, and are difficult to assess using traditional methods. The session featured three presentations that employ multiple methods including sophisticated functional imaging techniques to examine the processes employed by subjects as they are exposed to choice tasks.

The session accomplished three objectives: we provided insight into theoretical issues, particularly the role of emotion/arousal on decision-making; we highlighted the role of functional imaging and associated techniques that are quickly becoming important techniques to study brain processing; and we informed practitioners and public policy makers about how consumer choice is demonstrably contextual and labile, thus suggesting that extreme caution be employed in making generalizations about how consumers respond to choice sets.

ABSTRACTS

“Inferring the Role of Outcome Feedback on Choice using Neuroscientific Techniques”

John Dickhaut, University of Minnesota

Consumers face risky choices in a variety of settings, from purchasing financial securities to deciding on whether or not to purchase an extended warranty for a new car. We examine differences in the neural mechanisms that may occur in the evaluation of risky outcomes in the presence and absence of performance feedback. Employing behavioral and neuroscientific measures, we not only observe differences in performance quality but also observe differences in emotional response, depending on the presence and absence of feedback.

“The Neuroscience of Trust”

Kevin McCabe, George Mason University

Two settings in which consumers may employ trust are examined. In interpersonal exchanges in which the other player in the marketplace is known, the nature of brain activity is substantially different relative to exchanges with marketplace institutions (such as brand names). It appears that the anticipation associated with consuming a branded product may yield a different type of arousal as opposed to the system that has evolved to monitor inter-personal relationships.

“Brain Activation: Shedding Light on the Decoy Effect”

William Hedgcock, University of Minnesota

Akshay Rao, University of Minnesota

The decoy effect is a long-standing empirical observation of a violation of the regularity principle. According to this effect, the choice share of elements in a two-element choice set change upon the introduction of a third, irrelevant alternative. We observe and predict (based on behavioral as well as functional imaging studies) that the decoy effect occurs because trade-offs (between the original two elements) elicit negative emotion and the presence of the decoy makes the decision task easier and less laden with negative emotion.

A Holiday Loved and Loathed: A Consumer Perspective of Valentine's Day

Angeline Close, University of Georgia
George M. Zinkhan, University of Georgia¹

ABSTRACT

From a consumer perspective, we investigate the behaviors, rituals, meanings, and themes associated with Valentine's Day as it is "celebrated" in the U.S. The objective of our multi-method study is to provide insight into Valentine's-related rituals, themes, and meanings as a basis for understanding consumer behavior for this holiday. We seek to add to conventional thinking about the impact of Valentine's Day on various consumers in the U.S. We analyze consumer diaries, online postings, group interviews, surveys, and in-store observations to address three distinct research questions. Our research questions focus on: a) behaviors and rituals (both in-store and in the private sphere), b) key consumer meanings and emergent themes, and c) roles of marketing communications during this holiday. We report various behaviors and rituals and key meanings behind such actions. We find that this holiday is associated with extremes (e.g., consumers either love it or hate it). Commercialism and marketing communications contribute to consumers' reactions to this holiday by fostering materialism, togetherness, and gender roles. At the same time, there are strong anti-consumerism and anti-commercialism sentiments. We discuss consumers' perspectives on this holiday and suggest avenues for future consumer research on this unique holiday.

INTRODUCTION

Valentine's Day and the surrounding season is a time for rituals and romance in the U.S. This holiday is worthy of study due to the unique consumption, gift/card exchange, grooming, dating, and romance-based consumer behaviors associated with this holiday. Some of these Valentine's-related behaviors are ritualized to an extent. In a general sense, rituals organize life and give it meaning. Ritualized behaviors are important to study as they may propose consumer behavior principles, which in turn lend marketers to product and service positioning opportunities (Arnould, Price, and Zinkhan 2004, p. 93). Consumer rituals for this holiday are especially enacted by individuals in romantic relationships. Valentine's Day is generally known as the day for celebrating romantic relationships; yet, this day also celebrates other non-romantic relationships as well (e.g., familial, friendly).

For any type of relationship, however, this holiday celebrates commercialism and spending. This socially constructed, mass-marketed day and surrounding season is the stimulus for many consumers to purchase romantic goods (e.g., roses, chocolate, jewelry) and services (e.g., massage certificates, vacations) for both themselves and for their significant other. Furthermore, this holiday entices many to exchange "Valentines" or similar greeting cards for romantic partner(s), friends, and family members. In fact, over one-billion dollars worth of Valentine's Day cards sell annually in the U.S.

It is not to say that all consumers look forward to or even like this day of romance and rituals. For some, Valentine's Day serves as a somewhat unwelcome reminder of their "single status". For others, it is a time when society suggests that money should be spent as an indicator of affection. In fact, this holiday can be a source of obligation, self-loathing, and/or disgust for various segments of the

population. Such sentiments entail their own distinct rituals for this holiday (e.g., singles nights at clubs; self-gifts).

We believe that it is important to understand this commercial holiday from a consumer perspective. We focus on three research questions:

RQ1: What are the consumer behaviors and rituals associated with Valentine's Day?

RQ2: What are some key consumer meanings and emergent themes associated with the holiday?

RQ3: What roles do marketing communications play in shaping the holiday?

We address these questions via multiple methods of data collection, including: a) consumer diaries, b) online postings, c) surveys, d) group interviews, and e) in-store observations.

The following section reviews relevant social science research on rituals and gift exchange. Next, we describe our methods of data collection. We then report and discuss the findings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rituals and Valentine's Day

Rituals are sets of multiple, symbolic behaviors that: a) occur in a fixed sequence, and b) tend to be repeated periodically (Solomon 2002). We analyze the holiday further as it pertains to a variety of classifications of rituals. Valentine's Day is a holiday that is associated with a variety of cultural rituals. Cultural rituals are behaviors that occur in a relatively fixed sequence that are repeated periodically (Arnould, Price, and Zinkhan 2004). Other types of rituals that may be associated with this holiday are religious, magical, aesthetic, calenderical, and rites of passage (Arnould, Price, and Zinkhan 2004).

Such rituals may be further categorized as primarily personal rituals, ethological rituals, or consumer rituals. Personal rituals are those repeated behaviors that are performed via an individual's emotions and desires. Ethological (e.g., greeting, mating) rituals, however, are a component of biology (Rook 1985). Consumer rituals include possession, grooming, divestment, and exchange. Possession rituals occur when a product moves from the market to the place of consumption (e.g., home, workplace). Grooming rituals are often private behaviors that assist with transforming the private self to the public self and vice versa. Possession rituals may be grooming rituals, in the event that the individual is cleaning, polishing, or restoring the self or the extended self. Divestment rituals are performed as an individual dispossesses something (e.g., a grandmother's wedding ring). Exchange rituals (e.g., rites of passage) are often associated with gift giving and receiving. We note that rituals exist in cycles, which may be global consumption rituals (Rook 1985; Arnould et al. 2004). In any sense, rituals, often retail and market driven, organize life and give it meaning or purpose and may be apparent in various Valentine's-related behaviors.

Gift Giving and Exchange

A substantial portion of academic literature associated with Valentine's Day is devoted to the study of gift exchange (generally gift giving). For instance, the French anthropologist Marcel Mauss

¹Thank you to the informants who contributed to this study.

concludes that reciprocity motivates gift giving (1925). Since that time, pioneering insights have been added to that observation. Sherry (1983) combines anthropology (a social aspect) and consumer research (a psychological aspect), to create a macro-model of the gift exchange process. He recommends that the “reformulation” stage (the final stage of the gift giving process) should be studied thoroughly, as knowledge in this area is crucial to understanding the socio-psychological dynamics of gift giving (Sherry Jr. 1983, p.165). We consider these dynamics as important for understanding Valentine’s gift exchange and related rituals.

Goodwin, Swift, and Spiggle (1990) also examine motivations associated with gift-giving. They propose that gift giving is a product of either voluntary or obligatory motives; time, money restraint, and many consumer behaviors are affected by these motives. Belk and Coon (1991; 1993) explain how such motivations have traditionally been viewed from either an economic or a social model of exchange—inappropriate for romantic gift exchange.

Belk and Coon (1993) confirm that more emphasis should be placed on a modernized representation, such as the Model of Agapic Love. This model focuses on gift giving from a pure, unselfish, and altruistic viewpoint. Such a love-oriented model applies to a study by Huang and Yu (2000). Huang and Yu (2000) focus on a survival analysis for gift giving in a romantic relationship. They claim that links exist between gift consumption amongst partners and the length of the romantic relationship. Their findings apply to gift exchange for Valentine’s Day; however, their study is not specific to the holiday, as are the following studies.

Netemeyer, Andrews and Durvasula (1993) contribute a study entirely focused on Valentine’s gift giving. They show how three behavioral intention models may be applied to both planned and voluntary behavior. Otnes, Ruth, and Milbourne (1994) study attitudes toward Valentine’s gift exchange from the *male* perspective. They find that males have motives with respect to: purpose, gift/card giving, and the reasoning behind *why* males choose to engage in or opt out of the gift giving. Polonsky, Neal, Rugimbana, King, Bowd, and Porter (2000) follow the Otnes et al. (1994) study, and confirm the themes of obligation, self-interest, and altruism. In contrast, Polonsky et al. find that either obligation or self-interest is always present.

Few prior studies focus on non-gift rituals associated with this Valentine’s Day. Thus, one of our research questions focuses on exploring a more comprehensive account of consumer behaviors for this holiday. We will now discuss the methods we used to address the research questions.

METHODS

Table 1 summarizes our methods and informants, sample sizes, timeframe, and relevant details.

Method I: Diaries

Eighty-eight consumers kept diaries related to their thoughts and behaviors concerning the holiday. The age of diary authors ranged from 18–47, with a mode of 23 years-old. A relatively even distribution of males and females in various relationship statuses completed entries. Diary entries focused on the holiday’s: a) cultural rituals, b) male roles, c) female roles, d) enjoyment factor, and e) comparison to other holidays (e.g., meanings, associated marketing communications). Diary entries provide a personalized data source for this more intimate holiday.

To complement the offline diaries, we analyze online diary entries that have been published on the Internet. Online diary postings are often written under a non-recognizable screen name;

such anonymity provides for rich, truthful data concerning individuals’ sentiments and experiences with the holiday. While some individuals post with a first name and other information (e.g., age, city of residence), we are not always able to obtain the poster’s age or gender.

We used axial, open, and selective coding techniques for data analysis, and grouped similar entries into categories of meaning. Such contributed towards revealing the emergent patterns of each category (Wolcott 1990). The authors reviewed each other’s data interpretations until saturation.

Method II: Survey

For a supplementary perspective, we distributed a twelve-item exploratory survey on Valentine’s Day (2003) to college students. We administered one hundred surveys in order to gather insight from individuals in a romantic relationship. We included a screener question (i.e., Are you currently in a romantic relationship?). If the respondent reported to be in a relationship, they were directed to complete the survey. In total, we analyzed sixty-four surveys (thirty-two for each gender).

Survey items questioned the expectations, behaviors, perceptions, and the commercial aspects of this holiday. In addition, respondents indicated their age, gender, and whether they are in a “new relationship” (less than six months) or a more established relationship (six months or more) as suggested by Huang and Yu (2000).

Method III: Focus Group Interviews

Unlike the survey administered to both genders, we designed a focus group for female college students in a relationship, to encourage discussion without males present. We choose to focus on females for group interviews, as this is a more “female holiday” in the U.S. Furthermore, insight on male perspectives has been examined (e.g., Otnes et al. 1994; Polonsky et al. 2000) in extant literature. The focus group participants included six females (three in a new relationship and three in a more established relationship). An outside moderator served as the discussant. Two researchers took field notes during the session. The researchers debriefed the session and constructed overall themes and sub-themes.

Method IV: In-Store Observations

By conducting in-store observations, we witnessed aspects of commercial preparation for Valentine’s Day. The observations and fieldwork took place in floral departments of two large national grocery store chains and other retailers associated with the holiday. Observations took place at the first location, located in a southeastern city, during the week of and on Valentine’s Day 2003. A second round of observations took place at another grocer in a different town, on Valentine’s Day 2004. A final round of observations took place in a mid-size southwestern city the weekend before Valentine’s Day 2005.

At the outset of our study, we did not intend to focus on one specific kind of human relationship (e.g., heterosexual, homosexual). However, our informants tended to focus on heterosexual relationships or did not specify the type of romantic relationship.

FINDINGS

RQ1: WHAT ARE THE CONSUMER BEHAVIORS AND RITUALS ASSOCIATED WITH VALENTINE’S DAY?

A wide variety of rituals, often retail related, are associated with Valentine’s Day. We show five broad interrelated categories and their defining behaviors in Table 2. In light of our research

TABLE 1
Methods of the Study

Method	Informants	Time Frame	Details
Consumer Diaries (n=88)	Undergraduate Students Males and Females Ages 18-47; Mode Age=23 Any relationship status	2002-2004	Entries focused on the: a) cultural rituals, b) male roles, c) female roles, d) enjoyment factor, and e) comparison to other holidays.
Online Diaries/ Postings (n=22)	Anonymous posters to online diaries & message boards Males and Females All ages Any relationship status	2000-2004	Sources include: diaryland.com, opendiary.com, my-diary.org, pfft.com, diarist.net, mydeardiary.com, marketing science message board, various personal websites
Survey (n=64)	College students Males and Females Age 18-22 Currently in a romantic relationship	2003	Conducted on Valentine's Day
Focus Group Interviews (n=6)	College students Females Age 18-22 Currently in a romantic relationship	2003	Moderator's guide covered: rituals, meanings behind the holiday, traditions, reasons, and self-gift giving
In-Store Observations (n=41)	Customers at floral department and associated holiday retailers Males and Females All ages Any relationship status	2003-2005	Conducted on the week of and on Valentine's Days; field notes taken Conducted in the southeast and southwest

objectives, we will not discuss the meanings of *each* of these items; however, we focus on those that contribute to addressing our specified research questions.

Exchanging Gifts and Cards

Gift and card exchange is the most frequently mentioned behavior. One informant describes how she is just a *partial*-conformist to the American norm (Santino 1995, 1996):

Many people in America celebrate Valentine's Day by participating in the same rituals. The most common (gift giving and consumption) rituals are buying your loved one chocolate candy, red roses and wine. I also participate in these typical traditions, but I try and modify them for meaningful reasons. [F, Diary]

This informant, like others, partakes in traditional rituals, yet she maintains a sense of individualism on a day that is otherwise conforming to the consumption and/or exchange of specific products and brands. Valentine's is a day when many *speak of* giving personalized gifts in lieu of the "status quo" gifts of roses, chocolate, stuffed animal, and/or perfume. One way to optimize gift giving is to involve as many senses as possible. One informant describes her gift giving technique:

When I buy my Valentine's Days gifts, I also try to use all five senses. I will purchase some kind of candy for taste, flowers or cologne for smell, a nice dinner with candles so it looks nice, a winter shirt to feel warm in and I like to buy my loved ones a soft sound CD to listen to. [F, Diary]

Personalization is an important element of altruistic gift giving. She continues, as she discusses the importance of considering the preferences and tastes of the recipient:

I always try to put effort in my gift giving and personalize them too. For instance, my mom would prefer flowers and my dad would rather have cologne. So, whoever the person I am shopping for, whether it be my boyfriend, mom or dad I always try to be creative, use all five senses and most importantly show them my love. [F, Diary]

However, it is often more difficult and time intensive to select and purchase personalized gifts on this holiday due to the mass-production of Valentine's-related merchandise online and in on-ground retail locations.

Others view the entire idea of gift giving for this holiday as purely market-driven and store-bought. Many men have learned to "listen to the shelves" and to avoid certain gifts for romantic occasions (e.g., blenders, cleaning supplies). One man takes time to help other gift-givers by specifying what, in his experience, women *do* want for this holiday:

Any way, amigo, if you want her happy always remember: the gift has to shine or smell [good] or she should be able to wear it! Otherwise, you'll be doomed. [M, Posted 2-14-04]

This perspective is in stark contrast to many of the female posts, diaries, and discussions of appropriate gifts to give and to receive. Many females discuss how the gift exchanged should be meaningful to the couple, thoughtful, or unique.

TABLE 2
Valentine’s Holiday Consumer Behaviors & Rituals

Category	Specific Behaviors & Rituals Mentioned by Informants
Exchanging Gifts & Cards	Personalizing/non-conforming gifts, incorporating symbols (e.g., cupid, heart), decorating rooms/vehicles, incorporating senses, lighting candles, sharing chocolate anything, surprising loved ones with gifts or meaningful gestures, giving shiny or scented gifts, e-gift giving, preparing a special gift basket, giving specific items: red roses, flowers, concert tickets, teddy bear, pearls, diamond jewelry, engagement ring, chick-flicks, romantic movies or television shows lingerie, candy, diet candy, Spa Sydell half-day certificate, framed picture of the couple, car, new house, gifts for pets. Cards: personalizing, cutting out hearts, using artsy/crafty Valentine’ s, exchanging cheesy store-bought Valentine’ s, writing poetry, expressing true romantic feelings in a card, sending e-Valentine’ s, exchanging Valentine’ s with other singles, sending secret admirer cards, naming the “ Hallmark Holiday”
Showing Affection	Sex, kissing, making out, acting sensual, making loved ones feel special, slowing down, building a fire, cuddling on the couch, going on a date, romantic getaways, getting in the mood, love-making, celebrating love, spending time alone, enjoying each other’ s company, staying in together, avoiding the crowds, emphasizing commitment to one another, renewing vows, proposing, celebrating a romantic anniversary, getting married, snuggling, reading to each other, being grateful for each other, displaying affection, reminding friends and family they are loved, playing a game
Going Out	Nice restaurant, going to the ballet, parties, get-togethers, singles parties, fraternity date nights, hiring a sitter and escaping out, movies, theatre, concert, shopping, carriage rides, clubs, bars, spa getaways, weekend vacations, anti-Valentine’ s parties, going to virtual spaces: e-dating sites, singles chats, Valentine chat rooms, message boards
Preparing & Consuming Food/ Drink	Preparing romantic food, heart-shaped sandwiches, actually cooking in lieu of fast food, cooking surf-n-turf, aphrodisiacs, drinking expensive wine, drinking champagne, eating candy, candy hearts with messages, eating chocolate, avoiding cheap chocolate, eating alone, eating desserts, whip cream, avoiding overcrowded restaurants, having candle-light dinners on the back porch, picnics, expensive dinners
Grooming & Clothing	Wearing certain colors (i.e., red, pink) of lingerie and/or clothing, wearing pretty underwear, wearing heels, planning what to wear in advance, buying a new outfit, wearing sexy clothes, wearing a themed tie, putting on a cute outfit, getting dressed up to go meet singles, taking time off to groom, bikini and leg waxing, spending extra time on make-up, tanning, spray-tanning, getting a special hairdo, applying manicures/pedicures in pink or red, actually showering and brushing teeth, applying lotions and glitter, beautifying the entire body, looking better than other females, applying a temporary heart tattoo, wearing extra perfume, working out, shaving chest hair into a heart shape

Some males mention that the Internet makes it much easier to give feminine gifts (e.g., lingerie). These males share that they are uncomfortable spending time in a women’s lingerie store, such as Victoria’s Secret, aside from feeling that they make the women shoppers uncomfortable. One male reports that he actually enjoys giving lingerie—if it is purchased on the Internet:

Yeah, I enjoy the experience of buying a gift online. It makes it more efficient. Victoria’s Secret it is easier to go to online. Call me crazy. It is easier to do it online. [M, Diary]

Some informants also use the Internet to send online greeting cards for this holiday to friends and family members in certain situations. However, others choose to send an e-gift card:

I wouldn’t ever buy a card online and send it online (like an E-card), but I would buy a greeting card to have sent along with the gift. But if the gift card was a free E-card, then, yeah (I would send it), that’s not a problem. I don’t mind even just putting in a little note, five or so words in a message, that comes along with the gift when it is sent. I would even pay a couple dollars extra to make that message longer. [M, Diary]

To this informant, e-cards with gifts are an important part of the gift exchange and even worth paying a premium for; however e-cards should be free. Traditional, paper greeting cards (store-bought and homemade) are discussed as the more common form of card exchange among romantic partners. In general, these gifts and cards are a vehicle of showing affection.

Showing Affection

A key group of behaviors involves showing affection. Informants discuss relaxing with loved ones as a way of sharing affection. Whereas some individuals involve themselves with “holiday hype”, one young woman shares how she likes to slow down with loved ones on this holiday:

Even though Valentine’s Day is not necessarily about gift giving I enjoy the holiday every year just for the sole purpose that I get an extra chance during the busy year to let my loved ones know I care and have a nice dinner and celebrate each other’s love. My fondest memories of Valentine’s Day is every year building a warm fire after dinner and relaxing with each other. [F, Diary]

Kissing, making out, love-making, and sex are other behaviors informants commonly share as a way to show affection to loved one(s) for this holiday. This is one example of “celebrating” the holiday in the private sphere.

For those in and out of romantic relationships, more daring behaviors take place on Valentine's Day. This holiday makes it more appropriate to be direct with affection. This day is different:

There is a sense of magic, excitement, and romance. [F, Diary]

On this day, some take initiative to rekindle a relationship or connect with someone new:

It can be a day to try to find a loved one. It is a day when a secret admirer might emerge. [M, Diary]

It is the holiday that entices some to come forward with their romantic feelings.

Going Out

Although many celebrate the holiday intimately at home, a common Valentine's-related behavior entails “going out”. Many informants discuss going out on dates in the public sphere (e.g., movie theaters, parks, restaurants). Many singles choose to spend the holiday at singles events or with a group of other singles. This is one day where singles seek each other's company:

Singles might sit around in a group, watching movies or feeling sorry for themselves. Or, they might find a way to celebrate the day. [F, Diary]

One informant tells how this is the *one* night he is sure to go out to meet someone, because other singles are out celebrating, while the couples are home together.

Preparation and Consuming Food/Drink

Whereas many consumers go out and celebrate over dinner in a restaurant or café, others celebrate the holiday by preparing and consuming food and drink in the privacy of the home. Some consumers share that romantic dinners at home have the benefits of saving money, avoiding risks from drinking and driving, and have a comfortable and personal atmosphere.

Some of the more commonly exchanged and consumed items for this holiday are sweets and chocolates. Women often receive sweets on this day, and this consumption ritual is based on the assumption that women go weak for sweets (see Barthel 1989; Belk and Costa 1999). Some do not just like chocolate—they LOVE it. Such instances may explain why sweets are a common gift to women on Valentine's Day. As one woman explains:

It's not just candy. I have a fatal weakness for desserts. I love ice cream, cakes, pies, pastries, chocolate, fruit, and most other sweets with a passion. Whenever I go to a moderately nice restaurant, I'm mostly thinking about the dessert I could get at the end of the meal if I'm not too full. At Italian places, I dream of espresso pie and tiramisu, and most restaurants have good cheesecake. If it's homemade and comes in a pool of raspberry or chocolate sauce, I go weak at the knees. [F, Posted 2-14-03]

Such information may be of interest to men, as it appears that this woman would be pleased with gifts of chocolate just as much as expensive jewelry or roses. She is disappointed that her husband does not love sweets. It is not from the dieter's viewpoint (i.e., it is

unfair that he goes without sugar cravings), but from the pity-filled perspective that he is truly missing out on one of life's finer things:

It's a little disheartening that my husband doesn't share my love of sweets. He will happily eat ice cream or cheesecake or apple pie, but he doesn't seem to savor it, and really look forward to the next time the same way I do. The power sugar holds over me doesn't hold him. Some people in my situation would envy his self-control and lack of need of candy, but I just pity him, knowing he'll never understand what it's like to be in love with it. [F, Posted 2-14-03]

Just as chocolate and candy are frequently mentioned, red wine and champagne are the beverages many informants associate with the holiday. Wine is even a part of grooming rituals for some individuals on this holiday.

Grooming and Clothing

One grooming behavior of note is the act of “primping and priming”, or taking extra effort to look one's best. In the group interviews, the females discussed how grooming efforts on this day are much different from their everyday rituals. One woman spent hours beautifying herself for her new boyfriend:

I was so nervous getting ready for Valentine's Day when I first met my boyfriend, I literally attempted to calm my nerves by drinking a couple glasses of wine, and then beautified my entire body, from head to toe. [F, New; FGI]

Such a lavish grooming ritual may be more common for young women in new relationships. One woman, in a more established relationship explains that she no longer performs extraordinary grooming rituals:

I love my boyfriend dearly, but I don't think it is necessary to buy a new dress to wear for one night like I would have for the first Valentine's Day that we spent together! We tend to use the money that I would have spent getting my hair and nails done on something that we can both share together, like a really nice dinner. [F, Longer-term; FGI]

Unlike the young woman who shunned the need to buy a dress, another informant was proud of both her recent purchase and the way it complements her “purchased” skin tone:

I bought a new dress, but I had to make sure that it was classy but sexy at the same time. I made sure I had a nice color by going to the tanning bed a couple weeks prior to Valentine's Day. [F, New; FGI]

Such women in new relationships were *especially* eager to share their preparation rituals, and the session transformed into a “competition.” Many of the young women spoke at once, trying to surpass one another with their lavish doings. One woman in a new relationship seemed confident of her extra beauty efforts, as he took time out of her school and work schedule to groom:

I had to make sure that I had time to go to the spa to “fix” my body up for Valentine's Day. [F, New; FGI]

Some men may not believe (or desire to acknowledge) the preparation that some females go through; however, informants stated that their partners were extremely pleased with the final “product.”

Some of the ritualistic behaviors may seem unnecessary; however, these behaviors contribute to these females' individuality. Our informants (women in romantic relationships) do prepare for Valentine's Day in similar ways; however, the females in new relationships discuss going to greater lengths and monetary expenses for their partners.

We now consider the underlying meanings and emergent themes associated with these behaviors.

RQ2: WHAT ARE SOME KEY CONSUMER MEANINGS AND EMERGENT THEMES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS HOLIDAY?

The key meanings and themes we discuss here include: "love, affection and intimacy", "altruism", "mutual expectations", "self-gifts", and "negative feelings". Other themes (e.g., commercialism) are discussed in the section related to our third research question. We begin with the "positive themes" and then discuss more negative aspects of Valentine's Day.

Love, Affection and Intimacy

One key meaning of Valentine's Day is the showing of love, affection, sharing intimacy, and sex. In the public sphere, kisses, hugs, and hand-holding in public are more common on this day; public displays of affection are sightings that many have come to expect on February 14th. In the private sphere, this holiday celebrates romantic love and intimacy. For some, it is a time set aside for sex:

It is the holiday to stay in and share intimate times and sex. [F, Diary]

Valentine's means displays of love, affection, and care. [F, Diary]

Informants often associate the holiday with *all* loved ones (e.g., family, friends, significant-other):

Valentine's Day is a time for love and affection. I do not know anyone who wants to spend Valentine's Day alone. I love to spend my Valentine's Days with the person I am dating or my family. I love buying and giving gifts during this holiday but the most important thing is being with the people I care about and love. [F, Diary]

Family, specifically, is often mentioned as an important part of the holiday. Important family members include parents, siblings, and grandparents. Many phone calls and letters for this holiday are not just for romantic loved ones, but also for such family members.

Altruism

Altruism, or voluntary giving which is not directed at gain, is a key Valentine's Day theme. Motivations for gift giving in a romantic relationship change with time, and altruistic gifts may extend the relationship (Huang and Yu 2000). We find, for instance, that males in a longer-standing relationship have positive feelings for this holiday stemming from altruistic motives and love. Polonsky et al., however, find that "the altruism motive was rarely found to occur independently amongst young males, especially with relationships that have been established for periods longer than six months." (Polonsky et al. 2000, p.1003)

We find a similar phenomenon in responses from women. Women in a longer relationship were more likely to share selfless giving than the women who were involved in a fairly new relationship. Past studies (e.g., Huang and Yu 2000; Polonsky et al. 2000)

also found altruism is positively related to relationship length. However, those studies focused on males' gift-giving; our findings extend to women as well. Altruistic motives are apparent with males and females and underlie behavior for this holiday.

Mutual Expectations

Childhood experiences play a large role in shaping adult Valentine's expectations. Early memories of the day evoke images of elementary school and the parties, arts and crafts, candy, time off from schoolwork, and egalitarian exchange of Valentine's cards. Time off from schoolwork is more common on Valentine's Day in public elementary school, because of the secular association with the holiday, as compared to the policies that limit celebrations of religious holidays (e.g., Christmas, Easter) during class time. Because of such strong, early-rooted influences, consumers build up high expectations for the day. As a result, consumers enter their teenage years with high expectations. Such heightened expectations may lead to disappointment (e.g., by teenage females who expect uninformed young males to shower them with gifts and affection).

These expectations are mutual; over half (53%) of the males and 63% females in our survey expect a gift(s) from their significant other for the holiday. Heightened female expectations might be associated with the fact that women receive more gifts than they give on Valentine's Day (Goodwin et al. 1990). A further explanation may be that women see themselves to be gift-receivers more so than givers on this day. However, males do view the lack of gifts received as a negative factor associated with the holiday (Otnes et al. 1994).

Interestingly, a higher percentage of males and females in a new relationship expect gifts, as compared to those in a more established relationship. As the duration of the relationship increases, both men and women expect fewer gifts from their partners. As both partners may begin to feel comfortable and confident in the relationship, they may not feel the need to impress the other, as with self-gifts.

Self-Gifts

Self-gifts are gifts that are given to oneself to try and appear more attractive in their partners' eyes (Huang and Yu 2000). Examples of "self gifts" include perfume, cosmetics, and lingerie. We find that more of the women in a *new* relationship indulge in self-giving. This could be explained by the negative relation between relationship length and pressure to look "perfect". Valentine's Day is viewed as one of the most romantic times of year, and women who spend this day with someone special for the first time often go to greater lengths to "prepare themselves". Females speak of these self-gifts as a way to make themselves "absolutely irresistible" for their partner.

Negative Feelings

Not all informants hold the same warm feelings for the holiday; some consumers "can't stand this day of love." Past studies have suggested that men are primarily the ones with "anti-Valentine" feelings; however, there are expressive females speaking out and sharing their distaste for this love-oriented day. One woman turns to chat rooms and message boards when her misery needs company:

I've spent this valentines surfing the net, looking for sites about love sucking! My bou of 4 years broke up about 1 month ago, he is with someone right now...DEATH TO VALENTINES! [F, Posted 02-15-00]

Another young woman encourages others to send hate mail instead of “happy-grams”:

I want to urge everyone to join me in sending hate mail instead of Valentine's on this wonderful day. It makes you feel better. I promise. [F, Posted 02-15-00]

However, another woman shares her suggestion of getting rid of the day completely:

I always used to hate this holiday, and my friends told me I was weird- but now I know I'm not alone! Abolish Valentine's Day! [F, Posted 02-11-00]

Yet, some individuals just have problems in the way society interprets the holiday—or, they do not think it is a holiday at all:

I hate Valentine's Day because all those people in love think that it is a real holiday and it's not...it is a time of the year that everyone who is in love gets stupid and all mushy while the rest of us get left out yet again and we are forgotten about just because we haven't found the one...this sucks...! [M, Posted 02-04-00]

A theme we see often is that informants do not think that love is to be shown on “this day and this day only”. The following men seem to have more of a problem with it being *the* day for showing love:

I hate Valentine's Day, because...I don't know. I think, if you love someone, you don't need a special day to show it. Every day is suitable for this. [M, Posted 02-15-00]

Some of this dislike for the holiday (and what it represents) stems from unfulfilled expectations. Not getting a gift, “the right” gift, or desired attention often leads to disappointment. Self-esteem may fluctuate on Valentine's Day, as some get a boost or a threat to their self-esteem. We now consider the role of marketing communications on consumer expectations and experiences for this holiday.

RQ3: WHAT ROLES DO MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PLAY IN SHAPING THE HOLIDAY?

Marketing communications play a role in shaping feelings of materialism on one hand, and togetherness on the other. Marketing communications also contribute to gender roles for this holiday. We begin by discussing some observations of in-store marketing communications practices, and then discuss some roles that various forms of marketing communications play in fostering materialism, togetherness, and gender roles for the Valentine's holiday.

In-store displays sometimes start appearing months prior to February 14th. Our observations in floral departments and retailers that cater to the holiday include: multiple red and pink displays, including balloons, a “Valentine's Day Gift Center” banner, and extra options for floral and gift-wrap arrangements. Such a promotional arrangement attracts mainly men, who often purchase flowers, a card, chocolates, a balloon, and/or another small gift all at once. In turn, we see that few females come seeking gifts. Interestingly, there were no masculine items in the area.

One of the most traditional gifts for this holiday is a dozen red roses. However, some specifically requested something different:

I need a really nice arrangement for my girlfriend—but rather than roses, can you use tulips instead? [M, Observation]

To further individualize the gift, the saleswoman asked:

Have you two been together for a while, or is this the first time you would be purchasing flowers for her? I need to know so I can pick the right colors for the arrangement. Normally, red symbolizes love... [F, Observation]

He jumped in:

Yes! (pointing to a peach shade) That would be perfect, since my girlfriend prefers softer colors instead. Also, I really don't have a limit on how much the flowers cost. This is the first time I'm buying flowers and I want it to be nice. [M, Observation]

Here, price is a proxy for quality. He was willing to pay for “the best”. He described his spending limit as:

As much as it takes to satisfy my girlfriend! [M, Observation]

Another observed customer described how he begins saving months in advance, because he expects a considerable financial burden for this holiday. Marketing efforts also entice women to spend, among other enticements:

Marketing gets me “in the mood”, and causes me to buy more stuff than I normally would. For example, I bought Valentine cards for everyone in my family and all of my friends. [F, Diary]

Fostering Materialism

Valentine's Day has a materialistic aspect that is reflected in the multitude of ads, public relations material, in-store displays, and e-communications that remind consumers to purchase something for their loved ones. Recall we found that both women and men expect to receive some sort of gift. Some consumers overtly trace these mutual expectations to marketing communications. Recall that some consumers express negative feelings toward this holiday. Some explicitly attempt to avoid marketers' influences. One way is via the exchange of non-marketed, “hand-made” gifts (e.g., home-made dinners, massages, original song lyrics, homemade cards). However, traditional store-bought goods or services (e.g., restaurant meals, massage certificates, CDs, greeting cards) are mentioned by the majority of informants. Some individuals aspire to share luxurious items and brands (e.g., Tiffany & Co., Godiva) with their loved one, as ad images suggest. However, not all informants associate Valentine's marketing communications with materialism. Instead, they notice the “togetherness” reflected in marketing communications.

Fostering Togetherness

Marketing communications foster a sense of togetherness for some. Images often depict lovers spending time together. One informant recognizes the meaning of showing such images, and how she now appreciates this holiday's meaning:

Having people around to share special occasions leaves a much stronger impact in one's life rather than receiving material things. Every year on Valentine's Day, I have a nice breakfast with my mother and father and then a romantic dinner with the person I am dating... that way I can spend a little time with everyone that I love. [F, Diary]

For some, the shared gifts, food, and drink, are a vehicle of spending quality time and showing affection with loved ones and non-materialistic in nature.

A formal engagement is a symbol of togetherness. Some ads suggest proposing on this day. One male even recalls the advertiser:

Every Valentine's Day this one jeweler, the Shane Company, I think, calls out for men who are in relationships and suggests we come to their store and buy a ring. I don't want some businessman telling me that it is time to propose! [M, Diary]

The Valentine's season is a popular time for advertising engagement rings and wedding goods. To some informants, a diamond ring (and the future marriage that it symbolizes) is the ideal exchange. One informant had a day to remember. She is happy to share her story, as well as glimpses of her solitaire:

We went down to Atlanta on Valentine's Day and checked into the Westin Hotel and went outside for a picnic that my boyfriend had planned. It was raining so we were carrying an umbrella. We went to a horse and buggy, to which I was very surprised, and rode around Atlanta. We got off at Centennial Olympic Park and sat under a pavilion and had a salad, heart-cut sandwiches, fruit, and strawberries dipped in chocolate. After lunch, my boyfriend had a velvet Godiva chocolate box (that I had asking to eat all day!) I finally go to open it, and at this point, I was thinking that he might have put a ring in there, since our day had been so extravagant. I opened it and it (a ring) was not in the box. I got some chocolate and put the box down (disappointedly). [F, Diary]

Her diary continues:

Later, he picked the box (of Godiva chocolate) back up and asked me to see what kind of chocolate was in the center. I opened it and the ring was in there! He asked me to stand, and he got down on one knee... and asked me to marry him! I was crying and, of course, it was one of the most exciting days of my life. [F, Diary]

Upon hearing that her friend received a ring, another female responded with a half-joking tone:

You got a diamond ring—I didn't even get a card. [F, Observation]

Such sentiments are not uncommon—especially from singles on this holiday that reportedly “discriminates against” single people. To those who have negative Valentines feelings, marketing communications overtly depicting togetherness and engagements are especially irritating.

Fostering Gender Roles

Marketing communications fosters gender roles for this holiday. For example, consumers state how marketing messages suggest, imply, or state that this is a day for females. Informants reference the ads and messages that suggest pampering the female with a gift, card, dinner, and other purchased signs of affection. In turn, a somewhat common female perspective is that it is a day for female attention:

Females are supposed to be pampered and spoiled on this day. [F, Diary]

Some males perceive their gender role as a day to cater to “the ladies”:

Valentine's Day is cool...since I'm a true ladies man 🍷 It is a great day. 🍷 [M, Posted 5-20-04]

Other male roles apparent in marketing communications include buying, buying enough, and finding romantic activities to do. One woman realizes the pressure the hype for this holiday seems to put on some males:

There is so much hype, I think it sucks even for people IN a relationship- what should they do/buy, are doing/buying too much (for women), are they doing/buying enough (enough)? I got married on Valentines day and I remember every man invited was all smiles, because it gave them something “romantic” to do on valentines day with their partners that didn't cost them anything, and took all the pressure of them! Its embarrassing to be a marketer when you see something so commercialized, isn't it? [F, Posted 2-15-2004]

Another female shares her perception of each gender role during this holiday:

The male is the wooer. The female role is to be wooed. [F, Diary]

Although some females are “wooed”, other females are anything but wooed.

This is a day for a female to have her heart broken or else have an absolutely wonderful day. [F, Diary]

It is apparent that Valentine's Day is a day of extremes—from euphoria to heartbreak.

DISCUSSION

On the surface, Valentine's Day is a simple holiday; nonetheless, there are a wide variety of behaviors, rituals, meanings, and commercial efforts associated with this day. Because this holiday is so rich in consumer meaning, we are just scratching the surface in this study. Valentine's Day rituals are constantly evolving. New traditions are added annually (e.g., e-Valentine's, speed dating).

Marketing expenditures and efforts are large, and often begin months before the holiday. Such marketing efforts often target males as potential buyers, and often make explicit suggestions or guidelines to assist them in the gift giving process. Such marketing efforts are a clever strategy, because (young) males are sometimes fertile ground—and confused about what is expected from them with respect to this holiday.

At the same time, we find evidence of consumer revolt. Many consumers go out of their way to avoid “stereotypical” rituals or the mass-commercialism associated with Valentine's Day. For some, Valentine's is a season to be reminded of one's “single status” or a time of self-reflection and evaluation. For some, this holiday can be a source of obligation, self-loathing, and/or disgust. Distinct rituals are enacted for this situation (e.g., singles nights at clubs; gossiping about couples, girls' night out, self-gifts).

Consistent themes emerge in our research. For instance, we find that males often feel obligated to make significant purchases. Females tend to focus more on grooming rituals and prepare to “be wooed”. Members of both sexes discuss themes of belongingness and romance. Males are inclined to use gifts as a form of nonverbal

communication, whereas females engage in self-gift behaviors. Females spend a considerable amount of time and money in preparation for "the day."

Limitations of our study include relatively small sample sizes and restricted geographic/demographic focus. Furthermore, most of our informants focused on heterosexual relationships. One direction for future research is to examine, in detail, other kinds of relationships. Another way to expand our focus would be to study Valentine's rituals in other cultures. For example, in South Korea, the gender roles are often reversed, and the holiday is a time for the female to provide a gift (e.g., and express her "hidden affections"). Culture and practices learned at an early age are large contributors to rituals and meanings associated with a holiday. Nonetheless, these ritual practices change and evolve over the course of a lifetime. In terms of future research, the following three questions are of interest: 1) In elementary school, Valentine's Day is an egalitarian holiday with equal exchanges of cards and gifts to both sexes. How is it, then, that all of this has changed by the adult years, which now focuses attention on the female?, 2) Why is it that females have such high expectations for this holiday?, and 3) Why is Valentine's a holiday that seems to befuddle males so much? Females seem to have firm expectations, but males (at all ages) find the "meaning" of the holiday to be elusive.

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A Halloween Community: The Role of the Marketplace in Response to Social Isolation

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Our field's understanding of the marketplace has grown dramatically over the past few years. One line of research finds the market to be an authoritarian institution containing amoral, or even immoral, totalizing logics based on self-interest leading to dehumanizing community fragmentation (Firat and Venkatesh 1995). In order to escape these dehumanizing logics, consumers must escape the hegemony of the market (Kozinets, 2002). Another perspective presents the marketplace as providing cultural capital upon which consumers draw to construct their lifestyle and identity projects (Holt 1998). However, a common point of both perspectives is that the marketplace, as constructed by marketers, is a dull, manipulative and an unreflective space void of family, community or religion (Holt 2002). Yet the marketplace remains an attractive, alluring and even growing dominant logic that many consumers come to actively embrace. The purpose of this study was to contribute to our understanding of the marketplace by exploring some of the dimensions underlying the allure of the market. One key finding in this investigation was that the very amorality of the marketplace attracts consumers and provides consumers with an opportunity to build social bonds.

An ethnographic study of Halloween was conducted from August to November 2004. I immersed myself in the festival. Observations and field notes were taken at multiple sites including retail outlets, community events, bars and dances. I conducted 20 unstructured interviews with different individuals/families before and after Halloween. These participants came from diverse backgrounds ranging in age from 6 to 80, and demonstrating various levels of involvement with Halloween from trick-or-treating to putting up elaborate yard displays. I also followed one family through the consumption experience from buying the costumes and decorations to following them around on Halloween weekend to a community dance and trick-or-treating. For the purpose of this current paper, I analyzed my field notes as well as 5 transcribed interviews involving 7 participants.

Three themes emerged from the data: social isolation, temporary community and the role of marketplace within a Halloween hypercommunity. In today's world of double-income families, urban sprawl and long commutes, people are feeling a time pressure which leaves them socially isolated from their families and communities (Putnam, 2000). Halloween gives consumers an opportunity to chat with neighbors and temporarily reduce their social isolation. Consumers in this study long for the past where life was simpler and people were closer to friends, families and neighbors.

In response to social isolation, Halloween gives consumers a chance to construct a temporary community. Halloween has many of the same characteristics of a hypercommunity (Kozinets, 2002). It is bound by both time and space and is an intense experience. Halloween decorations typically go up the night before Halloween and are dismantled as early as 9 P.M. on Halloween Night. The majority of activity happens quickly during an intense period between 5:30 and 8:30 P.M. and dies off just as quickly. During this time period it seems everyone is out of their houses on their porches chatting with kids and neighbors about Halloween and neighborhood news.

Like a hypercommunity there is a caring and sharing element to the Halloween community that manifests itself through families. Through the wonderment and excitement of the children, the community comes alive. Parents get a chance to step out of their

social isolation, experience the enjoyment of their childhood and reconnect with their families and neighbors. Halloween is a hypercommunity where consumers attempt to strengthen social ties but unlike the Burning Man hypercommunity, Halloween is created well within the marketplace.

In this study, consumers readily admit that commercialization is central to Halloween. They understand that items provided by the marketplace are in a sense "amoral" – void of social meaning other than the attempt by companies to sell more products and make a profit. It is this amorality that makes the rituals of Halloween safe and accessible to the masses. Halloween is widely advertised by companies, and likewise, Halloween decorations and other paraphernalia are accessible and convenient for busy consumers despite Halloween's marginalized past. The marketplace offers Halloween, a "safe-haven" in the sense that it is "amoral". The Halloween merchandise is safe, physically and creatively with store bought costumes, decorations and candy. The wide variety of ever changing Halloween merchandise is also a source of safe creativity that allows consumers to exact Halloween rituals of family and community.

Consumers are actively trying to escape the social isolation of their daily lives. But very few people can escape the marketplace because they do not have the financial or time resources to access events like Burning Man. On the other hand, almost everyone has access to the marketplace. The allure of the marketplace is that consumers have access to it and can temporarily create communities that are creative but at the same time safe like the ones seen on Halloween. The amorality of the marketplace, which is what many say is its fault, may ironically be the very characteristic and allure that provides the consumer the opportunity to achieve some of the communal and self-expression/ideals that were previously thought only achievable outside of the marketplace.

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Authenticity at Gettysburg

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Authenticity in the marketplace is frequently met in multiple consumption expressions: art, museum artifacts, ethnic food and restaurants, old downtown renovations, collectibles, retro-style objects (Brown 2001), and leisure experiences (Arnould and Price 1993; Belk and Costa 1998; Costa and Bamossy 2001). As a theoretical concept, however, authenticity is still in the early stages of its conceptualization. A relatively small number of scholarly works has already appeared in anthropology, geography, and tourism. Nevertheless, academic work on authenticity remains vague both in terms of its definition and in its marketing relevance. As Bruner (1994) has noted, authenticity takes multiple forms and thus we can only unpack its meaning by analyzing the context and the specific instance it is used each time.

Consumer researchers have only recently started to investigate authenticity at a theoretical level, relevant to consumption practices. Nevertheless, it still remains a "problematic concept" (Costa and Bamossy 2001). The initial problem consumer researchers are facing is to define what meanings authenticity takes in different consumption contexts. Existing literature on authenticity underscores managerial concerns at the expense of a consumer perspective. With few exceptions (Bagnall 1966; Belk and Costa 1998; McIntosh and Prentice 1999), the majority of the existing studies overemphasize managerial strategies and the steps taken to offer an authentic product, ignoring consumer perceptions of authenticity. The present paper is focused on the concept of authenticity and its interplay with consumption in heritage sites. In this context, our study extends previous efforts to understand the meaning of authenticity from the consumer perspective (Chronis and Hampton 2005) by focusing on the theoretical relevance of perceived authenticity for the consumption payoff.

Ethnographic research was conducted at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, one of the most significant and popular heritage sites in the United States, visited by almost two million people a year. Data collection was accomplished primarily through in-depth personal interviews with visitors at Gettysburg during the summer of 2002. This method was supported by photo-elicitation and personal observation. Visitors were asked to commend on both their experiential consumption benefits and on those aspects of the site that they found particularly involving, captivating, significant, or characteristic of the historical events. Overall, fieldwork at Gettysburg resulted in a total of 75 interviews, 238 photographs, and hundreds of hours of observation. Transcribed interviews offered more than 500 pages of verbal data.

As expected, authenticity was brought up by visitors in multiple occasions, articulating each time different meanings. In this paper we distinguish between authenticity as a characteristic of a heritage site or, in other words, as a "product" feature, and authenticity as an experience. First, as a product feature, authenticity takes one out of five types: object-related, factual, locational, personage, and environmental. Second, in terms of its reference to the consumption experience, authenticity illuminates our theoretical understanding of consumers' connection with the past. Indeed, the most outstanding experiential outcome for a great number of visitors at Gettysburg was a temporary but profoundly intense imaginary flight in the past. As our data show, all five types of site-authenticity bequeath value to the heritage experience at Gettysburg and they help visitors connect with the past.

In recent years, various scholars expressed a modernist anxiety in the form of "kitschy imitations" (Gable and Handler 1996), pseudo-events (Boorstin 1964), and "hyperreality" (Baudrillard 1983; Eco 1986), that underscores managerial effort to "stage" authenticity (MacCannell 1999) and consumers' drive to discover it. Our research shows that authenticity, indeed, might be a concern for consumers during their experiences in the marketplace. Instead of the consumers being preoccupied with authenticity though, our findings show that this is not the case. Rather than being actively engaged in a search for authenticity, visitors at Gettysburg appreciate authenticity as a means to an end: perceived site authenticity is a powerful time machine that connects consumers with the past. In this role, perceived authenticity functions as a mediating concept that triggers consumer imagination. The conceptualization that we offer provides a link between authenticity as a feature of the product and the intangible virtues resulting from the consumers' passionate engagement with an outstanding cultural narrative.

While existing literature suggests that people engage in acts of imagination and the "suspension of disbelief" in order to attain a certain level of authenticity for the whole or parts of the product offering (Costa and Bamossy 2001), our insight at Gettysburg suggests that the reverse can be also true. Instead of having acts of imagination being responsible for the product authentication, perceived authenticity of the product can trigger consumers' imagination and transport them in narrative worlds.

Our research also provides guidance for the appropriate "staging" of authentic sites in both substantive and communicative terms (Arnould, Price, and Tierney 1998). While object-related, locational, and environmental forms of authenticity can be used for the substantive staging of the built environment (authentic artifacts, actual locations, authentically-looking environments), all types of authenticity can be used for the appropriate communicative staging of a consumption experience (through their incorporation into the heritage narrative).

In short, our research shows that in Gettysburg's stimulating context, visitors employ authenticity in its multiple forms as a signifier of a heroic past and as a vehicle for their imaginative engagement in a holistic and multisensory hedonic consumption experience.

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You-Can-Do-It-We-Can-Help: Emancipation Within the Marketplace?

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the marketplace and its allure to consumers. Following the existential-phenomenological interview format, we conducted 11 depth interviews with both male and female consumers to examine their lived experience within the marketplace and in particular, their patronage of Home Depot. Based on Green's view of freedom as combining both negative and positive freedom centering on concepts of opportunity and ability, we find that consumers can potentially begin a perceived journey toward emancipation within the marketplace. We also find that Home Depot, a dominant marketplace player, can portray itself as a benevolent emancipator, empowering consumers to start this perceived emancipatory journey.

INTRODUCTION

The marketplace has gained the attention of many consumer researchers in recent years (Murray and Ozanne 1991; Bristor and Fischer 1993; Hetrick and Lozada 1994; Holt 2002; Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Thompson 2004). The traditional Marxist view portrays the marketplace as dehumanizing (Kozinets 2002) and totalizing (Firat and Venkatesh 1995) and proposes that emancipation occurs when the consumer escapes the marketplace (Hetrick and Lozada 1994) either on his or her own volition or through the urging of consumer activists (Kozinets and Handelman 2004).

Poststructuralists, on the other hand, regard the marketplace as an arena where consumers co-opt marketplace symbols to create their own symbolic resistance and thus work to redefine marketplace meanings. For example, Thompson and Haytko (1997) study how consumers use fashion discourse to recreate meanings and to resist the repressive fashion norms in the marketplace. Thompson (2004) notes the blurred distinction between inside and outside the marketplace and advocates for studying how consumers engage in various discourses of power rather than assessing whether emancipation occurs inside or outside the marketplace.

However, through the idea of "the critical imagination", Murray and Ozanne (1991) conceptually imply that while working well within marketplace ideology, some corporations could align their interests with consumers' interest by critically examining and improving their practices, thus possibly contributing to the allure of the marketplace for consumers. Drawing from this conceptual possibility, this study seeks to contribute to our understanding of the allure of the marketplace through an empirical examination of consumers' perceived liberatory experience within the marketplace.

In this study, we examine a dominant corporation—Home Depot. The premise of this paper is that Home Depot's market positioning enables their customers to begin a perceived journey toward emancipation previously considered to occur solely outside the marketplace. This paper seeks to examine this conceptual possibility introduced by Murray and Ozanne (1991) and thus explore one aspect of marketplace allure.

We draw on the freedom framework of T. H. Green, a British liberal philosopher from the 19th century, as the conceptual lens through which to examine the marketplace. According to Green, an understanding of emancipation can be realized only by integrating the ideas of both negative freedom (freedom from constraints) and positive freedom (freedom to achieve self-realization) (Simhony 1993).

In the next section of this paper, we develop our understanding of emancipation and how it has been applied in the study of marketplace phenomena. This is followed by a development of Green's philosophy of emancipation which serves as the conceptual lens for this paper. This conceptual development is followed by an explanation of our research method and the results that were found.

THEORY

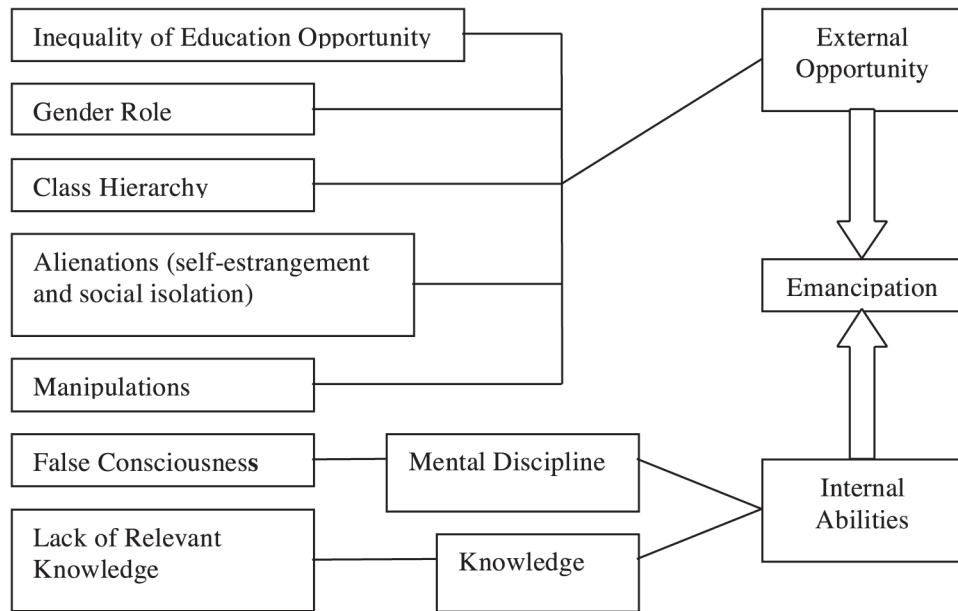
The Marketplace

Escaping the marketplace to be free from its ideology is advocated by the traditional Marxist view. This view argues that a logic of "self-interest" has increasingly undermined "the realization of the caring, sharing, communal ideal" and homogenizes consumers and suppresses their "self-expressive capabilities" (Kozinets 2002, p. 22). Firat (1994) finds that any countercultural ideas and practices could be co-opted by marketers and transformed for their own interests. As such, Firat and Venkatesh (1995) argue that consumers must find social spaces outside the marketplace to achieve emancipation. An example of such a social space is the Burning Man Festival whereby consumers escape the hegemony of the marketplace and its suppressive effects (Kozinets 2002). This is consistent with the view point of consumer activists who seek to awaken consumers from their false consciousness and blindness toward marketplace ideology and urge these consumers to escape its effects (Kozinets and Handelman 2004).

The poststructuralist view presents a slightly different view of the marketplace and emancipation. Consumer resistance occurs whereby consumers co-opt marketplace symbols to redefine meanings without differentiating inside or outside the marketplace. For example, sacred social spaces such as family and religion come to be inter-penetrated with marketplace ideology, so distinguishing between inside and outside the marketplace is difficult in contemporary capitalist society (Thompson 2004). From this perspective, consumers are never dominated by any singular hegemonic discourse (Thompson 2004). In a fragmented postmodern society, consumers use products and services in the marketplace to recreate their own discourses resisting potentially dominant ideologies of the marketplace. For example, Western natural health consumers construct their own microculture (Thompson and Troester 2002) and discourses (Thompson 2004) to challenge the medical authority and resist the dominant ideology. Instead of discussing emancipation inside or outside the marketplace, Thompson advocates understanding "the new opportunities for localized resistance that are produced in this matrix of overlapping discourses of power" (Thompson 2004, p. 173).

Different from the above-mentioned views, Murray and Ozanne (1991) imply the possible attractiveness of the marketplace. They propose an approach of critical imagination whereby consumers can "expose the social dysfunctions of marketing strategies in order to motivate regulation and change" (Murray and Ozanne 1991, p. 139). Similarly, private profit-oriented marketplace players can align their interest with public interests by critically examining their own practices, educating consumers, collaborating with progressive social groups, and thus building an attractive dimension to the marketplace that may potentially appear emancipatory in nature.

FIGURE 1
THE MODEL OF EMANCIPATION BASED ON GREEN'S VIEW OF FREEDOM



Green’s View of Freedom

To explore the allure of the marketplace and the possibility of emancipation, or freedom, this paper draws on Green’s theory of freedom as elaborated by Avital Simhony (1993). According to Green, emancipation (or freedom) occurs when *self-realization occurs*—that is, realizing one’s life themes and life projects that are free from false consciousness. Life themes are consumers’ “profound existential concerns” addressed in their daily life; life projects concern consumers’ self development and meaning systems relating to self and extended self (Mick and Buhl 1992, p. 318). To achieve freedom or self-realization, one needs a combination of internal ability (mental discipline and relevant knowledge) and external opportunity (Simhony 1993). Internal ability is “the ability to structure one’s desire into a coherent system” that is aligned with one’s well-being (Simhony 1993, p. 38). Achieving this internal ability requires mental discipline for breaking free from one’s false consciousness and the knowledge necessary for achieving self-realization. External opportunities include absence of manipulation and equal enabling opportunities to develop and to exercise one’s internal abilities. So, we frame the achievement of emancipation (and self-realization) as centering on internal abilities and external opportunities (refer to the figure 1).

For Green, complete emancipation occurs when both negative and positive freedom have been achieved. Negative freedom is freedom from constraints to self-realization. These constraints may be both external constraints (e.g., coercion, manipulation, lack of external opportunities) and internal constraints (e.g., false consciousness, lack of knowledge necessary for achieving self-realization). Consumers must be free from manipulation and coercion and have equal and sufficient opportunities to learn knowledge and exercise their internal abilities to realize their life themes and life projects. However, being free from these constraints is not enough. Positive freedom, therefore, is the achievement of one’s life themes

and life projects through exercising one’s freedom from the internal and external constraints that may have existed. In this study, we reconceptualize Green’s Utopian ideal of freedom as not an all-or-nothing proposition (i.e., either free from all possible constraints or not free at all), but instead regard emancipation as a process, a journey without necessarily a guarantee of reaching the ideal Utopian state.

Recognizing the adaptability of the marketplace (Holt 2002), the theoretical possibility exists for consumers to start a perceived emancipatory journey (realizing their life themes and life projects) within the boundaries of an ever adapting marketplace. Corporations can potentially tear down *some* internal and external constraints (negative freedom) while aiding consumers in their pursuit of their life themes and projects (positive freedom), in other words, empowering consumers to start a perceived journey toward self-realization inside the marketplace.

Green’s view of freedom provides a useful framework to study the allure of marketplace and emancipation inside the marketplace. We propose that emancipation integrates both negative freedom (*freedom from* internal and external constraints) and positive freedom (*freedom to* realize one’s life themes and life projects by fully developing and exercising one’s internal abilities). Drawing on this framework, we analyze consumers’ own narratives about their experiences and interaction with Home Depot. We explore the following questions: Why is the marketplace alluring? Can consumers start an emancipatory journey inside the marketplace?

METHODOLOGY

For this investigation we sought a site within the marketplace to which consumers flock. Home Depot, founded in 1978, is the world’s biggest home improvement retailer with more than 1500 stores world wide. In growing numbers, consumers flock to Home Depot to “do it yourself” (DIY). The “DIY” theme resonates with

the concept of self-realization and prompted our choosing Home Depot for this investigation. One Canadian store was selected as the research site.

The informants selected were randomly approached in the store and asked for their willingness to participate in this study. They were told that they could select the interview place, refuse to reply to any questions, and stop the interview at any time, and that this study had been approved by the store manager and was independent from Home Depot's sponsorship. Six male consumers and six female consumers who all had at least one year of experience shopping at Home Depot agreed to participate in this study. In the end one female consumer retreated from this study for lack of time.

To understand individuals' lived world inside the marketplace, we followed the existential-phenomenological interview format (Thompson et al. 1989) to attain consumers' first-person description of their marketplace experience with Home Depot as the focus of discussion. This format allowed our informants to freely talk about their personal experience with Home Depot as a social space rich in cultural symbolism (Firat and Venkatesh 1995).

Interviews were conducted at various locations depending on the informant's preference: the informant's home, cafes, and a seminar room and a meeting room at a business school. Each interview began with an introduction of the aim of our study (to explore consumers' understanding of their experience with Home Depot) and then a grand tour question regarding their purchasing experience with Home Depot: "Please tell me something about your purchasing experience with Home Depot." Other questions emerged from the on-going dialogue. The time of the interviews ranged from 50 to 100 minutes.

The analysis of the data followed an iterative process whereby an interpretation of each single interview transcript as a whole unit was conducted, followed by a comparison between the transcripts. Three themes emerged.

FINDINGS

For our informants, Home Depot helps them start an emancipatory journey by tearing down some internal and external barriers while providing our informants an opportunity to achieve their life themes and life projects (self-realization). This apparent emancipatory role by a dominant marketplace player is now explored.

Theme One: A Marxist Arcadia

Ray, a 31 year old paramedic who describes his daily life routine of being on-call to respond to medical emergencies as a combination of "very boring" yet "upsetting", expresses a starkly different vision in his pursuit of life themes and projects. He said: "It's kind of my sanctuary area, my workshop. ... When I build, I just relax. I create and build things. ... I create, just create. I only make paddles. Three hours later, I have made a paddle. ... I love canoeing. I love the sky. So, I am just trying to make paddles to see if they could work properly, and how I could make them better. The hope is that you can make them aesthetic. ... You know what you are doing is interesting." Here, in contrast to his daily life marked by boredom and distress, Ray discusses what for him is the achievement of positive freedom—a life where the day is spent creating paddles that enable him to canoe under the open sky. The place where he "creates" these paddles is not only his "workshop" but also his "sanctuary"—his Arcadia—a social space set aside from his daily life reality where simple and pastoral pleasures, beauty, and creativity can be pursued. Ray is seeking freedom from self-estrangement, in other words, freedom from the inability to find intrinsic values in life's daily pursuits.

For Ray and our other informants, Home Depot provides not only the raw materials but also the moral guidance in the construction of their sanctuaries. Feila, a 48 year old single mother and high school teacher talked about her close familiarity with Home Depot employees as a result of her frequent visits to Home Depot. She said: "I prefer to go to one place [where] I know the people and I know who they are because I need, because I think it is not just a game. ... You know, there is a time when everybody knows everybody in the little community. ... I do think this is personal, hmm, in terms of knowing you as a friend or things like that. It [Home Depot] is just a friendly store."

The marketplace is often referred to as a place of social isolation, exploitation, and dehumanizing encounters to be escaped (Kozinets 2002). But for Feila, her life themes and projects are enhanced by the "little community" feeling she gets at this otherwise gigantic retailer. At Home Depot, she knows the employees and they know her as a "friend".

Feila continued her life story and said: "When I grew up ... we were not allowed to take mechanics and I wanted to do. My brother did the mechanical stuff, my father did the work, you know, the trade parts of a family. So when you think of that type of thing thirty or forty years ago, children would not be encouraged, if you were female, to do certain jobs because of the division of roles." In Feila's past, in another social space and time, there was gender inequality imposed upon her where her brother had the opportunity to learn a trade, but she was denied the opportunity simply because of her gender. This gender inequality meant that Feila, like so many women, lacked the necessary socialization to enable the attainment of equal opportunities later in life (Bristol and Fischer 1993).

Daphne, a 38 year old elementary school teacher elaborates on the hurdle that gender inequality creates in her pursuit of her life projects. When going to other home renovation stores with her husband, she notes, "They are almost talking down to me ... I hate that kind of thing. It bothers me. It bothers me because they judge me incorrectly based on the fact that I am a female." Her opportunity to learn and grow is stunted as employees of other stores look past her to speak to her husband. But when she refers to Home Depot, a very different chord is played. She said: "But I don't get the same feeling at Home Depot. ... That's one reason why I go there because I don't feel like they are looking at me and thinking 'Why are you (as a woman) doing this?'"

For Feila and Daphne, Home Depot transcends past and present gender injustices enacted by others, enabling our informants to pursue their life themes and life projects free from gender discrimination. In Feila's word, Home Depot is "sexless".

According to our informants, gender is not the only social issue associated with Home Depot. Byron, a 30 year old physician described his roaming experiences at Home Depot and said: "I like *dressing down*, putting on the purple jeans, maybe they are dirty, maybe they are greasy, or full of saw dust, going into Home Depot, drinking my coffee, shopping for stuff, [and] talking shopping with people who know shopping. This is something completely different from my career. I enjoy doing that." Byron, an upper income professional shares his experience of escaping the familiarity of his career by "*dressing down*" into clothes symbolic of a working class laborer and connecting with people as social equals—"drinking coffee" and "talking shopping". Byron seeks out Home Depot on his distinct (from his regular career) journey towards his life themes and projects. Unlike his work environment of clear social class distinctions and professional hierarchy, Byron seeks out the egalitarian atmosphere of Home Depot, actively playing the part of a laborer with his dirty, greasy, and saw dust filled jeans. Feila underscores this egalitarian atmosphere at Home Depot when she

describes it as a place where “people come together. It doesn’t matter who you are”. For these informants, Home Depot is an egalitarian, working class social space where all class barriers are removed.

In this first theme, we find that Home Depot is intricately tied to our informants’ pursuit of their life themes and projects—their Arcadias that are distinctly removed from the reality of their daily lives. For these informants, positive freedom is achieved in a social space where simple, aesthetic pursuits fill one’s days. But even more, Home Depot instills this social space with Marxist ideals of social interaction and familiarity, and gender and class equality. Home Depot presents a Marxist Arcadia where informants can achieve their life themes and projects, free from social, gender, and class constraints. What does Home Depot do to become so revered by these informants?

Theme Two: A Temple of Knowledge

Rather than just being a retailer that sells building supplies and provides functional product and price information, for our informants, Home Depot is where one goes to seek emancipatory knowledge—knowledge that empowers one to transcend the constraints of daily life.

When describing her interaction with Home Depot employees, Daphne said: “They are like my friends telling me about, you know, just like someone who happens to have a lot of work experience here, making fences or whatever. It is not that I am the stupid one. ‘This is (I am) a person that doesn’t know it at all.’ This is not teaching... You know, [it is] more sharing.” For her, Home Depot employees “share” their knowledge that they gained from their own hands-on experience (making fences, or whatever). But she is not left feeling inept or unworthy. She feels like one of the workers, engaging in a dialogue where experiences and knowledge are shared. Rene, a 60 year old retired teacher, goes further in describing her interaction with Home Depot employees. She said: “They will let you see [that] you don’t really need ceiling lights though you really want them.” In fact, Rene tried to buy a fancy ceiling light for her bedroom but one employee persuaded her not to buy it because he thought that she didn’t really need it according to her description of her bedroom. From our informants’ perspective, the information they gain from Home Depot employees is starkly contrasted with manipulating sales pitches. The employees don’t try to sell you what you don’t need. Instead, the informants feel they receive important knowledge—emancipatory knowledge that can guide them with their life projects.

In addition to the informal interactions between customers and employees, Home Depot also offers regular workshops for both adults and children. These workshops offer equal opportunities for men and women, and boys and girls to gain emancipatory knowledge. According to Feila, “they [workshop leaders] are *encouraging* everyone to make their own choices by teaching [participants] how to use certain things. And they make it sound easy... It allows, it *empowers* females to do more.”

These workshops provide information, guidance, and training that “empowers” our informants to transcend the barriers of their daily lives. The workshop leaders encourage women to do projects by themselves and so help them break the stereotype of gender role, *one* type of false consciousness which is initially imposed on women and then might be internalized by some of them. With the encouragement and education of Home Depot, Feila continually tries new projects and develops new skills which were considered to be men’s skills.

So enthralled with the emancipatory potential of these workshops, Feila is enthused to have her daughter attend the child workshops offered around holiday themes. She said: “They just

take that step [teaching children about structures and tool applications in the clinics] into our community, as a part of our community, basically allowing our kids to do it themselves. Dates like Christmas, March Break, Father’s Day and Mother’s Day. These kinds of dates are for kids, always the time for them to come together.” Home Depot emerges as a community elder, entrusted with imparting potentially emancipatory knowledge to the children “allowing our kids to do it themselves”. In a certain sense, as Feila hopes, Home Depot helps the young girls avoid accepting the stereotype of gender role, a historical product of the male-dominated society.

But Home Depot is not only a place where emancipatory knowledge is imparted. It is also a place where our informants can seek knowledge—roam and find their way. Byron related his experience in Home Depot compared to shopping malls and said: “I don’t know why, but I find that crowds stress me out. I find that in many shopping malls ... I find it very straining, stressful, and exhausting to be around a lot of people. But in Home Depot, I will definitely get a cup of coffee, go in, roam around, maybe just get a hamburger, go back in and roam around again, and I leave with what I need.” Compared to stores in malls, he feels free and comfortable to eat, drink, and roam—free from stress and sales pressure. Replete with food, drink, and the dirtiest working clothes he can find, he presents a vision of himself wandering, roaming carefree around Home Depot discovering knowledge that helps him transcend the constraints of his daily stressful life.

For our informants, Home Depot is a Temple of Knowledge where emancipatory knowledge is imparted and discovered by those willing to make a pilgrimage. It is where one can take a journey to roam, free from stress and judgment, to gain knowledge that can help its recipient to transcend the constraints of daily life. In this Temple of Knowledge, social constraints such as gender roles (both imposed-upon and internalized) and class hierarchy are collapsed and the lost community is re-established. It empowers its followers with opportunities and abilities to achieve freedom.

Theme Three: A Benevolent Emancipator

In summing up their experiences, our informants present Home Depot as a Benevolent Emancipator—the friendly wise sage who only has the students’ interest at heart. They perceive no manipulation at Home Depot. Byron noted that Home Depot does not “target our own vulnerabilities with deceptive ads” such as the ads of Marlboro which indicate “You will be cool if you smoke like a Marlboro Man.” He said: “I haven’t felt a strong marketing pull to Home Depot to buy anything I don’t need, to buy anything cool.” According to Fred, “They (Home Depot employees) are not pushy and that’s nice. You get a more genuine feeling that they are really there to help you... In my experience, they do try to minimize my cost too”. Home Depot is presented as a friend with no hidden self-interests, but only a genuine desire to help.

Symbolic of their trusted presence, Home Depot employees wear aprons symbolic of the shop floor worker whose concern is focused on his craft, not profit. The apron comes to embody the Home Depot employee’s focus on his trade. Further, this Home Depot employee, particularly compared to other stores, is considered “mature” (Fred) where employees of other stores are regarded as “kids” (Ray).

What emerges is a portrayal of the Home Depot employee as an experienced, mature craftsperson, focused on his trade, bereft of worldly possessions, but rich with knowledge, interested only in sharing knowledge that will benefit his pupils in their pursuit of their life projects. The Home Depot employee is not driven by greedy self-interest. The Home Depot employee is the benevolent, sagely, (grand) fatherly figure concerned only for the emancipation of his apprentices.

DISCUSSION

Faced with the perceived negative and positive freedom presented by a dominant marketplace player such as Home Depot, we gain some insight into why the marketplace is so alluring to consumers. It must be noted that Holt's (2002) argument that the marketplace is able to adapt to provide consumers with what they *think* they need, certainly resonates. In other words, the argument can well be made that our informants have not achieved "true" emancipation. However, while the marketplace has been described as a dehumanizing and totalizing space or as an arena full of discourse contests between consumers and marketers, our findings present a large marketplace player, Home Depot, helping consumers start a perceived journey toward emancipation by offering external opportunities (equality of gender and classes, freedom from social-isolation, and manipulation) and enhancing their internal abilities via transferring emancipatory knowledge. It is such knowledge that leads the way towards the realization of life themes (e.g., creativity, self-development, independence, and equality) and life projects, and thus, emancipation. This provides intriguing insight into the allure of the marketplace.

Our findings indicate that, as Murray and Ozanne (1991) imply, a perceived journey toward emancipation within the marketplace is possible and that corporations can play an active role in this process. How can other potential emancipators such as activists compete with the benevolence of a marketplace player like Home Depot? They might need to do the same things necessary for consumers to experience both negative and positive freedom: offering equal enabling opportunities and transferring emancipatory knowledge to enhance consumers' abilities.

When we use the phrase "a journey toward emancipation", we mean that emancipation is an ongoing process that occurs over time where some constraints are overcome, others still exist, and some new ones might be constructed at the same time or later. Here, emancipation is not conceived as an either-or issue whereby consumers are either emancipated by escaping the marketplace or still enslaved within the marketplace ideology.

This research has attempted at least a small look into the role that marketplace actors (such as Home Depot) can play in the emancipation of consumers (Murray and Ozanne 1991). Future research could also examine other forms of alienation—powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, and cultural estrangement (Seeman 1975), and other types of false consciousness, and how they might possibly be overcome within the marketplace.

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Brand Literacy: Consumers' Sense-Making of Brand Management

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ABSTRACT

In cultures where brands play important roles for consumers' identity construction, people learn how to relate to and use brands 'knowingly.' Through the process of learning to consume brands in ways that are recognizable by the consumer culture, consumers develop brand literacy. Based on contemporary studies in literacy, this paper develops the concept of brand literacy. We trace the historical reasons why such literacy emerges and illustrate from a research study the different levels of brand literacy, and discuss the implications for consumers' engagement and experiences with contemporary consumption life and culture.

INTRODUCTION

Research in consumer culture has provided important insights into the role brands play in consumers' everyday lives (Fournier 1998; Kates 2004). Today, it is widely acknowledged that brands are not just differentiating marks that help consumers to choose one brand against another, but are also—and indeed more significantly—cultural signs that supply people with individual identities (Elliott and Wattanasuwan 1998), and collective identities through brand communities (McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). We have learned that brands are meaningful to consumers not just because they are strategically managed by companies, but because consumers incorporate them into their lives and add their own idiosyncratic stories to them (Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry Jr. 2003). In contrast to contemporary strategic brand management models (Kapferer 2004; Keller 2003), research on consumer brand cultures has illustrated how brands are co-constituted through a dialectical process between the consumer culture and the companies' branding efforts (Holt 2002). Brands, in effect, have acquired, with the changes in consumer culture (Lury 1996; Slater 1997), the status of cultural institution, signaling a constellation of cultures of brand, playing the role of signifying and communicating messages and images that are now often globally read, contested and navigated. As argued by some, while people across cultures are sometimes unable to communicate due to language differences, often understanding each other is possible when brand names, such as *Coca Cola* or *Kleenex* or *Levi's* or *Beckham*, are uttered (Hildebrand 1998; Holt, Quelch, and Taylor 2004).

In an iconic consumer culture where brands become important resources for social interaction, consumers develop knowledge and competences in the peculiarities of consuming brands 'knowingly' in a given social context. In this way, consumers develop something we call *brand literacy* and become increasingly skilled in relating to and using brands in a way that is recognizable by the consumer culture. We define brand literacy as *the ability of the consumer to decode the strategies used in marketing practices in introducing, maintaining and reformulating brands and brand images, which then, further enables the consumer to engage with these processes within their cultural settings.*

According to the literature on literacy (Bernardo 2000; Street 1999; White 1984), three degrees of literacy are needed for complete literacy. The first degree of literacy is the "reading," the ability to decipher the words (signs, in the broader meaning of literacy) in their systemic unity in order to make sense and understand their complete meaning. A second degree is the "writing," the ability to compose signs into a set that transmits the meaning intended. This

second degree of literacy is needed to improve the first degree, since by "writing" one gets to recognize the intricacies of composition, thus becoming more capable to recognize the strategies and methods employed by the "author" of what is being read and, thereby, having an improved capability to read analytically, in between and behind the "lines." Finally, a third degree of literacy is the ability to embed one's reading and writing in particular cultures. Thereby, the literate person can judge how and why novel reconstructions s/he may attempt are likely to be interpreted, decoded and understood by those s/he is trying to communicate with. When one has all three degrees mastered, then s/he is best able to become a participant in the design of signs and, thus, culture, and not simply a receiver.

LITERACY IN SOCIAL LIFE

Literacy is an important concept in many areas of social life. As discussed, in literacy studies, it refers not merely to the act of reading and writing printed language, but also to the ability to extract and process complex meanings in a sociocultural context (Bernardo 2000). While literacy traditionally was considered a cognitive process, isolated from social and cultural interaction, there is an increasing acknowledgement that literacy is embedded in activities and practices of a community. In this way, literacy is an active and creative process that allows the individual to participate in social and intellectual practices (White 1984). Literacy has come to embrace skills and competencies in a variety of areas of social life, such as computing, film and politics (Street 1999). The multifaceted employment of the concept makes it necessary to define it in the context where it is developed and put to use. For as Street (1999, p. 38) writes: "within a given cultural domain there may be many literacy practices, that is, not one culture, one literacy."

Theories of literacy have also been used in marketing and consumer research where *advertising literacy* has been introduced as a concept for understanding peoples' advertising experiences (O'Donohoe and Tynan 1998). Ritson and Elliott (1995) use literacy theory and propose a model of advertising literacy. Their model is based on a 'practice account of literacy' which involves meaning construction in the individual domain and an 'event accounts of literacy' which involves meaning construction of self and group identity in the social realm. Their model of advertising literacy emphasizes how readers of advertisements are active co-creators of advertising meanings that display an ability to read, co-create and act on polysemic meanings from ads (Ritson and Elliott 1995). While advertising literacy is an important concept addressing consumers' ability to read and make sense of *advertising*, it does not embrace the skills and competencies that are necessary for consuming *brands* 'knowingly' in a cultural context. Sense making of advertising can indeed be an important aspect of consumers' encounters with branded goods but is not the only facet of brands that people experience through their consumption.

Brand literacy is acquired in many ways; through everyday consumption of branded goods and advertising, through social interaction with other people, and through experiences in cultures in which brands are prominently displayed through multiple media. There are historical reasons why brand literacy has developed in contemporary culture. We shall first explore this history, then try to develop an understanding of brand literacy itself. Finally, we shall

discuss how brand literacy can be understood in the context of consumers' sense making of co-branding and the implications it has for consumers.

HISTORICAL REASONS FOR BRAND LITERACY

Different consumers develop knowledge about brands in different categories of products. Some consumers, for example, have a high degree of knowledge in automobile brands and others in brands of wine. Partially, such knowledge may depend upon the person's interests due to occupation or hobby or relations to someone in the "business." How brands work and the designing of strategies behind brands may thus be gained through such special interest in a product category. Of greatest interest to us in this paper, however, is the lay consumer's literacy of brands, gained for reasons of pure consumer interest; that is, literacy based not on obvious reasons, such as occupation, but on consumption experiences.

Why does such brand literacy develop? Why do so many people in our world today care to care about brands? The origins of these complex phenomena can be partially traced in the development of modernity, and specifically, in modern consumer culture. Modernity's project is one of emancipating the human being from all impositions; originally of nature and, then, also of all restrictions and oppressive obligations inscribed in erstwhile social orders (Russell 1972/1945). Through such emancipation, humanity can, with the use of scientific discoveries and technologies, take control of its own destiny to build a society that provides all the conditions enabling all individuals to fulfill their utmost potentials and visions (Habermas 1983). In effect, the modern project is to realize a grand future for humanity. Such a project required that all individuals be able to practice their own free will (Rorty 1979). The result of efforts to find and implement principles to make this project a reality, efforts in both the discursive and practical domains of human life and society, specifically in western cultures, has been the growth of *individualization*, *commoditization*, *consumerization*, and *marketization* (Slater 1997). These phenomena, in turn, have constituted the foundations of the institutionalization of brands.

The idea of the modern market has been integral to the quest of the modern project (Angus 1989). In modern thought, the market is envisioned as a *mechanism* (Slater 1997) that allows free sellers and buyers to come together and exchange their resources without any prior or subsequent obligations to each other. They need not know each other, be obliged or bound to each other in any way. Thus, the idea is that through this market mechanism, all individuals become free agents who can obtain what they want and can afford, according to their own free wills, not having to feel or have any obligations that could thwart their wills. With the growth of the market, then, that is through marketization of more and more human interactions, free agency of the human individual is enhanced.

With marketization comes the individualization of the modern human subject. By freeing the individual from all obligations that institutionally tie her/him to others and others' wills, individuality becomes more possible as does the capability to act as an individual. Thus, each individual is further enabled to act one's free will and constitute oneself as distinct and different from others; this emancipation of the individual being a principle inscribed deeply in the ideology of modern human rights.

This theoretically meritorious idea(l) of freeing the individual through the market requires the other two phenomena of commoditization and consumerization. Commoditization, that is the separation of the objects or items of use from their producers and the processes by which they are created (Marx 1976/1867), is necessary so that those who exchange for them can possess them without any linkages; the commodities stand on their own and are

considered to contain, in themselves, the qualities that their possessors seek in them. Thus, possessing and using them is an independent act that involves only the possessor and the commodity, and nothing or no one else.

Consumerization, that is the separation of the individual from the process of production of what is used, is, then, another necessity for the existence of modern markets. Consumerization enhances the freedom to have and use commodities of all kinds, which means non-reliance on solely one's own production, and provides the ability to consume what others produce and are willing to exchange. This separation from production of commodities consumed means that individuals relate to most of the items they consume in modern society simply as consumers. Thus, as people become consumers, acquiring what they use, the market expands its existence and individualization is furthered (Firat and Dholakia 1998; Slater 1997).

The above phenomena in modern culture are responsible for the development and institutionalization of brands and brand cultures as much as, if not more so than, the manufacturers' (marketers' in general) need to establish recognition and relations with their customers. Indeed, the principle of the individual's emancipation from all that did and could repress one's free will, and, thus, her/his ability to decide his/her own destiny, partaking in social choices, has been and is one of the most voiced and revered idea(l)s of our time. Much of this freedom of the will has come to focus on consumption choices (Dholakia and Dholakia 1985) thanks to marketization, individualization, commoditization and consumerization, along with the increased centrality of the economic in modern culture and, thereby, greater ability to consume increasingly coming to define improvement of human lives. Consumption has also become the locus of exhibiting individuality with greater rationalization of workplaces and, thus, increasingly routine and homogenized work-lives for the large majority of people during production.

Consequently, for people seeking to express their individuality in and through what they consume, brands, especially those that represent the categories of consumption they find expressive—for this can be different for different people—have provided the ground for articulating symbolic meanings, identities and, thus, individuality (Lears 1994). In a consumer culture where practically everyone has access to all product categories in a mass-market, distinguishing marks tend to be more easily found or inscribed in brands than in products.

When the history of brands is studied, certain patterns are recognized. First branded products appealed most to upper classes, thus becoming signs of distinction for the superordinate groups in society. Similar to fashion, brands exhibited a trickle-down process (Simmel 1904), where the upper classes first adopted premium brands that later diffused to subordinate groups. While the brand owners' original intention for brands may have mostly been to distinguish their products from others, brands fast became signs of distinction for consumers. Thus, the brand has always been a part of the symbolic consumption system. Specifically, the brand name or icon is a signifier that simultaneously becomes a sign—a union of the signifier and the signified a la Saussure (Barthes 1967)—for any recognition of the brand immediately conjures up associations. As a signifier, however, the brand is a free-floating expression, for at the same time or through time it may be associated with varying meanings (signified).

Given this history of development and institutionalization, what is a brand today? It is no longer simply a sign of ownership of the brand by those who manufacture or distribute it, but an *iconic sign* that constellates images that serve as a means by which people have life experiences and meanings, and through which these

cultural values and meanings are communicated. The construction of this sign is only partially controlled by the marketer who is the owner of the brand. The complete brand is the result of cultural processes whereby other players negotiate the meanings and contribute to its articulation (Holt 2004), which is, in effect, always in the process of being constructed however stable it may seem at times.

In contemporary times, the increasing prominence of brands in people's lives is also a sign(al) that an iconographic culture is on the rise—meaning that in the articulation of distinctions made and the hierarchical significance of these distinctions, iconic imagery plays an increasingly dominant role. In language, literature, films, in all cultural media, communication of what is what and who is who becomes most prominently and easily accomplished through elicitation of iconic brands (Friedman 1985). Iconic brands, of which there are now so many, used in this manner, also contribute to the growth of the iconographic culture, a culture where meanings are relayed less and less through sets of words (signs in general) constructed according to linguistic (or more generally, semiotic) rules of formulating analytically logical connections and, thus, sense making unit(ie)s, but more and more through iconic signs that at once conjure up images that transmit meanings and elicit senses that can be felt as well as cognitively processed.

This phenomenon further indicates the necessity of expanding the meaning of literacy as we discuss brand literacy, where “reading” (sensing) and “writing” (constructing/composing) in an iconographic culture require more than abilities related to understanding and using of words, where participating in brand cultures requires abilities related to a multiplicity of signs that impact on all senses—sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. Brand literacy requires, what has been called, (multi)signefficacy (Firat 1996).

Therefore, those who are most brand literate today are the ones who are privileged in having (multi)signefficacy. While this is a necessary condition for high brand literacy, it is not the only variable in acquiring brand literacy. Additionally, similar to distinctions between those who are fashion oriented, whose actions are informed by their concern for and reactions to fashion, and those who largely remain uninformed about fashion, there are distinctions between those who care about and those who remain uninformed about brands. Furthermore, there are different degrees and types of involvement with and literacy of brands. Therefore, the question arises as to whether the culture will favor those who care about brands or those who do not. In the case of the persistence of an iconographic culture, the use of iconic signs, thus of brands, and the influence of those who can make such use expertly is likely to increase.

BRAND CULTURES IN HISTORICAL RETROSPECT

While market exchanges have constituted a common characteristic of human life for several thousands of years, the culture of branded goods—especially as articulated in contemporary marketing literature—is a relatively recent phenomenon. Mass produced branded goods gradually became more readily available in the late Nineteenth Century in United States (Strasser 1989). The reason why manufacturer brands became a viable phenomenon, as well as desirable for their legal owners is generally explained by a number of macro-environmental changes, such as industrialization and urbanization that brought new innovations, improved transportation and, not the least, mass consumption (Low and Fullerton 1994).

An important aspect of consumer cultures is recognized to be that people desire a good not just because of the utilitarian value of the commodity, but also for its symbolic capacity, such as enabling the individual to express social status or to construct and maintain

self identity (Belk 1988). In this symbolic market (Levy 1959), the availability of branded goods is not a prerequisite for such processes to occur. In the Eighteenth Century, when branded goods were still rare, consumption became increasingly complex as people were encouraged to select from a variety of styles and colors (Breen 1993). With the introduction of *branded* goods, however, distinctions among competing goods were intensified and, given the history of the market discussed earlier, consumers were encouraged to also consider the brand in their consumption decisions.

Since the early days of mass produced branded goods in the United States, a common feature of brands has been the claim and/or expectation of consistency. When branded food products gradually became available from around 1850 in United States, consumers learned that, unlike grocery products that could be bought in bulk by the merchant and then by the consumer, branded goods promised a consistent quality that should not vary from one purchase to another (Strasser 1989). As Miller's (1998, p 142) research illustrates, the issue of consistency and predictability (cf. Ritzer 1993) is, today, still an important feature of branded goods. In a world that is rapidly changing, where consumer identities are found to be fluid and constantly rearticulated (Bauman 2001), brands become powerful because they help consumers to anchor their identity projects (Elliott and Wattanasuwan 1998).

BRAND LITERACY

Consistent with contemporary viewpoints of literacy, brand literacy refers to the ability of the consumer to make sense of and compose the signs of a brand culture, and to understand the meaning systems that are at play. More specifically, this means that the consumer's understanding of the brand goes beyond the immediate surface meanings of the words and symbols associated with the brand. Consumers who exhibit literacy of a brand know that the brand name and the symbols associated with it are not just signs used to distinguish one manufacturer from another, but signs that carry complex cultural meanings. These cultural meanings are produced throughout the life of the brand where consumers and cultural intermediaries contribute to the cumulative (re)formulation of the brand. For instance, a person who demonstrates literacy of the Lacoste brand knows that this is the classical brand for polo shirts that was launched by the French tennis player René Lacoste in 1933. In addition to knowing the history of the brand, brand literacy also includes the ability of the consumer to relate to the brand's contemporary status in his/her imagined consumption context. For the Lacoste literate consumer, this ability can consist of a flair for effective use of the brand and sensitivity towards the connotation it may generate in his/her consumption context.

How does brand literacy relate to other concepts such as *brand awareness*, *brand image*, *brand loyalty*, *brand relationship*, and *involvement with branded goods* which deal with peoples' brand behaviors? Our argument is that these concepts are all important components of brand literacy, but they are not in themselves an indication whether or not the consumer has acquired brand literacy. In order to play a role in a specific brand culture—that is a context in which a particular brand is socially constructed—it is important that the consumer has an understanding of what other people think and feel about the brand. By definition, each and every consumer who has awareness of a brand has an image of the brand that may be influenced by certain associations. However, while a brand image generally refers to the perceptions of the brand held in consumer memory (Dobni and Zinkhan 1990) it does not take into account whether or not this image is cognizant of the cultural meanings the brand has in the particular consumption context. Because consumers oftentimes personalize the meaning of a brand through consumption rituals, a brand image can be more or less idiosyncratic.

TABLE 1
Levels of literacy

Levels of literacy		
Low	Medium	High
Consumer may buy and consume brands but has no or little knowledge of the symbolic meanings brands have acquired in the culture	Consumer has ability to read and understand the cultural meanings and strategies underlying brands	Ability to fully participate in the culture of brands. Consumer does not just follow the cultural meanings, but is able to reformulate and play with them

Our conception of a brand literate consumer is one that is able to articulate and spell out the culturally agreed meaning and to consume the brand in ways that, therefore, make him/her effective in the cultural context. Similar to that of a brand image, involvement with branded goods (cf. Coulter, Price, and Feick 2003), brand loyalty, and brand relationship are not in themselves evidences of brand literacy. Though it is likely that a consumer who has acquired brand literacy also shows signs of involvement with a brand, one can easily imagine a consumer who is heavily involved with a brand but has limited understanding of how the brand—according to the brand connoisseurs—can effectively be consumed. When it comes to loyalty and brand relationship, it is easy to envision that a consumer who continues to buy a brand from time to time and who has developed strong emotional attachments to a brand may nevertheless have little interest in getting acquainted with the brand's socially constructed meaning.

Furthermore, given that literacy is a multidimensional construct that emerges in specific social settings, it is appropriate to distinguish between various levels of literacy. In Table 1, we outline three levels of literacy, determined by skills of reading, writing, and ability to embed this reading and writing in the culture. As seen above, on the one hand, there are consumers who do not care to care about brands and remain outside of the iconographic culture in which brands play a major role. On the other hand, we have the brand connoisseurs who are heavily involved with brands and who know how to play effectively with brands in consumer cultures. In between these two extremes, we can identify a circumscribed level of brand literacy where consumers are able to read and follow the culture of brands, but have limited ability to formulate and articulate its meaning to become effective players in it. These different levels of brand literacy will result in different consumer relations with brands and, also, different forms of consumer engagement with the culture of brands (cf. Fournier 1998). We wish to explore these potential relations and forms of engagement in the rest of the paper.

UNMASKING BRANDING PROCESSES

One of the main goals of brand management has been to provide a basis for differentiation from competitors' products. In brand management literature, it is generally suggested that successful differentiation on product attributes is not a source of long term differentiation, since these attributes can easily be copied by competitors. In a market where competing firms have access to the same technological solutions, competition moves to the symbolic domain where brand owners seek to differentiate their brands through attributes that relate to consumers' emotional states. In this way, branding becomes a way to nurture perceived symbolic differences that speak to consumers' desires. Indeed, brands provide people with a variety of benefits. During shopping, well known brands help

consumers to make decisions instantly, where tried and trusted brands are oftentimes chosen without much consideration because of their record of consistent delivery in past experience. Hence, brands tend to display and inform consumers of certain features, whereas some other features of the product are hidden. When no obvious or important differences exist at the product level, branding becomes an important tool for managers who seek to relate their brands to symbolic differences perceived by consumers. In this context, brand literacy becomes an important skill. As companies execute their branding strategies, over time *some* consumers become more knowledgeable about the principles of and the techniques for branding processes partaking in the institution and constitution of brands. Sophisticated forms of brand literacy make consumers potent, for example, to unmask the processes that may be hidden behind the brand façade (Dholakia 2004).

Consumers with a high level of brand literacy are able to unmask the branding processes that may blur the properties of the product. For instance, in the food industry, many manufacturers supply their products to retailers not with their own brand but with the retailer's brand—the private brand. In the same grocery store, it is sometimes possible to find a product from the same manufacturer both under the manufacturer's brand name and in a version using the retailer's brand. Although the actual product may be identical, the similarities between the products are hidden through branding processes that add packaging and symbolic content. Some consumers are aware of the fact that many manufacturers also produce retailer brands and may therefore conclude that there is no point in paying a premium price for a manufacturer brand when basically the same product can be acquired at a lower price. Some manufacturers, for instance *Kellogg's*, go as far as advertising to consumers that they do not supply retailer brands. The fact that *Kellogg's* and others need to so advertise indicates that a not insignificant segment of consumers have acquired enough brand literacy in order to unmask this particular branding process. If people did not have the knowledge that sometimes two branded goods are manufactured by the same company, there would not have been a need for *Kellogg's* to run such advertisements. This is an example that indicates how brand management has to respond to brand literacy.

Consumers at different levels of brand literacy can also be expected to react differently and relate differently to brands. In a research conducted to understand how consumers relate to co-branded products—products where two or more brands are used in conjunction—at least three distinct orientations have been found in relation to levels of brand literacy.

RESEARCH AND FINDINGS

The goal of the research was to collect empirical accounts of consumers' sense-making of co-branded products. In this context, co-branded products refer to marketplace co-operations where two

or more brands are used as co-endorsers for the product (Askegaard and Bengtsson 2005). By exploring the ways in which consumers understand and relate to this particular form of marketplace cooperation we were able to demonstrate the different levels of brand literacy. An important goal for this study was to include consumers with first hand experience from consuming co-branded products. Consumers were recruited in two different grocery stores after they had been observed buying at least one co-branded product. Consumers who agreed to participate in the study were later contacted for in-home interviews. Phenomenological interviews (Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989) were conducted with each consumer at his/her home in order to elicit the lived experience of co-branded products. Each interviewee was interviewed for a total of four to six times, for one to two hours each time, over a six-month period. Through this multi-interview approach, it was possible to elicit how brand literacy was acquired. Thus, the data consist of interviews of seven consumers living in a large city in western United States. The selected interviewees represent a variety of ages, incomes, education levels, religions, and both sexes.

Our analysis of the data collected indicates that consumers at different levels of brand literacy construct at least three different categories of stories that justify or rationalize their relations to co-brands. There is an almost exact correspondence between the three levels of brand literacy and the three types of stories we elicited from the interviews. Consumers who showed a low level of brand literacy produced, what we call, *production stories* about co-brands. In these stories, the interviewees understood co-branding primarily as a way of sourcing primary products, where one of the brands is portrayed as supplier of a product that is bought by the other brand (or the company behind this brand) in order to be used as an ingredient in the product which the consumer is buying. For instance, a recently retired woman expressed that she thought the visual display of the chocolate brand Hershey's in a Betty Crocker brownie mix had to do with supply of the chocolate ingredient. She thought Betty Crocker bought the chocolate from Hershey's and then put the brand name on the package. In her opinion this procedure was a good solution where Hershey could sell their chocolate through another brand. As this example illustrates, production stories reflects a low level of brand literacy where co-branding is understood as a way for companies to manage their sourcing of primary products whereas understanding of the marketing logic that drives companies to initiate co-branding agreements is very limited. Consumers who had brand literacy at the medium level produced, what we call, *strategic stories*. Here the consumers provide analytical interpretations of co-branding activities by companies, explaining why and how their practices may or may not make sense and how it may influence their idea about the brands. For instance, a woman expressed her thoughts about the Betty Crocker brownie mix with Hershey's syrup and concluded that her idea of Betty Crocker had changed because of the kind of business co-operation the brand has with Hershey's through the co-branding activity. She had always thought of Betty Crocker as a homespun brand but now when it seems to be fairly business oriented, entering partnerships with other brands to improve profits, the warm, fuzzy feelings she associated with the brand changed. Finally, consumers with high levels of literacy produced, what we call, *critical stories*. Here, consumers exhibit an ability to critically question companies' co-branding efforts. In the research, consumers at this level of literacy indicated an understanding that co-branding has marketing implications but rejected or criticized this practice as a symbolic game that intended to make the products more appealing to consumers. Related to this rejection was the understanding that behind many brands there are multinational conglomerates that control

many of the brands in the marketplace. Co-branding was therefore seen as an opportunistic display of two brand symbols when it made sense from a marketing perspective. The reason co-branding is seen as opportunistic is that when such display is not favorable—such as the example of a display of Philip Morris on Kraft Foods—the link is kept secret so that consumer do not make a connection between the two companies and their brands. Other examples of critical stories occur when consumers critically evaluate a marketing organization's policies, offering strategies to better articulate or improve the brand.

IMPLICATIONS OF BRAND LITERACY

As literacy in general influences the individual's relations to/ in society, brand literacy affects the relationships consumers have with brands and with consumption in general. In a growing iconographic culture, consumers' brand literacy influences their degree of effective involvement in the images, strategies, and use of brands, and the degree to which they can impact on companies' policies. We see from the research on co-branding, for example, that consumers at different levels of brand literacy employ different levels of interpretation strategies. Interpretation, in dealing with understanding brands involves processes of juxtaposition (matching, comparing and contrasting of the values and beliefs of consumer's culture with the perceived signs from the marketer, resulting in temporary or longer-term co-existence of meanings), resistance (intended ignoring or critical refutation of perceived meanings of the signs), and transformation (intentional or unintentional reconfiguration of the signs or their intended meanings), similar to consumers' involvement in fashion (Thompson and Haytko 1997). Consumers at higher levels of brand literacy, as they move from production to strategic to critical stories about brands, also tend to employ more of the interpretation strategies and with greater depth. With increasing brand literacy, the consumers' reactions in terms of appropriating, interpreting, negotiating, and constructing signs and their attached meanings regarding the co-brand take different forms. Consumers encountering the stories emanating from the marketing organization's promotional efforts for the brand tend to juxtapose these to stories from other brand cultures, transform them in the process of appropriation, or resist them with greater intensity as their brand literacy grows.

Brand literacy is and will likely increasingly become a significant element in consumers' life experiences. Indeed, one can choose not to care to care about brands and let others acquire literacy about brands. However, in consumer cultures that are permeated with brands and where brands are important vehicles for social interaction, it becomes apparent that brand literacy is an important skill in everyday life that becomes difficult to opt out of. We recommend, therefore, a focus on this construct, developing a greater understanding of it through further articulation of its dimensions and, also, measures or scales of it, in order to appreciate fully its role in contemporary consumers' lives.

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How Do Consumers Interpret Market Leadership Claims in Direct-to-Consumer Advertising of Prescription Drugs?

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ABSTRACT

Claims such as “most prescribed” are commonly made by top-selling prescription drug brands in their direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertising. Under the FDA’s current policy, sponsors may present “market leadership claims” (MLCs) with only sales data to support the claim. This paper examines how MLCs might affect consumers’ product judgments and whether such claims evoke unwarranted inferences and beliefs about the superiority of the leading brand.

Results of two studies suggest that market leadership claims in DTC advertising signal greater trust of the brand among prescribing doctors and imply superior product effectiveness under conditions when supporting survey and clinical data to support such inferences have not been provided.

ADVERTISING OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS?

Prescription drug advertising has become increasingly consumer-directed in recent years, and the industry spent \$4.2 billion on “direct to consumer” (DTC) advertising in 2004 in the U.S.—an increase of nearly 30% from 3.2 billion in 2003 (Boston Globe, March 2, 2005). Market Leadership claims (MLCs) are commonly used in DTC prescription drug advertising; many of the top-selling brands in several categories (e.g., Celebrex, Zolof, Avandia, and others) make claims of market leadership to differentiate themselves from competition. (For example, Celebrex has used the claim “The #1 selling prescription arthritis medicine.”) We note two characteristics of MLCs that may have important implications when such claims are used in the advertising of prescription drugs. These claims are comparative in nature and may lead consumers to make inferences regarding the leader’s superiority on important product attributes. (c.f., Barone and Miniard 1999; Shimp 1978). In addition, a MLC for a prescription drug may lead consumers to draw inferences about the brand’s market acceptance, i.e., its relative standing among health care professionals.

The advertising of prescription drugs is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and under current FDA regulations, claims of product superiority or market acceptance must be supported by relevant clinical or market evidence. Therefore, if a company has clinical data to support the claim that its brand is “more effective” than competition, it could differentiate itself from competition based on this explicit claim of superior performance. However, if actual superiority in performance or doctor preference is difficult to document, MLCs that suggest *perceived* superiority may be used by the sales leader to differentiate itself from challenger brands. Under current FDA regulations, such MLCs are permitted as long as they are supported by sales data, such as that provided by the IMS Health National Prescription Audit. This research investigates how consumers interpret a MLC in the context of DTC prescription drug advertising, and examines the potential of such claims to evoke unwarranted inferences about relative effec-

tiveness of the leader and/or its superior standing among physicians or patients.

BACKGROUND LITERATURE

In one of the few papers in marketing that have examined market share, Hellofs and Jacobson (1999) identified conditions under which a high brand market share would lead to perceptions of higher quality. In the economics literature, Caminal and Vives (1996) suggest that a brand’s market share, which reflects the relative preference for the brand aggregated across dispersed individual buyers, could be used by consumers to make inferences about unobservable product quality. Based on this logic, prescription drug marketers could use various tactics to gain sales leadership (e.g., deep price discounts to selected formularies, aggressive sampling, and intensive detailing, etc.), and then use MLCs to shape consumer judgments. These strategies are likely to be effective, since research in marketing suggests that consumers are more likely to use extrinsic cues in their evaluation of experience/credence products such as prescription drugs (see Ziethaml 1988).

While Hellofs and Jacobson’s (1999) research offers initial empirical evidence on the effects of market share information, their study did not examine consumer responses to a brand’s *leadership* claim presented *within* an advertisement. Furthermore, this research does not offer an understanding of the nature of consumer inferences made from MLCs for prescription drugs, in particular, whether they may lead to unwarranted conclusions about specific attributes of the sales leader. Additionally, consumers may interpret share of prescription drug brands as indicative of the brands’ endorsement by physicians, who are experts, and may draw meaningful inferences about doctors’ preferences and brand beliefs. These may, in turn, influence consumer evaluations of the product. Two studies described below address these issues. Study 1, adopts an open-ended questioning approach to explore the nature of inferences evoked by a MLC. Study 2 examines how MLCs affect beliefs about the brand’s effectiveness and its standing among doctors (relative to competing brands).

STUDY 1

Although economic signaling theory suggests that market share will be used by consumers to make inferences about relative quality (see Caminal and Vives 1996), it offers little detail on the psychological mechanism for how judgments of other consumers might affect an individual’s perceptions. But support for such a mechanism can be found in studies in consumer psychology that have examined the issue of how social influence in general, affects consumer judgments. This stream of research has shown that even for familiar products in which personal taste was the sole criterion for evaluation, individual judgments can be modified by the perceived evaluations of others. This modification in judgment occurred despite the fact that no attempt was made to encourage subjects to believe that the information conveyed by others was accurate or reliable (c.f., Price and Feich 1984). Cohen and Golden (1972) note the importance of the “informational” value of social influence—“influence to accept information provided by others which is taken as evidence about reality” (p. 54). Social psycholo-

*The views expressed here are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the Food and Drug Administration.

gists use the term “social validation” to describe this influence. “We use actions (of others) as a means of social validation, as an interpersonal way to locate and validate the correct choice (Festinger, 1954).” This implies that a brand’s leadership position, which reflects a strong preference for the brand across numerous decision makers, is likely to influence consumer judgments about the brand’s market acceptance.

Since doctors are the primary decision makers in the selection of prescription drugs, which have risks associated with usage, research in social validation suggests that the prescribing behavior of doctors (reflected in the MLC) can significantly affect consumer judgments (Burnkrant and Cousineau 1975). Note that a *moderate* MLC (“most prescribed) can be made stronger by providing additional factual information (e.g., “4 million more than the next leading brand”). Thus we predict:

H1a. A MLC will evoke more inferences about the brand’s acceptance among doctors than a non MLC; more of such inferences will be evoked with a *strong* (vs. *moderate*) MLC.

Consumer research suggests that consumers use extrinsic cues such as price, warranty or brand name in judging the quality of a product (Rao and Monroe 1989; Srivastava and Mitra 1998), and that reliance on such cues to judge unobservable product quality is greatest when product attributes are difficult to evaluate prior to purchase (Ziethaml 1988). Consumer expertise in the prescription drug category is low. This suggests that a MLC, if interpreted as brand preference of numerous experts, i.e., doctors, is likely to evoke inferences about attributes of the drug. Thus we predict:

H1b. A MLC will evoke more inferences about product effectiveness than a non MLC; more of such inferences will be evoked with a *strong* MLC, compared to a *moderate* MLC.

Furthermore, a MLC such as “Celebrex is the brand most prescribed by doctors” does not draw an explicit conclusion nor does it provide an explicit argument structure (Sawyer 1988; Kardes 1993). Yet, the “open-ness” of the MLC makes it an effective persuasion tactic for two reasons: (a) involved audience members construct their own syllogistic reasoning and self-generate a desired conclusion; and (b) the audience attributes ‘less bias’ in the message (c.f., Sawyer 1988, p 168). Instead of directly asserting performance superiority, the ad that reports the behavior of doctors may generate fewer counterarguments and resistance to the source of the message. This further enhances the likelihood of self-generated inferences about the superiority of the market leader, especially under a *strong* MLC. Thus:

H2a. A MLC will evoke more *comparative* product quality inferences than a non MLC; more of such inferences will be evoked with a *strong* (vs. *moderate*) MLC.

H2b. A MLC will evoke more *comparative* market acceptance inferences than a non MLC; a greater number of such inferences will be evoked with a *strong* (vs. *moderate*) MLC.

Method

The overall research approach was consistent with suggestions by Graeff and Olson (1994) on the best methods to get a deeper understanding of consumer inferences, and similar It is also similar to other studies of comparative advertising (Manning, Miniard,

Barone, and Rose 2001). We employed a non-directive, thought-listing approach to investigate the nature of consumer inferences evoked by MLCs.

Subjects and Procedure. One hundred twenty undergraduate female students at a private university participated in the study. They were randomly assigned to see one (of three) versions of an ad for a hypothetical brand of prescription pain reliever.

Stimuli. Advertising claim condition was manipulated at three levels: (a) moderate leadership, (b) strong leadership, and (c) control. The layout and composition of the ads were modeled after an actual advertisement for a leading brand. In the “moderate” market leadership condition, the first claim featured in the ad was: “PRIDON. #1! The Most Prescribed Treatment for Acute Pain ***” In the “strong” market leadership condition, the leadership claim was supplemented with the sentence “Over 4 Million More Prescriptions Than The Next Leading Brand.” Both leadership claims were accompanied by a referencing footnote (“*** Data from IMS HEALTH, National Prescription Audit. Based on total dispensed prescriptions for the period 5/01 through 1/02”), and a “#1 Prescribed” banner that was placed in the upper right-hand corner of the ad. In the control condition, the first claim featured in the ad was: “PRIDON. Prescription Medicine For The Treatment of Acute Pain.” Other parts of the advertisement (major statement of side effects and warnings, etc.) were held constant across the three ad conditions.

Dependent Measures. After reading the ad, subjects answered two key open-ended questions: “What does this ad claim mean to you?” and, “What, if anything, about Pridon is suggested by this statement.” They also responded to a the manipulation check measure

Results

Manipulation check. Subjects’ responses showed that overall, MLC claim manipulations were successful in increasing subjects’ perceptions of relative prescription frequency. Average prescription frequency for the control and two market leadership versions were 2.5, 3.2 and 3.4 respectively ($F(2,117)=10.1$; $p<0.001$). While prescription frequency was perceived to be significantly different between the control and the MLC conditions, the perceived difference between the *moderate* and *strong* MLC conditions were not significant.

Findings. The 440 separate responses elicited by the thought listing task were content analyzed by two judges to classify the nature of the elaboration indicated by each response. A third judge was used to resolve discrepancies ($\kappa=.815$). A response was classified as a simple “ad restatement” if it was a verbatim or near verbatim restatement of the ad claim with little or no elaboration (“you can get it only from a doctor”). Responses indicating elaboration about the product were labeled Inferences and were classified under: (a) “product attributes,” if the response mentioned a specific attribute (e.g., “it’s effective”, “it is strong”), or (b) “market acceptance,” if the response addressed the brand’s relationship with doctors (“it’s popular”, “doctors trust it”). Finally, responses were classified as comparative (e.g., it’s more effective”) versus noncomparative (e.g., “it’s effective”). Subjects reported an average of 4.0 responses to the two questions. See Table 1.

Results for the three ad claim conditions are presented in Table 2. We observe strong support for H1a, that MLCs evoke more market acceptance inferences relative to the control claim ($\hat{u}_{\text{control}}=0.02$, $\hat{u}_{\text{mod}}=1.08$, $\hat{u}_{\text{str}}=1.45$; $F(2,117)=25.1$; $p<.001$). The difference between the *moderate* and *strong* ML conditions was not statistically significant ($F(1,78)=2.18$; $n.s$). However, contrary to H1b, MLCs did not evoke more product attribute inferences com-

TABLE 1
Study 1: Mean Number of Responses by Question by Category

	Q1 ^a	Q2	Q1+Q2
Total Responses	1.81	2.19	4.00 (100 %)
Ad Restatements	0.45	0.35	0.81 (20.2 %)
<u>Inferences</u>			
a. Product Qualities¹	0.76	1.01	1.77 (41.7 %)
b. Market Acceptance	0.31	0.54	0.85 (21.3 %)
c. Advertisement	0.25	0.21	0.46 (11.5 %)
d. Company	0.03	0.05	0.08 (2.0 %)

^a Q 1: What does the first ad claim mean to you? Q 2: What, if anything, about PRIDON is suggested by this statement?
¹ Product related includes the attributes of effectiveness, safety, and strength. Market acceptance includes topics of popularity, preference, trust, choice, and recommendations.

TABLE 2
Study 1: Content Analysis of Elaboration by Advertising Claim Condition

	Advertising Claim Condition		
	Control Claim	Moderate Leadership Claim	Strong Leadership Claim
Total Responses	3.67 ¹	4.17	4.17
Ad Restatements	1.20	0.67	0.57
<u>Inferences</u>			
a. Product Qualities (All)	2.10	1.60	1.60
Effective	0.77	0.85	0.95
Safe	0.17	0.27	0.25
Strong	0.77	0	0.12
b. Market Acceptance	0.02	1.08	1.45
c. Advertisement-all	0.35	0.55	0.47

n=40 subjects per condition.
¹Read as average number responses for Q1. “What does the first ad claim mean to you?” and Q2. “What, if anything, does it suggest about the product?”

pared to the control claim ($\hat{u}_{control}=2.10$, $\hat{u}_{mod}=1.60$, $\hat{u}_{str}=1.60$, $F(2,117)=1.41$, n.s.).

MLCs also evoked comparative inferences. About 30% of inferences about product attributes were comparative in nature.

Comparative product inferences were higher under the MLC conditions ($\hat{u}_{control}=.25$, $\hat{u}_{mod}=0.58$, $\hat{u}_{str}=0.75$; $F(2,117)=3.0$; $p=.054$), providing support for H2a. There was partial support for H2b. Comparative market acceptance inferences, which were not

observed in the control condition, represented about 39% of the market acceptance inferences in the MLC conditions. However, although more comparative inferences were observed in the *strong* than *moderate* MLC condition ($\hat{u}_{mod}=0.38$, $\hat{u}_{str}=0.60$), the difference was not statistically significant ($F(1,78)=2.14$; $p=0.15$).

Study 1 demonstrated that MLCs have the potential to evoke inferences about comparative product effectiveness and market acceptance of the market share leader. In the next study, we examine if MLCs affect specific brand beliefs.

STUDY 2

Consumer researchers have noted that inference plays an important role in persuasion, and may influence persuasion even more than the advertising message. (Chattopadhyay and Alba 1988; Greenwald 1968; and Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann 1983). Results of Study 1 showed that MLCs evoke inferences about the attributes of the market leader. In Study 2, we examine more specifically the issue of belief formation after exposure to a market leadership claim in DTC advertising. We make the following predictions:

- H3. Compared to a non MLC, a MLC will enhance beliefs about: (a) product effectiveness and (b) comparative product effectiveness. A *strong* MLC will enhance beliefs more than a *moderate* MLC.
- H4. Compared to a non MLC, a MLC will enhance beliefs about doctor-brand acceptance. A *strong* MLC will enhance beliefs about doctor-brand acceptance more than a *moderate* MLC.

Method

Subjects and Procedure. Seventy-seven undergraduate students participated in the study and were randomly assigned to one of ad claim conditions for a prescription pain reliever. The procedure used in this experiment was similar to that used in Study 1.

Stimuli. As in Study 1, advertising claim condition was manipulated at three levels: The layout and composition of the ad was adapted from that of a leading brand and included elements common to prescription drug print advertisements. The level of market leadership—*strong* and *moderate*—was manipulated using length of time (six months vs. five years). Thus, the *moderate* (*strong*) MLC featured in the ad was: “In 2002 (over the last five years), doctors prescribed PRIDON more than any other brand of prescription pain reliever.” The MLC was supported with a footnoted reference to data from an IMS audit for the appropriate time period (i.e., five-year time period vs. first six months of 2002). In the *control* condition, the claim featured in the ad was “Prescription medicine for the treatment of severe pain.” All other portions of the advertisement were held constant across all three conditions.

Dependent measures. Beliefs about product effectiveness were measured on three 7-point likelihood scales (effective/“relieves pain”/unreliable”). Comparative effectiveness was assessed using the same items posed in a comparative context (e.g., “more effective than other prescription pain relievers”). Beliefs about the relative preferences of doctors were assessed using a series of six questions about relative preference, trust and effectiveness (e.g., “How likely is it that doctors prefer PRIDON over other prescription pain relievers?”/“... like PRIDON less than ...?”/“... think PRIDON is more effective than other prescription pain relievers”: Very unlikely=1; Very likely=7). Subjects’ perception of relative sales was assessed on two 5-point scales. These measures served as the manipulation check.

Results

Manipulation check. Results showed that MLCs were successful in affecting perceptions of relative sales. Cell means for the two relative sales measures are in the appropriate direction across the three conditions (See Table 3). A factor score for “relative sales” was created based on the two items (see item loadings in Table 3). GLM analyses with planned comparisons revealed that the differences across the three claim conditions approached conventional levels of statistical significance ($\hat{u}_{control}=-.36$, $\hat{u}_{mod}=-.02$, $\hat{u}_{str}=.29$; $F(2,74)=3.02$, $p<.06$). Perceived sales level in response to the *strong* MLC was significantly higher than the control ($d=0.65$, $t=2.45$ ($p<.05$)), but the difference between the *moderate* and control conditions, was not statistically significant ($d=0.34$, $t=1.18$, (n.s.)).

Beliefs. Means for the brand belief items are displayed in Table 3. Factor scores for each construct were created (item loadings are displayed in Table 3). A summary of the GLM and contrast analyses is shown in Table 4.

Effectiveness. Consistent with H3a, consumer beliefs about product effectiveness were higher in the MLC conditions ($\hat{u}_{control}=-.41$, $\hat{u}_{mod}=-.01$, $\hat{u}_{str}=.32$; $F(2,74)=3.91$; $p<.05$). Contrasts reveal a significant difference between the control vs. the *strong* MLC condition ($d=.75$, $t=2.85$, ($p<.01$)), but not for the control vs. *moderate* MLC condition ($d=.43$, $t=1.50$, (n.s.)). A similar pattern was observed for comparative effectiveness ($\hat{u}_{control}=-.36$, $\hat{u}_{mod}=.11$, and $\hat{u}_{str}=.20$; $F(2,74)=2.33$; $p=.10$), providing marginal support for H3b. Contrasts reveal a significant difference for the control vs. the *strong* MLC condition ($d=.55$, $t=2.06$, ($p<.05$)), but not for the *moderate* vs. control ($d=.47$, $t=1.62$ (n.s.)).

Doctor-Brand Acceptance. Results also showed support for significant MLC effects on consumer beliefs about the doctor’s acceptance of the brand. Consumer beliefs about doctors’ relative trust in market leader brands were affected by MLCs ($\hat{u}_{control}=-.52$, $\hat{u}_{mod}=.24$, and $\hat{u}_{str}=.23$; $F(2,74)=5.33$ ($p<.01$)). Doctors were thought to trust the leader brand more in both the *moderate* ($d=.767$, $t=2.74$, ($p<.01$)) and *strong* ($d=.757$, $t=2.93$, ($p<.01$)) MLC conditions. Beliefs about doctors’ brand preference or liking for a market leader were similarly affected by MLCs ($\hat{u}_{control}=-.49$, $\hat{u}_{mod}=.15$, and $\hat{u}_{str}=.27$; $F(2,74)=4.74$ ($p<.05$)). Contrasts showed that doctors were thought to prefer the leader brand more in both the *moderate* ($d=.646$, $t=2.29$, ($p<.05$)) and *strong* ($d=.765$, $t=2.95$, ($p<.01$)) MLC conditions. These results provide support for H4.

MLCs affected consumer beliefs about doctors’ judgments of relative effectiveness in a similar manner, but to a lesser degree. Doctors were thought to judge a market leader brand as being more effective than other brands ($\hat{u}_{control}=-.40$, $\hat{u}_{mod}=.15$, and $\hat{u}_{str}=.20$; $F(2,91)=4.74$ ($p=.051$)). Contrasts revealed significant differences between the control and the *strong* MLC condition ($d=.60$, $t=2.26$, ($p<.05$)), but not for the *moderate* vs. control ($d=.54$, $t=1.89$ ($p<.10$)) at the $\alpha=.05$ level.

DISCUSSION

This paper extends previous research in economics and marketing on the role of market share information to understand the effects of leadership claims, specifically, MLCs used in prescription drug advertising. Our study provides preliminary evidence that an ad featuring an MLC for a prescription drug can enhance consumer beliefs about effectiveness, both in absolute and relative terms. We also observed that MLCs resulted in beliefs about the doctors’ *comparative* judgments about the market leader. In particular, presentation of a MLC resulted in consumers believing that doctors judged the product to be more effective, more preferable and more trustworthy than other brands. An interesting finding was

TABLE 3
Study 2: Means and Standard Deviations by Advertising Claim Condition

Variable Item (factor loading)	Advertising Claim Condition		
	Control Claim	Moderate Leadership Claim	Strong Leadership Claim
Relative Sales ^a			
Prescription Frequency (.93)	2.71 (1.23)	3.00 (1.07)	3.45 (1.12)
Sales Volume (.93)	2.54 (1.06)	2.95 (1.09)	3.16 (1.04)
Beliefs about brand ^b			
Effectiveness (non comparative)			
Effective (.89)	4.54 (1.28)	5.09 (1.19)	5.35 (0.95)
Relieves Pain (.88)	4.96 (1.76)	5.41 (1.14)	5.77 (0.84)
Unreliable (.69 ^c)	3.96 (1.55)	3.68 (1.43)	3.26 (1.37)
Effectiveness (comparative)			
More Effective (.93)	3.96 (1.49)	4.86 (1.28)	4.87 (1.86)
Relieves Pain Better (.94)	4.25 (1.39)	4.59 (1.47)	4.58 (1.71)
Less Reliable (.70 ^c)	4.00 (1.35)	3.36 (1.29)	3.00 (1.32)
Beliefs about Doctor-Brand Acceptance ^b			
Dr-Brand Trust			
Drs trust more (.93)	3.83 (1.46)	5.00 (1.93)	4.84 (1.53)
Drs have less confidence (.72 ^c)	4.21 (1.50)	3.09 (1.57)	2.97 (1.54)
Dr-Brand Preference			
Drs prefer over other (.90)	3.83 (1.27)	4.64 (1.87)	4.84 (1.59)
Drs like less than (.76 ^c)	4.21 (1.41)	3.23 (1.38)	3.10 (1.40)
Dr-Brand Effectiveness			
Drs think more effective (.93)	3.91 (1.32)	4.95 (1.86)	4.90 (1.37)
Drs believe works better (.85)	3.92 (1.50)	4.50 (1.50)	4.71 (1.51)

^aBoth measures were five-point scales (much less/lower than other prescription pain relievers=1; about the same=3; and much more/higher=5)

^bScale: very unlikely=1; very likely=7 ^c Scale item reversed

that even with a “moderate” leadership claim (six months share leader), the brand was seen as being trusted more and preferred more by physicians. This suggests that a brand which can achieve sales leadership, for as few as six months, can advertise the fact and reap potential benefits in terms of consumer beliefs about doctor preference and trust.

While more research is needed to extend and test whether the results are generalizable, several implications are suggested about

market leadership claims in DTC advertisements. First, MLCs may create a “difficult-to-correct” bias against competitor brands that may not be clinically different in terms of clinical effectiveness or doctors’ comparative evaluations. Consider the claim a challenger brand might (accurately) use in a counter-attack—“No other brand is proven more effective than *ProPill*.” The likelihood that such a claim may be able to correct misperceptions may be low, especially if the challenger cannot support the claim with a well-controlled

TABLE 4
Study 2: GLM Summary for Beliefs by Advertising Claim Condition

Variable	F (2,72)*	p	Advertising Claim Condition		
			Control (n=24)	Moderate Leadership (n=22)	Strong Leadership (n=31)
Relative Sales^b	3.02	.06	-.36	-.02	.29
Beliefs about brand					
Effectiveness (non comparative) ^b	4.07	.02	-.42	-.01	.32
Comparative Effectiveness ^b	2.33	.10	-.36	.11	.20
Beliefs about Doctor-Brand Acceptance					
Trust more ^{a,b}	5.33	.01	-.52	.24	.23
Prefer more ^{a,b}	4.74	.02	-.49	.15	.27
More effective ^b	2.91	.05	-.40	.15	.20

* Based upon GLM type III SSQS

^a Contrast of Control vs. Moderate significant at $p < .05$ (one-tailed)

^b Contrast of Control vs. Strong significant at $p < .05$ (one-tailed)

comparative efficacy study. Even with such a study and consumer acceptance of the challenger's claim, the counter-claim may result in, at best, a belief of competitive-parity.

Will consumers "self-correct" this bias? Previous research shows that consumer experience with products is often ambiguous, and in such cases, experience is often interpreted in line with prior expectations (Hoch and Ha 1986; Hoch and Deighton 1989). In some categories, consumers who are "new-to-the-market" may find their experience with a prescription drug especially hard to evaluate even with guidance from a healthcare professional. Therefore, we might hypothesize that expectations created by MLC advertising will influence how consumers form their consideration set and how consumers interpret subsequent product experience. Those who are prescribed the leader brand might experience a stronger placebo effect or may be more reluctant to switch to another brand in spite of a less than optimal product experience. Conversely, patients using a smaller share brand may switch unnecessarily because of the tendency to interpret the current performance of the brand as potentially inferior to that promised by a leader. Also, because of expectations, caregivers, who are now often the target of prescription drug advertising, may be similarly affected by leadership claims. They may be more inclined to ask about a market leader. Left uncorrected, the bias created by MLCs will result in effects similar to the concept of "double jeopardy"—the statistical observation that in many competitive markets, small market share brands generally evidence less "loyalty" among their buyers than large brands (leaders) do among theirs (Ehrenberg, Goodhardt, and Barwise 1990).

Consumers, unlike physicians and pharmacists, do not have a proper context for evaluating MLCs. Physicians and pharmacists understand that prescribing behavior may be affected by marketing practices (pricing and detailing) and that aggregate sales data are

not a substitute for well-controlled clinical tests of comparative effectiveness. Normally, skepticism about an advertiser's motives may protect consumers from being misled. Since doctors serve as the learned intermediaries, consumers may assume that doctors' prescribing patterns represent expressions of (unconstrained) choice among available medications, and that the brand selected in each case is the one that is "best" for the patient. If so, the market leadership position (achieved through the prescriptions written by numerous individual doctors acting independently.) would appear to the consumer as a true reflection of relative superiority. Ironically, the more strongly consumers believe that physicians act in the patients' best interest, independent of external influence, the more susceptible they may become to the effects of MLCs. Those most skeptical of their physician's motives (and/or DTC advertising) may be the least affected by MLCs.

If MLCs cause consumers to believe that a brand is superior, the incentive for pharmaceutical manufacturers to do comparative brand (as opposed to placebo) efficacy studies may be reduced. Under current FDA regulations, a brand would be allowed to make a direct claim about its superior effectiveness or doctor preference only when supported by market surveys or clinical data. We argue that MLCs in DTC advertising offer the brand an *indirect* way to make a claim of relative superiority without presenting such evidence. Our studies show that consumers make MLC-based inferences about relative effectiveness of prescription drugs, consistent with predictions of signaling theory (Caminal and Vives 1996). Caminal and Vives note that firms would attempt to gain market share by lowering prices and promoting the product heavily. The implication is that if a MLC can be used to shape beliefs about relative effectiveness as suggested by our data, then drug companies may have fewer incentives to do well-controlled clinical studies to assess comparative effectiveness. An advertising strategy

based on post-marketing data (such as IMS), may be less risky and less costly, even though post-marketing sales data are obviously not designed to assess comparative effectiveness.

Our studies provide initial evidence to suggest that market leadership claims in DTC advertising may serve as an indirect method of making a statement about the comparative superiority of a brand under conditions in which clinical or market evidence to support such claims are not available. Future research might examine potential boundary conditions on the extent to which MLCs affect consumer inferences. For example, researchers might examine the effects of using explicit share percentages to support the MLC, and if providing such information would result in fewer inferences about the relative superiority of the share leader. Without *specific* market share figures for the major brands in the category to clarify the leader's claim, consumers are left to form their own impressions about market structure. Consumers exposed to a MLC may overestimate the leader's relative market share (either the ratio of the leader's share to next largest challenger's, or the incremental difference between them). These assumptions about relative market share might affect whether the leader is viewed as better than "all other brands," "most other brands," or "some other brands" (c.f., Johar 1995). Research may also investigate the effectiveness of a disclosure in the advertisement stating that sales data (leadership) are not suitable evidence for judgments of comparative brand efficacy or safety.

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Investigating Impulse Buying and Variety Seeking: Towards a General Theory of Hedonic Purchase Behaviors

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INTRODUCTION

Impulse buying (IB) and variety seeking (VS) are classified as hedonic purchase behaviors associated with feelings and psychosocial motivations rather than thinking and functional benefits (Baumgartner 2002) and shown as examples of low-effort feeling-based decision-making, associated more with feelings rather than cognitive processing and with a strong affective component (Hoyer and Macinnis 2001). However, despite these motivational and behavioral similarities, there is no common conceptual framework or general theory to explain the socio-psychological processes underlying these two behaviors. This paper addressed this gap by exploring similarities and differences between these behaviors using a conceptual framework incorporating three relevant consumer traits—consumer impulsiveness, optimum stimulation level and self-monitoring.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Most of the consumer traits associated with IB and VS can be traced back to a single personality measure, namely trait impulsivity in the Psychology literature (Eysenck and Eysenck 1977; 1978; Zuckerman 1979; Cloninger et al. 1991; Eysenck 1993; Zuckerman et al. 1993; Zuckerman 2000; Whiteside and Lynam 2001). Individuals with high optimum stimulation level (OSL) are chronically lower in their arousal level making them indulge in sensation seeking activities to achieve their desired (optimum) stimulation level (Raju 1980; Steenkamp and Baumgartner 1992). Such individuals are also more likely to indulge in IB and VS behaviors to reach their optimum stimulation level. On the other hand, high self-monitors are expected to be more motivated to control their impulses (or, urges) due to their desire to appear rational and prudent (Becherer and Richard 1978; Rook and Fisher 1995; Dholakia 2000).

In this paper, it is specifically argued that consumer impulsiveness and optimum stimulation level influence both IB and VS behaviors positively, whereas self-monitoring influences IB negatively and VS positively. Moreover, self-monitoring is also hypothesized to moderate the influence of consumer impulsiveness and optimum stimulation level on purchase decisions, negatively for IB and positively for VS. Specifically, high impulsives who were high self-monitors indulged in less IB compared to low self-monitors and low variety-seekers sought more variety if they were high self-monitors.

METHODOLOGY

Two studies were conducted to test these hypotheses, one with 160 undergraduate students and the other with 309 retail shoppers. Questionnaires were developed using established scales to measure the consumer traits and level of impulsiveness/variety seeking in purchase decisions. In the first study, participants were exposed to two different purchase scenarios and their purchase intentions were recorded using single-item five-point scales (adapted from Rook and Fisher 1995). To improve the generalizability, retail shoppers were intercepted and interviewed about the items bought by them. Levels of impulse buying/variety seeking were estimated based on

their actual purchase decisions. Only pure impulse and variety seeking purchases were considered and the others were discarded (e.g. reminder impulse etc.).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Using multiple moderated regression analysis, it was found in both the studies that consumers with high scores on CI and OSL indulged in more IB as well as VS compared to those with low scores on these two traits. High self-monitors indulged in less IB but more VS. Moreover, self-monitoring moderated the relationship between CI and OSL with level of impulsiveness or variety seeking in purchase decisions.

In this paper, IB and VS are shown to be similar to each other for the first time empirically based on a common conceptual framework incorporating three relevant consumer traits. It also highlights some key differences in the normative aspects of these two behaviors by showing the opposite influence of trait self-monitoring on these two behaviors. High self-monitors are shown to indulge in less IB but more VS. Moreover, the association of the other two traits i.e. consumer impulsiveness and OSL with VS is shown to be moderated positively by self-monitoring but negatively for IB. The conceptual framework used in this research paves the way for a better understanding of these two common but complex consumer behaviors.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

However, this research also has a few limitations. It explored only the influence of consumer traits on both the behaviors. Future research may include some relevant situational factors such as mood, time and money availability and involvement level. It also used only one scenario for each behavior in the first study (i.e. using jacket and ice-cream). However, there could be a significant difference between the involvement level in the two scenarios used by us e.g. price difference between the jacket (IB) and the ice-cream (VS). Future research may use different scenarios to study these behaviors. Finally, future researchers could test more complex conceptual models by including some possible mediators for these behaviors such as browsing, impulsive urge, attitude towards impulse purchase, cognitive evaluation and resistance strategies.

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Binge Drinking—Do They Mean Us? Living Life to the Full in Students' Own Words¹

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to further understanding about young people and their excessive alcohol consumption, focusing particularly on students. The study aimed to identify and explore the role and position of alcohol in students' lives, and the perceived benefits that alcohol offered. Undergraduate student researchers were recruited and trained to conduct focus groups. Major findings focused on the way participants consumed alcohol, the language they used to talk about their behavior, the means by which they rationalized their behavior, and the perceived benefits they gained from drinking alcohol. The implications of this research for consumers and policy makers are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

The discussion and analysis of young peoples' drinking habits has captured the interest of academic researchers from a range of disciplines. The underlying assumption of much research has been that excessive alcohol consumption is problematic or deviant behavior, and the focus is often on examining the negative impacts of alcohol consumption. This study attempts to explore the area of young people and their alcohol consumption using young peoples' voices to present the findings, focusing particularly on students. Rather than judging students' alcohol consumption or approaching it as a problem-solving exercise, in this primarily exploratory study we attempted to progress towards identifying and understanding: firstly the role and position of alcohol in the lives of students, and secondly the perceived *benefits* that alcohol offered. Taking this approach should facilitate a better understanding of the attractions of excessive alcohol consumption, and hence its importance in students' lives.

LITERATURE OVERVIEW

Excessive alcohol consumption amongst young people has been recognized as a major problem for Western countries. Binge drinking is of particular concern in the UK and is prevalent among people between the ages of 16 and 24 (Strategy Unit 2004). It is acknowledged that alcohol plays a key role in the lives of many undergraduate students (e.g. Ardenekan 2005; Christie et al. 2001; Gill 2002; Gofton 1990; Webb et al 1996) with recent research suggesting that half the UK student population regularly binge drink (see Ardenekan 2005) and students' alcohol expenditure was nearly £1 billion in 2004, £300 million more than on food (Curtis 2004).

Gill (2002) provides a very useful review of the past 25 years of research looking at drinking behavior focusing on undergraduate students and based in the UK. However, all 18 of these studies used questionnaires as their main method of data collection and the majority of studies have focused on identifying the amounts of alcohol consumed and the negative effects of alcohol consumption. It is generally agreed that many university students tend to drink above what the government defines as sensible limits² (Webb et al. 1996) and are more likely to do so than the general population (Gill 2002). Webb et al. (1996) identify pleasure; habit; to increase confidence; anxiety/stress and social pleasure as the key reasons for students' consumption of alcohol (on a methodological point these choices were researcher-generated, although respondents were given the option to cite self-generated responses under the 'other' category). Questions left unanswered by this research, and other

related studies, are that in spite of focusing exclusively on student respondents, the studies do not identify factors associated with excessive alcohol consumption other than those that could be true for the *population as a whole*. Although one might conclude from these findings that the student sub-group of the population is no different from the wider population in its drinking behaviour, it is likely that the research methods used (researcher-generated closed options, a focus on negative aspects of drinking) skewed the findings away from developing a valid and reliable picture of the role of alcohol in students' lives.

In any attempt to understand the so-called binge-drinking culture, it is important to examine the context specific aspects of student drinking culture. Gill (2002) suggests that factors such as 'student demographics' need to be explored in more detail and Dowdall and Wechsler (2002) argue that a major shortcoming is the failure of studies to understand or communicate the broader context or the 'alcohol environment' of students' lives. It is important to appreciate those aspects of students' lives that make them distinct and therefore worth studying. For example, any discussion of students and alcohol should discuss students' access to bars and the existence of alcohol promotions that can be found on and off campus. This leaves us with the following question: what is it about being a student that leads to a tendency to drink excessive amounts of alcohol whilst at university?

Another potential obstacle to forming a clear picture of alcohol consumption is the terminology employed by alcohol researchers and policy makers. In recent years the term 'binge drinking' has assumed common usage. However, there exists confusion regarding this terminology—i.e. whether it refers to alcohol consumption over a prolonged period or whether it refers to the specific amounts drunk in a particular session (and associated with this, there exist differences in the amounts classified as worthy of the term) (Gill 2002). This confusion of terminology serves to cloud our understanding as researchers (Measham 2004) and also understanding by the population under study (of how their own behavior would be classified). Further, it is argued that the commonly understood definitions of binge drinking result in the majority of young people becoming included in the definition (see Measham 2004) in essence promoting the normalization of binge drinking as a behavior. Researchers have encouraged the use of less emotive and loaded language—for example 'heavy sessional drinking' (Measham 1996; 2004)—but the term 'binge drinking' continues to be used by the UK government, media and commentators, making the issue of terminology difficult and confusing for researchers and consumers alike.

Therefore a number of characteristics associated with previous studies help make our contribution to research in this field innovative, timely and ultimately important. There is a lack of research focusing on understanding the positive aspects of alcohol consumption, which is essential if we hope to fully understand

¹With special thanks to our 'student researchers' who let us into their world and ultimately helped us to explore this topic.

²The UK government's 'sensible drinking guidelines' recommend limiting alcohol consumption at 14 units of alcohol for women and 21 units for men. Since 1995 there has been a move towards changing the message focus to daily recommendations of 2-3 units for women and 3-4 units for men (Strategy Unit 2004)

young peoples' or students' high levels of alcohol intake. By starting from a different standpoint to the majority of studies, we have tried to be less judgmental in our approach, seeking to understand young peoples' behavior in their own terms. This approach should help encourage students' understanding of (and in some cases change) their behavior and public policy or university welfare departments to tackle excessive consumption through an approach that is centered in an understanding of why the experience of being a student may encourage alcohol consumption.

Our paper also contributes methodologically. We argue that research needs to ensure greater engagement with the population under scrutiny. In order to understand the behavior of young people—particularly with regards to activities that are considered deviant in some way—we need to find means by which to 'enter' their culture. By enlisting the help of members of the population under study, academic researchers are able to understand more about the context in which much public policy is situated. This kind of approach mirrors trends within other areas—for example studies of childhood and young consumers (e.g. Banister and Booth 2005; Pole, Mizen and Bolton 1999). Further, Dowdall and Wechsler (2002) have identified the need for more studies featuring 'thick description' in order to gain insight "into how the participants view their own conduct" (p17). We argue that by enlisting the voices of our participants to present and discuss our findings that we can hope for a 'truer', more authentic account of the role of alcohol in students' lives.

RESEARCH DESIGN:

Our research aimed to discover more about the drinking habits of undergraduate students, by exploring the *role* that alcohol plays in their lives and the *benefits* that alcohol consumption offers. Our experience with students is primarily restricted to the academic context of lectures and tutorials, but we wanted to use methods that would allow us to take our understanding beyond this context. We considered it important to enlist the help of experts within the area who would be able to aid our quest and ultimately provide us with a fuller range of insights and findings—undergraduate students.

Our research was based in a campus university in the North West of England. Picking up on the criticism of many student-focused studies (made by Dowdall and Wechsler 2002³), the university campus has nine bars. Most of the university's undergraduate students live on campus during their first year and in the nearby city (approximately three miles from the campus) in their second year, with some students choosing to return to campus living arrangements in their final year. Alcohol prices on campus tend to be low, and there are high numbers of drinks promotions in the city centre. The university has its own university nightclub in the city centre, which has recently stopped offering drinks promotions, presumably following government efforts to curb excessive alcohol consumption.

Five undergraduate second year student researchers were recruited on the basis of their competence in running focus group discussions as part of a practical workshop on a marketing research module. We specifically recruited second year student researchers as previous studies have suggested second year students tend to be adjusted to university life yet free from the stresses of final year study (Webb et al. 1996). These student researchers were invited to a training session, where proposed methods were discussed and students were invited to contribute to the research design. The student researchers suggested changes to the focus group guide and also the style of language to be used within the research. The final discussion guide was circulated to all student researchers and agreed by them.

The student researchers were asked to recruit participants from their friendship groups for a discussion about alcohol consumption and students' social lives whilst at university. The researchers were not asked to select on the basis of age or gender or amounts of alcohol consumed, but instead to select a group of their friends who enjoyed each other's company. The researchers were told that the discussions should be between 1 hour and 1.5 hours long and they should be based around the guided but informal discussion schedule. Although there were topics and lines of questioning that we wanted included in all discussions, the student researchers were advised to manage the discussion in such a way that it resembled 'normal' social interaction. Our researchers received a gratuity payment for their part in this research procedure, which included a sum for the transcription of the discussion.

Our student researchers were given consent forms, which explained to participants the broad aims of the research and our ethical responsibilities towards them. A key aspect of our approach was that all respondents were granted anonymity. In practice this meant that although consent forms were collected, the student researchers were requested to keep hold of these. The researchers changed all participants' names, and were asked to ensure that there was nothing to identify the participants within the transcripts. Table 1 gives the key information that was collected from participants along with their pseudonyms for the purposes of this study. As you will see the majority of students were 19 and 20 years old, there was a mixture of males and females and a mixture of courses studied, reflecting the friendship groups of our researchers. Each group had between 4 and 7 participants (researchers were asked to aim for approximately 6 participants).

Our data were analyzed through a process of initially reading and rereading the transcripts and two academic researchers independently identified key themes and patterns to emerge from the data. We then compared insights and looked for alternative explanations from the ones that were identified. There was also an instance where we contacted the group moderator to check our understanding of one aspect of the discussion, again to ensure that we had interpreted the conversations as accurately as possible.

Student researchers were employed in order to capture the authentic voice of our participants. As a consequence it is important to note that the language used and stories told were more explicit in nature than those we heard in our earlier research with this population (Piacentini and Banister 2006). Notably, the student data collected for this study contains swearing and reference to illicit behaviors (e.g. drug taking, sexual behaviour), which have been retained and reported, in the interests of preserving the authentic student voice.⁴

FINDINGS

We aim to shed light on two aspects: firstly the *role(s)* alcohol plays in the lives of our participants; and secondly *why* does it play this role? We structure the first part of our findings around firstly the *language and rituals* of alcohol consumption in an attempt to find out more about the role or position of alcohol in students' lives. We then explore the means by which our participants explained or

³See literature review—Dowdall and Wechsler called for more explanation of the factors (and context) associated with student life.

⁴Please note that we have followed our reviewers' advice and left in place the language used, in order to reflect the 'voices' of our participants, and hope this language is not viewed as offensive or problematic.

TABLE 1
Focus group participants [age & course of study¹]

Group 1 (Carl)	Group 2 (Des)	Group 3 (Leanne)	Group 4 (Mark)	Group 5 (Hayley)
Ryan 19, Sociology Sarah 19, Sociology Justin 19, Management Dennis 19, Management Tina 19, History Laura 19, English Lit	Harry 19, History Rhys 20, Mktg Brian 20, Politics Luke 21 [3rd yr] Information Systems and Communications	Claire 19, Geography & Biology Dean 21, Biology Anna 20, Psychology Alison 20, Music Lisa 19, Criminology	Jake 19, Management Jason 19, Bus Studies Vicky 19, Bus Studies/Maths Chris 19, Management Peter 20, Computer Scien John 20, History/ Politics Des 20, Environmental Science & Chemistry	Joe 19, History Rick 20, Culture Media & Comm Penny 19, Geography. Suzy 20, Geography Melanie 20, Ed Studs

¹All participants were second year undergraduates except where indicated (i.e. 1 student).

rationalized their high levels of alcohol consumption, typically referring to expectations of student life, the temporary nature of student life and the key benefits of alcohol—particularly as a social facilitator.

Language and rituals of alcohol consumption

In any attempt to hear and understand the voices of research participants, it is important to first become acquainted with and then form a shared understanding of, the language used (Banister and Booth 2005). It became immediately clear that the term binge drinking had assumed common usage by our participants. Ironically, rather than using it as a loaded or negative term, our participants seemed to accept its applicability to their particular situation, using it as a kind of 'standard' or term of reference. The following exchange was fairly typical of its usage.

- Justin *I consider myself a medium binge drinker, cos when I go out I get wrecked, but I probably go out once a week so....*
- Laura *Yeah*
- Tina *I Guess I'm a medium drinker because (Group laughter) I do drink every night, I do drink every night, but I don't binge drink every week.*

It was important to recognise the shared culture in which our participants consumed alcohol. In each discussion group there was at least one mention of an activity that could be considered a key ritual involving alcohol, and in some cases rites of passage marking entrance into particular friendship groups. These ritualistic activities were then explained 'to the tape' demonstrating the extent to which our participants (and our researchers) saw themselves as a somewhat exclusive group, utilizing practices and rituals which could be unfamiliar to 'outsiders' of the student culture.

- Des- *Can you just tell me about the dirty pint, obviously I know but the tape doesn't*
- Rhys- *Well a dirty pint is where you have a pint full of spirits. Think about downing a pint of spirits, you aren't going to be well afterwards.*
- Harry- *The alcohol is worth about £25. Literally you've got to accept that you will be sick when you do a dirty pint. You drink it, raise your glass to the crowd then go to the bathroom and then just vomit like a bastard*

- Rhys- *You get wasted, absolutely wasted. Whenever I feel like being sick I hold it in, I hate being sick.*

The 'dirty pint' was also referred to within another group (although not by this name). It seemed to be a fairly masculine activity. The assumption by both groups was that this was something in which to participate and endure, not necessarily something to be enjoyed.

- Mark: *For your birthday Jack, what did we put in your drink?*
- Jake: *That was really nice... [said sarcastically]*
- Mark: *Didn't we spend twelve quid on it, put 12 shots in? that Baileys curdled...*
- Jake: *It was fucking horrible*
- John: *But he knew what was in it...*
- Mark: *Yeah. It wasn't like we only put a few shots in ha ha ha*

In addition ritualistic drinking games were discussed whereby the forfeit involved drinking copious amounts of alcohol.

- Brian- *Actually I've a good example of this, there was a few of us, I don't think everyone here was there, maybe not, but we were drinking Absinthe.*
- Des- *Just for the tape what's Absinthe?*
- Brian- *Absinthe is... What percentage is it?*
- Rhys- *70%*
- Brian- *Yeah 70%. We were playing a drinking game of darts and it involved pretty much everyone every few minutes downing either a shot of absinthe or whisky. And we were drinking beer at the same time. We drunk a lot. And a few days afterwards my head felt genuinely not right, I was genuinely worried and other people that were there said the same thing, for a few days, my head really wasn't in the right place*
- Brian- *When something like that happens you realize that alcohol can be quite nasty*

We played alcoholic Screw-Ball-Scramble. It was awesome... It was well funny, we tricked you [directed at the moderator], because, because, we were really masters at screw-ball, and we played a game

basically, who ever wins gets furthest and then whoever gets least furthest has to drink. We started off, and we like "oh we can't do it, we can't do it" and then kept fucking up on purpose, and he fucked up on the first one, and I finished it, jack finished it, and he had to drink seven fingers. [Chris]⁵

Some participants talked specifically about initiation practices that were specific to their social group; again the discussion suggested this to be a fairly masculine activity. The female members of the groups seemed to be 'in the know' about the particulars of the practice but did not acknowledge participating.

- Dean: *There's like an initiation thing for the new members of the club [i.e. his group of friends] where you have to down a flaming Drambuie so we were showing them how to do it (laughter)*
- Lisa: *That sounds a good one*
- Alison: *oh my god!*
- Mark: *I know, within this group, the 'Beer Bong' is quite important part of our social group*
- Mark: *how important do you feel this Beer Bong is, and how did you feel after it got stolen.*
- Vicky: *Have you got it back?*
- Mark: *Can you just explain what the Beer Bong is?*
- Jack: *I couldn't sleep...*
- Des: *The Beer Bong basically is an aquarium tube, which is see through err, approximately 3/4 of an inch in diameter, two meters long and with a funnel⁶*
- Mark: *And do you find that's good for social, and it's a good laugh yeah?*
- Des: *It's a good laugh yeah while you do it, it's not just to get drunk, well it is to get drunk but...*
- Vicky: *It's also quite funny*
- Des: *We sing a song... and it's like a drinking game*

Drinking games, and special drinks fulfilled a means to gain initiation into a social group, but seemed to be a primarily masculine activity. Female group members also discussed rituals associated with alcohol consumption, but these predominantly concerned night-out preparations and discussions the following morning. For female participants these pre and post night out rituals seemed an important aspect of the drinking occasion and also functioned as a bonding activity, providing key aspects of group membership.

- Penny: (laughs) *Started getting ready about three hours before we went out. Took me 40 mins to have a shower, shave and wash and dry my hair!*
- Suzy: *The four s's!*
- Penny: *Didn't have a clue what to wear so everyone is like a panel and they have to judge, and if they can't make a decision we don't get out any quicker! There's a lot of enjoyment in getting ready though, I quite like, it kind of prolongs the evening...*

In the following exchange, female group members talked about their habit of discussing the previous night's proceedings. The male group members rarely mentioned their pre-night preparations (typically claiming to take 10 minutes) yet there was agreement by both sexes concerning the need for post-night-out 'hangover foods'.

- Claire: *We have one [discussion] in the bedrooms in the morning don't we? Where everyone will go into*

someone's bedroom and sit on the bed and chat about what we did the night before

- Lisa: *Dean do you do that?*
- Dean: *Oh yeah all the time! [said sarcastically]*
- Leanne: *So what do you do Dean?*
- Dean: *I just go to sleep on Alison's bed all day*
- Leanne: *Would you take anything maybe take a hair of the dog and have another beer?*
- Dean: *You have to eat bacon*
- Claire: *Oh no a McDonalds*
- Anna: *Coke and a Kit Kat*
- Lisa: *Yeah that's what Sally Clarke says!*
- Liz: *And these aspects of the whole process of sorting yourself out talking to your friends about it, are they as important as the night before do you enjoy them to some extent?*
- Anna: *Yeah*
- Lisa: *Yeah they are a good laugh especially if someone can't remember what happened and you can just make up stuff that's really funny*

Explaining and rationalizing excessive alcohol consumption

In seeking to understand some students' tendency to consume excessive amounts of alcohol, it is useful to explore their rationalizations for behaviour, particularly in the context of widespread knowledge regarding the potentially destructive nature of alcohol consumption. The key themes here related to student expectations regarding their current and future lives. Students felt it was almost expected of them to consume excessive amounts of alcohol, with these expectations existing both within and outside the student community. This rationalization for consumption was also supported by their (primarily negative) experiences when not drinking in alcohol type situations. Most of our participants seemed fairly clear that their alcohol consumption would subside once they left university, and they used this as a means by which to rationalize any current excesses.

Fulfillment of expectations

One of the key themes to emerge builds on the expected student identity also discussed in Piacentini and Banister (2006). Participants tended to think that high levels of alcohol consumption were a key aspect of being a student.

[Discussing whether drinking is expected of him] *Definitely, definitely, football bar crawls, peer pressure, you get abused if you don't drink, you're forced to do things you know you shouldn't do like the 'dirty pint'.⁷ Potentially they have the power to kill you. [Rhys]*

- Lisa: *You have to really because I don't think you would have the proper uni life if you didn't drink*
- Alison: *Yeah.. (Claire: yeah ..Anna: yeah)*
- Lisa: *because you wouldn't get as many friends you wouldn't get the whole uni experience (Suzy: social thing) unless you were friends with other people who drank but there's not that many people at uni who don't drink*

⁵Chris refers to a game named 'screw ball scramble' which involves moving a ball bearing from one end of a course to the other. In this version whoever loses (ie does not get their ball bearing as far) had to face the forfeit of drinking lots of beer.

⁶In this example the 'beer bong' is used as a social means by which to consume alcohol.

⁷Please see previous explanation of the 'dirty pint'

- Alison: *I don't know anyone actually*
 Lisa: *I don't*
 Claire: *No well when I've gone out and not drank I usually end up having a crap night because everyone else is pissed and not making sense and you just get pissed off with them well I do anyway I'm just like I want to go home*
- Vicky: *When you subscribe to uni, part of the course is going out and getting pissed with your mates*
 Jake: *If someone said you can go out tonight and everything is free, you can't drink you would be like urgh no.*

These discussions hint at the potential for students to become 'segregated' within universities according to their behavior and attitudes toward alcohol. There are certainly undergraduate students within the university who do not drink yet our participants seldom mentioned these non-drinking students and did not seem to socialize with them.

Key benefits of alcohol consumption

There are a number of key benefits that were associated with excessive alcohol consumption, and these are explored in this section. As the previous discussions demonstrated, a number of activities surrounded alcohol consumption and facilitated group cohesion. However, the social value of alcohol to students did not stop here, and we now move on to talk about the role of alcohol in facilitating social interaction.

Provision of social facilitation

It quickly became clear that for many of our participants alcohol provided a clear social function and constituted a key aspect of students' social lives at university, reflecting the findings from our previous research (Piacentini and Banister 2006). There were two aspects to its role of social facilitation, which are neatly summed up by the following exchange. Firstly alcohol, and more specifically getting drunk, provided a means by which to meet new people and secondly it provided a social bond within the social group (as mentioned previously).

- Justin *I think especially to meet new people in the start of uni and stuff, like, all going out and getting drunk is the best way to get to know each other, in a relaxed atmosphere.*
- Tina *Like whenever you go out in a group it's always to drink, it's never go out as a group to go to the cinema or anything like that (Group agreement)*
- Laura *It's things like getting, if you get totally wrecked then it's a sign of a good night (laughter)*

Alcohol was also perceived to facilitate social interaction via its effect on individuals' personality characteristics. There was the belief that consuming alcohol allowed participants to enact (both positive and negative) aspects of their characters, which remained hidden or subdued while sober. Therefore participants used alcohol as a tool with which to enact positive possible selves, primarily a more confident and outgoing possible self.

"... it gives you confidence when you try to meet new people"
 [Sarah]

"... Yeah drink does give you that bit extra confidence. Well I wouldn't have met my girlfriend now, if I hadn't been drunk, it gave me confidence to go and talk to her" [Rhys]

However, participants also balanced these positive selves with the potential enactment of negative possible selves. Many participants—both male and females—identified aggression as a characteristic associated with alcohol consumption, which had negative connotations.

I think it [alcohol] definitely gives me more confidence and sometimes it makes me a bit more aggressive depends on the situation where and when I drink [Justin]

- Ryan *Basically Sarah hit me once and then it didn't really hurt that much*
 Carl *Yeah?*
 Ryan *No and she said can I hit you again and I said yes and she absolutely fucking pummelled me*

I reckon it causes a lot of arguments too. [Harry] will know about this. My ex-girlfriend used to drink quite a lot, get really, really pissed, have so many arguments. Ruined my night all the time, hated it. That's one of the reasons why I don't drink. [Rhys]⁸

There was also concern exhibited by some participants (particularly males) that they would not be perceived as being aggressive. In the following exchange the participants are looking at a photograph of Rhys (taken while drunk) on the wall.

- Brian- *Look at his face!*
 Rhys- *Not violent, it's not violent!*
 Brian- *I didn't say it was violent*
 Rhys- *Disgraceful behavior yeah but not violent*

One participant saw the potential for what was normally perceived to be a positive characteristic—confidence—as interpreted negatively when exhibited in excess.

The thing is I see myself as quite a confident person I think that alcohol can sometimes make me a bit irritating and I can go a bit too far and people can be like "fuck off" [Tina]

Therefore it is generally acknowledged that alcohol consumption could have both positive and negative effects on social facilitation, despite this providing a key rationale for alcohol consumption. Participants managed the risk of enacting aspects of their undesired/negative self, necessitating balancing the positive effects (e.g. social facilitation) with possible negative effects (e.g. hangovers and embarrassing situations).

Achieving an altered state—drinking to get drunk

The overall picture that emerged was one of students drinking primarily to get drunk. Our participants liked being drunk and deliberately sought to achieve this 'altered state'. They rationalized their behavior as temporary and this allowed them to disregard the particular dangers and risks involved with high levels of alcohol consumption. Alcohol consumption helped them to achieve some

⁸Rhys' comment here appears contradictory in the sense that he has talked openly about consuming alcohol and then says he doesn't drink. This kind of claim was noticed with quite a few participants in the sense that if they felt they did not drink heavily, they would classify themselves as non-drinkers, but often this *lighter* drinking was classified as such in comparison with others who might be very heavy drinkers.

of the aspects associated with student life, traditionally a time to study hard whilst playing hard, utilizing drink to lose inhibitions and bond socially.

The findings supported previous studies that claim a significant proportion of students drink with the sole intention of getting drunk (e.g. in the US, a figure of 48% has been identified [Marklein 2004]) There were numerous unprompted discussions in which students noted the extent to which they drank with this outcome in mind. In the excerpt below the participants talk about the tendency to drink to get drunk, and Laura draws a comparison with three of the group participants—Tina, Dennis and Ryan—who she views as drinking for alternative reasons—primarily to relax. She hints that their motivations for alcohol consumption are at odds with her motivations and those of many of her friendship group.

- Justin *I don't see the point personally of going out and having a couple of drinks*
 Ryan *Yeah*
 Justin *And not*
 Ryan *See all or nothing*
 Justin *Yeah*
 Laura *Unless you're a steady drinker yeah*
 Justin *Yeah I wouldn't go out and have two or three pints and come home and go to bed*
 Laura *Yeah like Tina and Dennis and Ryan will drink cos it's like something that you do in your evening to have a relax or whatever? It's not like a lot of people probably... I don't know about you Sarah but if you go out, then, we'll go out and get totally drunk cos that's the only time you properly drink alcohol*
 Jason: *Do they put the percentage on the drink to stop you drinking it because...*
 Chris: *No...*
 Jason: *I go for the higher...*
 Chris: *Yeah*
 Jason: *The more pissed it gets the more I'll buy it...but why?*
 Vicky: *Its not the case of how much alcohol is there, its how the alcohol affects you...*

Participants continuously discussed the cost of drinks, and the challenge of maximizing their expenditure to achieve the 'best' result. This represented a kind of cost-benefit analysis, using limited funds to achieve tangible results (drunkenness) from their expenditure.

- Tina *When we went for a drink with you guys in the Friary before you went to that house party like we had two drinks each and it was a tenner, so you do start to realize that we could've had like four bottles of wine for that...*
 Laura *You could've bought a CD or something or a DVD or could have bought a present for a loved one (group laughs)*

However, this attitude was not universal, with some students acknowledging that sometimes they would drink smaller amounts of alcohol to enjoy the taste.

- Rhys- *If you don't want to drink, then you shouldn't drink at all. If you think about it, you go into a pub, you drink three pints, that's six quid on average, and*

unless you're Ben three pints isn't going to get you pissed, so there's no point in drinking. Then you just need a wee....

- Rhys- *No it is, if you think about it, it's just pissing away money. I'd rather just have one coke or something*
 Brian- *Yeah but I can buy a bottle of wine, drink it throughout the evening, not to get drunk, just because I enjoy it....*
 Rhys- *The taste of the wine yeah. Food, wine goes well with food.*
 Brian- *Yeah. I do the same with beers. I'll just get a couple in and drink them slowly through the night just to enjoy them rather than to get really drunk.*

However, the comments made by Rhys and Brian provided the exception rather than the rule. The indication was given that few of the participants would drink solely because of a liking for the taste of alcohol. In fact few of them drank when there was no intention to go out and socialize. However, they acknowledged that this was a pastime that they might enjoy in the future and many of them talked about drinking wine with their meal at their parents' house (i.e. away from the student context).

Relief from boredom

There was also an element of rationalizing alcohol consumption because it was considered to provide relief from boredom. Many of our participants mentioned this. We should pick up on Dowdall and Wechsler's (2002) point regarding the importance of understanding our participants' context. The university the students attend is positioned just outside a small city. Undoubtedly there are fewer activities to keep the students entertained than might be the case in other non-campus universities based in larger livelier cities.

- Laura *Sobriety is boring*
 Ryan *I got bored to death by just sitting in my room sort of thing so I think alcohol could make it more fun (Dennis laughs)*
 [And later in the same discussion]
 Ryan *Do you know what I think if I had like an X-box*
 Laura *The internet you need the internet*
 Ryan *Yeah if I had the internet or an X-box I wouldn't drink that much I'm just bored like I've watched all the DVDs we've got I've got nothing to do*
 Tina *Actually that's true*
 Ryan *I wish this was actually a group session instead of this*
 Dean *Time just goes quicker if you're drinking*
 Ryan *Yeah definitely*

However, one participant felt negatively about the assumption that students tend to drink excessively; and pointed out that he had other things in his life, inferring that this limited his 'need' for alcohol (again suggestive that boredom encouraged students to drink excessively).

[Group 4]

- John: *I find great pleasures. I find other pleasure in life not just alcohol consumption like some students... [Chris laughs]*
 John: *I have some hobbies...*
 Mark: *What pleasures? [Background noise of laughter]*
 John: *mmm...*
 Chris: *Not too graphic please Andrew*
 John: *I quite like soccer and bedroom sports*

- Mark: [laughs] *so have you found since you got a girlfriend you drink less?*
- John: *Probably, like first term was getting wrecked all the time. The second term a lot of people sort of paired off...*

Experiences of not drinking in alcohol type situations'

As part of their discussions about drinking to get drunk, participants talked about 'drinking situations' where they had specifically remained sober. Their responses illustrate the challenges associated with the 'drink sensibly' message.⁹

[Group1]

- Jack *Tried it once [not drinking] and then about halfway through the night I just thought fuck it and started drinking*
- Carl *And if you and if you have gone to these situations and haven't drank how did this effect your night?*
- Ryan *I actually went in a nightclub when I hadn't drunk before it was really crap [group agreement]*
- Jack *You notice how dodgy all the clubs are and how minging¹⁰ everything is [group agreement]*
- Tina *And the sleazy sorts of people that are there*
- Jack *Yeah you just notice more and things and things you don't normally see basically when you're sober*
- Laura *And also when everyone else is drunk and they all seem to be having a really good time and you just want to be in that place yeah*

Experiences like this tended to rationalize students' alcohol consumption. In addition it led many of our participants to avoid socializing in 'alcohol type situations' (i.e. particularly clubs and late night bars) if they did not intend to consume alcohol.

The future...life after university

The 'alternative boundaries'¹¹ that students experienced were clearly viewed as temporary. Participants' alcohol consumption and positive attitudes towards excessive intake seemed to be justified on this basis. There was an assumption they would make the most of their years at university and their consumption would become more 'normalized' on leaving university and would begin to conform with the boundaries common to the rest of society.

- Dean *Cos I feel like I feel like I should be making the most of my time here I try and make sure that I do go out for a big night a week once or twice a week once a week once every fortnight trying to make sure I do go out*
- Ryan *The thing is you're only gonna be at university for three years or four years for some people and for those three years it's an experience you gotta I mean I wouldn't want to like look back and say at university I had a proper flat time like and it was shit*

After you have left uni you won't go out during the week as much and you will probably go out one night at the weekend not both [Lisa G3]

The key justification here is that by consuming high levels of alcohol, students are only doing what students do and they will cease once they become 'full working adults'. However, for one of our participants the reputation of students as big drinkers was something that she viewed negatively.

- Laura *The thing is though you are a student and like I find that people don't take you seriously ohhh they are like students they get pissed every night and do fuck all and I actually don't*
- Ryan *Well that's you're saying something's inherently wrong with that? Just*
- Laura *Well yeah there is in that you want to be taken seriously*
- Ryan *Well while we're young why don't you just get on with it*
- Laura *Well yeah cos the thing is like we're in the top 15% of the country and people take the piss out of us*

Participants' discussions of the temporary nature of their behavior seemed to revolve around the expectation that their drinking habits would change once they left university. Some participants predicted alcohol would maintain a socialization function—particularly for workplace networking—but the majority of discussions indicated an expectation that alcohol would take on more of a relaxant role, no longer functioning as a key social aid.

- Dennis *If I've got a stressful job I'll probably still be drinking in the evenings*
- Justin *I think I think I'll be more likely to have a relaxing drink a relaxational beer if I wanted my wife to open it and pour it into a glass for me*
- Tina *That's it you'll be more likely to be in as well*
- Justin *Yeah you won't have time or the energy to go out*
- Laura *Although it depends where you live, say if you live in cosmopolitan London and like you went out to like nice swishy bars and stuff*
- Dennis *I'd rather go to a village pub*
- Mark: *What about when you get a job?*
- Vicky: *Yeah. I don't intend to drink as much*
- Des: *It depends on money... which could affect it*
- John: *I want a job like Scouse Dave, who is a beer sampler*
- Mark: *So you think when you get more money you will drink better drinks?*
- Peter: *You will drink to enjoy it, and not get drunk*
- Mark: *So you will buy Budweiser, Peter?*
- Jake: *That's why I don't worry about drinking hardly now, if I drank as much as I drink now for the rest of my life I would probably have liver problems.*

⁹The main UK alcohol promotion messages focus on slogans such as 'don't do drunk' 'drink in moderation'

¹⁰Colloquialism meaning horrible or disgusting

¹¹See Measham (2004:319) who talks about calculated hedonism operating within the boundaries of time (typically the weekend), space (club bar etc), company (supportive friends) and intensity. We can recognise that the boundaries for students are not the same as for the general population, perhaps facilitating opportunities for heavier drinking.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Our choice of methods provided an extremely successful means by which to encourage our participants to 'open up' and discuss their alcohol consumption habits in a frank manner. We are confident that our use of student researchers and friendship groups enriched both the range and depth of our findings. Students were able to talk about their alcohol consumption in comfortable surroundings (generally the home of the student researcher) and the

transcripts reflected the researchers' success in engaging in discussion that focused on core themes of interest yet resembling everyday conversations for the participants. However, it should also be noted that the use of relatively untrained qualitative researchers provided one of the study's major weaknesses with students perhaps failing to reach sufficient depth in certain areas, which in parts made the task of analysis and interpretation difficult. There were some instances when meanings and language were checked with the student researchers—thus helping to bridge potential gaps between informants' stories and the authors' analysis and interpretation.

Our major findings focused on the way participants consumed alcohol (e.g. rituals), the language they used to talk about their behavior, the means by which they rationalized their behavior, and ultimately the enjoyment and perceived benefits they gained from drinking alcohol and being drunk. Alcohol provided an important social facilitator, a kind of social fuel and confidence booster that helped our participants to meet new people and have fun.

Owing to our focus and space limitations we have not been able to report the negative experiences associated with alcohol that students discussed. However, suffice to say that our participants felt so strongly about the importance of alcohol in their lives that despite negative experiences—e.g. hangovers or doing something they later regretted whilst drunk—any reduction in consumption was temporary (e.g. students might take one night off alcohol). Participants reconciled their behavior with widespread knowledge concerning the health effects of high levels of alcohol consumption by emphasizing that their drinking habits would change on leaving university, and this provided a key rationalization of what they saw as a temporarily excessive intake. On this note it would be extremely interesting to track students' alcohol consumption on leaving university and identify whether their behavior does in fact change in the way they have predicted or whether alternative rationalizations are sought.

It must be acknowledged that some issues could be restricted to the particular context of our study. A different university, city and of course different participants might have led to a different range of discussions and findings. It would be useful to conduct further studies specifically talking to students who do not drink alcohol (or drink very low levels of alcohol) and identify how they experience life as a student and deal with what our participants might consider a void left through not drinking or drinking in lesser amounts.

In terms of the implications of our study for policy makers and university welfare departments, a number of key issues emerged. Despite being aware of the dangers associated with high levels of alcohol consumption, our participants perceived these dangers as primarily concerned with long-term alcohol abuse (dependency) and so were able to rationalize their behavior as temporary and less worrying. In this sense students saw themselves as a 'special population' and to some extent beyond the health promotion messages concerning alcohol, as post-university they would settle down with alcohol assuming a role as a relaxant rather than specifically a social tool. This has important public policy implications because it suggests that alcohol campaigns focusing on students would need to use different approaches and messages. It would be useful for alcohol health campaigns to pick up on some of the rituals which accompany alcohol consumption—so for example the preparation, post-episode and day after socialization—recognizing that for many young people, their enjoyment of drinking is not just about the alcohol but also the wider environment which accompanies this. It was also interesting to see how our participants had taken on the terminology used by media, researchers and health professionals, but using it in a primarily positive way, with the sense that a binge session reflected a good night out. This suggests that the

use of more formal language might be helpful and less likely to be adopted by young people, serving to normalize the activity and therefore lessen the impact of the message.

Consumers and specifically students can take away from this study an improved understanding of how they use alcohol to facilitate social interaction and bonding and may feel encouraged to question their need for such high levels of consumption. Policy makers and health professionals can begin to build a more detailed and in depth understanding of the importance of alcohol in students' lives. Any recommendations or alcohol reduction messages need to start from this premise—i.e. situated in an understanding of the particular context of students' lives—the primary social activities, the bars and drinks promotions, the rituals and language and ultimately the perceived benefits that alcohol offers. However, students could be provided with more advice and information to help them recognize when alcohol has taken on a role beyond that which seems to be the norm (e.g. signs to look out for in friends), how to drink and socialize safely (e.g. organizing transport home at the beginning of the night) as well as ensuring that universities facilitate plenty of social activities in order to ensure that students do not need to drink in order to have a good social life while studying.

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When Temptation Hits You: The Influence of Weak versus Strong Food Temptations

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Food temptations are common in everyday life, in ads, in stores, on coffee tables during social visits, or in one's own refrigerator... Such temptations constitute a permanent threat to the accomplishment of consumers' long term goals of looking attractive. Resisting these food temptations requires self-control, and fails on some occasions. This happens when attention is diverted from inhibitory restrictions, and narrowed to the most salient available cues, which -ironically- are often the food itself (Ward & Mann, 2000). However, salient temptations might also remind consumers of their objectives (Fishbach et al., 2003), and facilitate self-control. In this paper we study when temptations (weak versus strong) prevent and when they facilitate reaching food-intake control objectives. We distinguish two levels of temptation: weak and strong. According to the 'inoculation' theory (McGuire & Papageorgis 1961), a weak temptation should strengthen self-control because it activates defensive mechanisms that are helpful in warding off subsequent strong temptations. Contrary to this theory, Gilbert, Lieberman, Morewedge, & Wilson (2004) state that a strong temptation should strengthen self-control because it activates inhibitory goals. Weak temptations are not threatening enough to do so. The present research explored the effects of different temptation levels (no versus weak versus strong temptation) on the self-regulation of food intake.

In a first study, one hundred and ninety female undergraduate students were randomly assigned to one of three manipulated temptation levels. Participants were told that the manufacturer of a well-known candy brand, 'Quality Street®', was interested in consumer inferences of the relationship between flavors and wrapper colors and shapes. Participants in the Weak Temptation condition were asked to associate twelve pictures of the candies (of different colors and shapes) with the corresponding flavor of each candy (e.g. 'chocolate with strawberry cream'). Participants in the Strong Temptation-condition were given the same task while a bowl filled with about 50 'Quality Street' candies was present next to them. Participants in the No Temptation-condition were asked to associate ten colors with ten words (e.g. 'white' and 'elephant'). Then, participants were given two bowls of the same volume, one with regular M&Ms® (400 grams), and the other with the 'new' crispy M&Ms (300 grams). They were allowed to sample as many of the M&Ms as they needed to complete a comparison taste test of both types of M&Ms. After the taste test, the remaining M&Ms in both bowls were weighed to assess the amount consumed. The main effect of Temptation seemed significant, indicating that the weak temptation seemed to increase consumption compared to the No Temptation and the Strong Temptation-condition. The strong temptation seemed to help participants in resisting the M&Ms. These results imply that the weak temptation leads to increased consumption in female eaters, whereas strong food temptations seem to help female eaters in exerting food-intake control.

In a second study, we directly measured concept/goal activation resulting from temptation manipulations. One hundred twenty one female undergraduate students participated. Temptation level was manipulated as in study 1, except that the 'Quality Street' candy was replaced by 'Cote d'Or®' mini-chocolates that exist in five different flavors. Then, participants were given a lexical decision

task in which they were asked to respond as quickly and accurately as possible whether the stimulus was a word ('W') or a pseudo-word ('N'). Response times and accuracy were recorded. The test consisted of one hundred trials, including 30 words related to food, dieting and temptation, 20 neutral words, and 50 pseudo-words. Of the 30 goal-related words, half were related to inhibitory goals like dieting and health, and half were related to the taste of food and consumption. A repeated measures ANOVA with Goal Type (food versus diet) as within subject variable, Temptation as between subject variable, and the average reaction time of the neutral words as a covariate, revealed a significant interaction between Goal Type and Temptation. In comparison with the no temptation condition, the food-consumption goal was more activated in the Weak Temptation-condition and less in the Strong Temptation-condition. These results show that a weak temptation arouses positive feelings related to food consumption. The strong temptation, on the other hand, inhibits these positive food-related thoughts.

In a third study, we examined the viability of the causal role of goal activation as suggested in study 2. We tested whether the strong temptation condition was able to inhibit the appetizing effects of an olfactory cue. The results of the third study showed that in the No Temptation-condition, participants in the Scent-condition ate more than in the No Scent-condition. Moreover, in the Scent-condition, the strongly tempted participants consumed fewer M&Ms than the participants that were not tempted. These results imply that the strong temptation seems to inhibit the consumption increasing effect of the scent on consumption. This supports the causal role of the food goal activation.

In summary, the results of study 1 show that weak food temptations might lead to overconsumption while strong food temptations might help consumers in controlling their food-intake, offering support for Gilbert et al.'s (2004) theory. Hence, advertisements featuring food temptations might be more detrimental for overconsumption than placing food right in front of consumers. As study 2 shows, weak temptations arouse positive feelings related to food consumption. The strong temptation, on the other hand, inhibits these positive thoughts related to food and, in this way, strong temptations seem to facilitate self-control. Study 3 showed that the activation of the eating goal by the scent of freshly baked brownies leads participants to increase consumption. However, the strong temptation inhibits this effect, again indicating that strong temptations seem to facilitate self-control by the inhibition of the desire for food.

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400 / When Temptation Hits You: The Influence of Weak versus Strong Food Temptations

Ward, Andrew & Mann, Traci (2000), "Don' t Mind If I Do :
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Excessive Buying: Conceptual Typology and Scale Development

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MOTIVATION

Excessive buying is suggested to be responsible for increases in personal debt and the number of people filing for personal bankruptcy in the U.S. However, academic research on excessive buying is limited. The contributions of this paper are threefold. First, we propose a conceptual definition of excessive buying. Second, building on the “time-inconsistent preferences” and automaticity theory, we propose a typology of excessive buying that captures the complexity of its occurrence. Third, using the proposed typology, a psychometric scale to measure the different types of excessive buying is developed and validated.

DEFINITION OF EXCESSIVE BUYING

We define excessive buying as “an *inappropriate individual* type of buying behavior whereby consumers *repetitively* spend more than what (they think) they can afford”. Two reasons lead us to define excessive buying as a perception-based construct. First, a perception-based definition rules out the influences of external factors (e.g., socioeconomic status) on consumers’ buying behavior. Second, in terms of measurement, a perception-based definition can be easily operationalized by a psychometric scale.

IDENTIFYING THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF EXCESSIVE BUYING

We propose that there are five different types of excessive buying: 1) aspirational, 2) rewarding, 3) remedial, 4) out-of-control, and 5) habitual excessive buying. Excessive buying can be a conscious or unconscious behavior. Based on the “time-inconsistent preferences” theory, conscious excessive buying behaviors is conceptualized as a result of either strong desires or self-control failures. Bargh’s automaticity theory explains why excessive buying might also be a result of unconscious mental processes.

The first three types of excessive buying are motivated by strong desires. Hoch and Loewenstein (1991) imply that a consumer’s desire for owning an object is a summation of: 1) the satisfaction the consumer derives from owning the object and, 2) the deprivation a consumer derives from not owning the object. Sometimes deprivation, induced by adaptation (imagining oneself possessing the object), intensifies desire and the motivation to purchase.

Due to the shift of desire reference point from no-adaptation to adaptation, consumers engage in excessive buying. It is proposed that excessive buying occurs as a result of desire reference point shift induced by social comparisons, positive emotions, or negative emotions.

American consumers constantly make “upward” monetary possession comparisons. When consumers feel that a product may win admiration or status for them, they cannot resist the temptation to buy it at the expense of their long-term economic interests. When consumers are in a positive emotion, they are highly motivated to prolong the positive emotion. As a result, they engage in excessive buying to reward themselves. When consumers are in a negative emotion, they tend to adapt to the notion of possessing surrounding objects so that the negative emotional responses can be alleviated. Consequently, consumers involve themselves in excessive buying. We refer to excessive buying behaviors driven by social comparisons, positive emotions, and negative emotions as “*aspirational*”, “*rewarding*”, and “*remedial*” excessive buying respectively.

A fourth type of excessive buying is induced by self-control failures. Self-control is a significant determinant of people’s consumption behavior. Excessive buyers often report experiencing self-control failures in a shopping context (Hirschman 1992). Why consumers lose self-control helps us to understand the occurrence of excessive buying. Effective self-control is determined by three ingredients (Baumeister 2002). The first ingredient is “standard”. Standards refer to “goals, ideals, norms, and other guidelines that specify the desired response”. Uncertainty or conflicts in goals make people more susceptible to self-control failures. The second ingredient is the process of monitoring. Self-control is jeopardized when people fail to keep track of their expenses. The third ingredient is whether consumers possess sufficient resources to exercise self-control. Consumers cannot overcome temptation when there is a lack of such resources. We refer to excessive buying driven by self-control failures as “*out-of-control*” excessive buying.

Finally, a fifth type of excessive buying is induced by habits. We propose that a considerable portion of excessive buying is the result of unconscious mental processes. Consumption goals can be activated and then operated all outside of awareness (Bargh 2002). Especially, similar or familiar features of environment can automatically activate goals associated with the features in the past, leading individuals to act in accordance with the same goals. In a shopping context, when consumers enter familiar stores where they used to commit excessive buying, the same consumption goals that drive consumers to buy excessively will be activated automatically and guide consumers’ buying behavior. We refer to excessive buying driven by habits as “*habitual*” excessive buying.

SCALE DEVELOPMENT

Based on the proposed typology, a psychometric scale to measure excessive buying is developed and validated by using 2 studies and 233 respondents. Items are generated based on our theoretical typology and qualitative data from a survey research (Richins and Dawson 1992). Items are purified and examined by using confirmatory factor analysis. The analysis results in a 20-item five factor excessive buying scale. The five factors correspond to the five different types of excessive buying. A 9-item scale is also developed to measure the economic and emotional consequences of excessive buying. Reliability and convergent and discriminant validity of the scales are tested. Nomological validity of the excessive buying scale is tested by examining the relationship between the different types of excessive buying and the economic and emotional consequences. Specifically, the model suggests that “habitual” and “out-of-control” excessive buying result in significant economic consequences, while both “remedial” and “rewarding” excessive buying behaviors result in significant emotional consequences. No significant relationship is found between aspirational excessive buying and the economic or emotional consequences.

CONCLUSION

The current research proposes a perception-based definition for excessive buying. This research also suggests that there are five different types of excessive buying. Based on the typology, a psychological scale to measure excessive buying is developed and validated. Future research is needed to refine the current scale.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Psychological Processes in Financial Decision-making: A Consumer Perspective

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ABSTRACTS

“Intuitive Compounding: Framing, Temporal Perspective, and Expertise”

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Many important financial decisions hinge on a proper understanding of compound interest. For example, decisions on how much and when to invest in a 401(k) plan, whether to refinance a loan, or how to trade off various attributes of a loan instrument (rate, points up front, duration, etc.), cannot be made without a proper understanding of compounding. Furthermore, some judgments that enter into assessments of well-being and happiness, such as whether prices or wages are fair (cf., Bolton, Warlop, and Alba 2003), also depend on a proper understanding of compounding.

When consumers approach such decisions, however, their understanding of this critical concept is frequently quite poor. This problem is exacerbated because the geometric nature of compounding is counter-intuitive even to those who are intellectually familiar with the underlying theory. Furthermore, to accurately choose an option in many of the financial domains outlined above would require substantially greater spreadsheet modeling expertise than is possessed by the vast majority of consumers, which means that there will frequently be a substantial intuitive component to consumer decision-making in these domains.

A limited number of studies (e.g., Wagenaar and Sagaria 1975; Wagenaar and Timmers 1979) have investigated people's ability to intuitively predict the outcome of an exponential growth process. Most of these experiments were conducted in unfamiliar domains (such as the growth of duckweed on a pond) rather than in the more familiar financial domain. An unfamiliar domain is likely to reduce the ability of participants to transfer any expertise that they might possess—an effect that has been demonstrated repeatedly in other tasks (e.g., the Wason 1968 card task). Furthermore, previous studies have not specifically looked for expertise effects or examined heterogeneity in the psychological process used to make decisions.

In three experiments, we explored the psychological underpinnings of consumer estimation of compound interest in a heterogeneous population. In particular, we examined differences in processing arising from negative vs. positive framing (e.g., debt, loans, and inflation vs. interest, raises, stocks), and in differences between retrospective and prospective compounding estimation (i.e., what was the cost of a TV in 1970? vs. what will be the cost of a TV in 2030?). Furthermore, we examined the effects of expertise and training on accuracy. The normative theory is simple: given an interest rate, i , and a time horizon, n , the formula governing compound interest is $FV = PV(1 + i)^n$, where FV and PV are, respectively, the future value and present value of the investment, i is the interest rate, and t is the term.

Results demonstrated that the vast majority of people anchor on simple interest (i.e., $FV = PV[1 + it]$), and then adjust their answer upwards. Reliance on simple interest was demonstrated both by analysis of participants' open-ended responses and by the pattern of coefficients of individual-level models that were fit to respondents' estimates. Anchoring on simple interest yielded acceptable accuracy for short time periods and for low interest rates, however,

massive underestimation resulted for longer time horizons and for higher rates. Most of the major financial decisions that people make during their lives involve either long time periods (e.g., retirement saving, mortgages) or high interest rates (e.g., taking on credit card debt), which makes anchoring on simple interest a pernicious bias. Additional results demonstrated that all respondents found retrospective estimation (i.e., if there are FV dollars in the account today, what PV was invested n years ago at a constant interest rate, i ?) more difficult than prospective estimation.

Although most participants used simple interest as an anchor and were very inaccurate, a small minority were very accurate in their estimates. Open-ended responses and individual level coefficient estimates revealed that these subjects used a completely different estimation process, the “rule of 72.” The rule of 72 is an accurate approximation of the correct financial formula, the core of which is the realization that $y = 72/i$, where y is the number of years that it takes for money invested (or loaned) at an interest rate of i to double in value. If the time horizon is known, the rule of 72 can be used to approximate the effects of compounding by computing the number of doublings implied by (i, t) , and then doubling the principle that number of times. For example, if $PV = \$1,000$, $i = 9\%$, $t = 24$ years, then an exact computation shows $FV = \$7,911$. To use the rule of 72, compute $72/9 = 8$, which demonstrates that money at 9% will double in approximately 8 years. Since the time horizon is 24 years, this represents $24/8 = 3$ doublings, which will result in a $FV_{72} = 2^3 * \$1,000 = \$8,000$ (error = 1%). Note that simple interest would provide an anchor of $FV_{SI} = \$1,000 * 9\% * 24 = \$2,160$ (error = 72%).

In Experiment 3, we trained participants to use the rule of 72. Compared to an untrained control group, the trained condition realized enormous improvements in accuracy, with no increase in time spent on the task.

Expertise in estimating compound interest is strongly linked to the use of the rule of 72. If consumers anchor on simple interest, they are likely to make errors that have massive impact on their financial well being, including underestimating the cost of long-term loans (such as mortgages), saving too little and too late for retirement, and allowing credit card debt to revolve, rather than aggressively paying it down. Furthermore, the results shed light on the difficulty of learning nonlinear functions, even for those with substantial experience with them. Consumers can be taught to be considerably more accurate in their understanding of compounding in a very short amount of time.

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“Choosing for the Long Run: Making Tradeoffs in Multi-period Borrowing”

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Both basic economics and popular wisdom imply that consumers should be sensitive to interest rates when making decisions about borrowing and saving. Consumers assume that lower interest rates are always better, all other things held equal. For example, credit cards regularly compete for business by advertising that they charge interest rates below other cards that the consumer might currently hold. However, examples abound in which consumers choose loans with unreasonably high interest rates, such as products at payday loan stores that can charge interest at annual rates of several hundred percent. Public concern about this tendency for making unwise borrowing choices has resulted in Truth in Lending laws, which require lenders to explicitly state annual interest rates (APRs) for loans regardless of the length of the loan. Yet even with these corrective measures in place, consumers continue to borrow at rates which seem inconsistent with rational behavior.

These inconsistencies may lead us to wonder whether consumers really do pay attention to interest rates when making borrowing decisions. Although borrowers may believe that lower rates are better, their final loan choice may be inconsistent with this belief when other aspects of the loan, such as time schedule and per period payment amount, are changed. One explanation for this inconsistency between beliefs and actual choice is that consumers choose between loans based on attributes other than interest rates, such as the total payment amount, the length of the loan, or the size of the individual payments (even when controlling for budget constraints). This could imply that consumers' sensitivity to interest rates can be exaggerated or muted by the extent to which a change in rates affects these other attributes, such as the total payment amount.

In this paper, I hypothesize that consumers often choose between loans in a way that is inconsistent with both the normative economic model and the behavioral model of discounting. To test this hypothesis, a series of three studies is conducted that asks participants to choose between hypothetical loan schedules. The first study asked participants to repeatedly choose between pairs of loan schedules which differed in length, monthly payment, and annual percentage rate (APR). Since potential borrowers may be using one of several rules of thumb in choosing between loans (e.g., choosing based on total payment, timeframe, per period payment, or APR), pairs of choices were constructed to check for each alternative heuristic. Participants' responses were categorized based on these possible choice heuristics; results indicate that most subjects are consistently choosing the loan schedule with the lowest total payment amount. The second study involved a ranking task, in which participants order a set of eight different loans; the results of this study give us insight into how the various attributes of each loan are traded off. An ordered logit analysis of the data suggests that participants are using a model that puts weight on the rank (and not the absolute value) of several attributes other than interest rate. The third study mirrors Study 1 for positive outcomes (lottery winnings) rather than payments, to investigate whether the attributes that characterized the loan choices would receive similar weight in a gain situation. Results suggest that subjects do switch their emphasis to a different attribute (i.e., to monthly amount rather than total amount) when considering positive streams of payments.

Taken together, these three studies show that, when choosing between loan options, decision makers focus on loan attributes other than APR. This approach differs from previous work in this area since it suggests that people are not using any model of discounting (normative or behavioral), but are instead using sim-

pler decision strategies (and yet not as simple as just choosing based on lowest APR, which may be the simplest strategy of all). Explanations for the use of these decisions strategies may center on a combination of salience, reference points, and temporal bracketing. For example, a theory of reference points predicts that people will react differently when total interest cost is large relative to the original price (as it is in the case of a long loan, such as a mortgage) versus when interest cost is small relative to the original price (as it is for a payday loan). This focus on total payment (or, equivalently, amount of interest) may be stronger than the focus on interest rates for some consumers because the concept of an interest rate is intangible for many consumers. They may interpret interest costs as a penalty assessed by the lender rather than as a way of calculating the time value of money. Thus, even in cases where a consumer can directly compare loans based on APR, interest rates may have some influence, but the total payment amount will also still be taken into account (as the results of Study 2 demonstrate).

An additional implication of this work is its predictions for demand elasticities of interest rates. If consumers are indeed more sensitive to attributes other than APR when considering loans (such as total payment amount), then this will result in a greater sensitivity to interest rates on long term loans, such as mortgages. In other words, the elasticity of demand for rates will be higher for long term loans than for short term loans. Empirical work on loan choices has already noted this result. For example, Attanasio (1994) studied vehicle loans and tried to determine what factors influence borrowing. His empirical findings are consistent with the hypothesis of this paper, in that attributes other than interest rate influence loan choice. Determining these behavioral influences on consumption and savings patterns remains a rich area of future work.

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“Bursting Another Financial Bubble: The Influence of Ability Perception on Choice Satisfaction”

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Prior research has shown that consumers prefer to make a personal choice rather than having the same choice dictated to them even when they are not more satisfied as a result of their own choice (Botti and Iyengar 2004). How can we explain consumers' preference for choosing in spite of their subsequent satisfaction? It has been found that people generally believe that they will outperform others (Alba and Hutchinson 2000). For example, most investors view their ability to select investments as superior to the average investor's ability (Moore, Kurtzberg, Fox, and Bazerman 1999; Wood 1997). The same positivity bias may therefore cause consumers to believe that they can make better choices than anybody else, explaining their general aversion to relinquish choice. This positivity bias extends even to judgments made about others (Klar and Giladi 1997), suggesting that, when estimating someone else's ability to make good choices, people will overestimate their performance as well.

Although this positivity bias in estimates of relative abilities has proven to be quite robust, prior findings suggest that people may be unable to maintain optimistic self-assessments given information about the context of their performance. Research shows that people are likely to apply situational explanations to their own outcomes (Jones and Nisbett 1972). However, people have been also shown to ignore situational information in favor of disposi-

tional explanations for others' outcomes (Jones and Nisbett 1972). Hence, it might be hypothesized that in decision-making contexts in which consumers have access to situational feedback about the quality of their decision outcomes, assessments about one's own comparative abilities are more prone to positive illusions than assessments about others' comparative abilities. In this paper, we investigate the impact of situational feedback on estimates of relative investing abilities in a context where situational feedback is often available—investment decisions. For example, newspapers provide investors with information about the valence and degree of their own investment outcome, about how this performance compares to those of other investors, and about the performance of the market as a whole. Because people tend to incorporate this type of feedback only into evaluations of their own outcomes, we suspect that people's evaluations of their own comparative investing abilities, but not of another's, will be reduced.

We investigate the impact of situational feedback on estimates of relative investing abilities by comparing a situation in which the performance of a selected mutual fund was positive to one in which the performance was negative. Each investment outcome was carefully framed within a set of alternatives that also went up [down], on average, the same amount as the selected fund. Thus, each outcome was always an average outcome. Nevertheless, we predicted that, when the investment was chosen for participants by a third party (e.g., a broker), consumers would attribute the decision outcome to the skills of that broker—a dispositional explanation; conversely, when the investment was chosen by themselves, consumers would attribute the decision outcome to the situational factors (the market). As a result, in a bull market, investors would assess their relative ability following a gain as less stellar than the broker's relative ability. However, in a bear market, investors would judge themselves as less incompetent after a loss than the broker.

We tested this hypothesis in a 2 (self-choice/broker-choice) by 2 (positive outcome/negative outcome) between subject experiment. Participants evaluated the results of a mutual fund that they had either personally chosen or that has been chosen for them by a broker. In the positive outcome condition the mutual fund gained value along with all 3 alternative funds. In the negative outcome condition the fund lost value along with all 3 alternative funds. Results show that participants wanted to choose their mutual fund even though they were on average more dissatisfied with the funds' performance in the self-choice than in the broker-choice condition. When the selected mutual fund gained value, self-choosers' preoccupation with the situation prevented them from inflating their relative investing ability. Because both the selected and the alternative funds went up, on average, the same amount, choosers considering all the information provided could not maintain an optimistic view of their ability relative to average peers as they had not outperformed the market. However, the broker's choice was under much less scrutiny and as a result the broker was rated as more able than the average broker despite the fact that he had merely matched the average market performance. Participants were also most satisfied with the positive outcome that resulted from their broker's choice than with the same outcome when they chose it. A mediational analysis showed that this satisfaction was a direct result of the participants' perceptions of comparative abilities.

In conclusion, though consumers want to make their own choices, in those contexts that qualify decision outcomes with situational information, consumers' tendency to temper their own performance with situational information can lead them to view themselves as relatively unskilled choosers. However, consumers' attribution of dispositional factors to others' outcomes causes them

to perceive third parties making a choice on their behalf as relatively skilled. These disparate perceptions of ability have a direct consequence in outcome satisfaction: low perceptions of ability lead to low satisfaction while higher perceptions of ability lead to higher satisfaction. Thus, participants are ultimately more satisfied with positive results when they do not make their own choices. These results suggest that consumers' optimism about their own abilities can be tempered to an extent that they are actually unbiased in their self-assessments when situational information is available. Furthermore, these findings imply that consumers may not be sufficiently critical of the performance of experts. So, when evaluating the performance of an expert hired to make decisions such as a financial advisor, consumers may unnecessarily attribute positive performance to the skills of that expert.

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Lost in the Story: Factors That Affect Narrative Transportation and Advertising

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EXTENDED ABSTRACTS**“Narrative Transportation and Advertising Effectiveness”***Jing Wang, Northwestern University**Bobby J. Calder, Northwestern University*

Narrative transportation has recently been defined as “a convergent process, where all mental systems and capacities become focused on events occurring in the narrative” (Green and Brock 2000, p. 701). The authors show that high transportation leads to more change in story-related beliefs and evaluations than low transportation. Hence people’s attitudes toward whether individuals with violent mental disorders should be released without supervision change more if they are more transported by a story involving a murder by a disturbed individual.

From a more cognitive perspective, the work of Gerrig (1993; Polichak and Gerrig 2002) emphasizes that transportation should not be thought of as a passive process. This research indicates that transportation is characterized by “participatory responses” which are thoughts actively generated by the person in response to the narrative. Beyond merely paying attention to the story, a person produces her or his own cognitive responses, and this process is instrumental to the experience of transportation.

Based on previous research, we define transportation as a process of narrative information processing in which a person not only attends to information but he or she is absorbed into the flow of a story in a pleasurable and active way. Previous research has focused on how people react differently to a story if it involves high transportation versus low transportation. The present research focuses on how differences in transportation affect an ad that is presented in the context of the story (that is, where the story is the media context for the ad). We propose that these effects depend not only on the extent to which the audience is transported by the context, but they also depend on the relationship between the ad exposure and the transportation experience. Specifically, high transportation should enhance advertising effectiveness if the ad exposure does not interrupt the transportation experience. With high transportation, people are absorbed in the media context and experience it as a pleasurable activity. If an ad does not interfere with this process, say by occurring after the story is completed, the positive experience of transportation will be associated with the ad. This should lead to greater advertising effectiveness. However, if the ad does interrupt the transportation experience, this in itself creates a negative experience that is associated with the ad. This should lead to lower advertising effectiveness. Thus, we predict that the effect of media context transportation on advertising is moderated by the intrusiveness of the advertising. If an ad does not interrupt the transportation experience it benefits from association with the positive experience. If it does interrupt it, it suffers from the association with a negative experience. We conduct three studies to test these predictions.

The first study is designed to test the hypotheses that the effect of context transportation on product attitude is moderated by the intrusion of the ad. Participants are instructed to evaluate a new magazine by reading a sample story. We measure participants’ narrative transportation with Green and Brock’s (2000) transportation scale, and manipulate ad intrusion by inserting the ad either in the middle or at the end of the story. Consistent with our hypotheses, we find that highly transported participants have more favorable

attitudes toward the advertised product than less transported participants when the ad is inserted at the end of the story. However, when the ad is inserted in the middle of the story, highly transported participants have less favorable attitudes toward the product than less transported participants. Also consistent with our hypotheses, we find that highly transported participants perceive the ad inserted in the middle of the story to be more intrusive than less transported participants, and that the perceived intrusiveness of the ad mediates the effect of transportation on product attitude.

One alternative explanation of the results in the first study is that the effects could come from the position of the ad rather than the intrusion, because the time between ad exposure and evaluation is different across the conditions. The second study is designed to rule out this alternative hypothesis and to support our theorizing with a different operationalization of the construct. The ad is inserted in the middle of the story for all participants, but its intrusion to the transportation experience was manipulated by varying participants’ involvement with the advertised product. When participants are highly involved with the product, they are more likely to pay attention to it and process it deeply. As a result, the ad is more intrusive to the transportation experience and participants should have a less favorable attitude toward the advertised product because of the interrupted transportation experience. On the other hand, an uninvolved product should be less likely to interrupt the context transportation experience. Consequently, the product attitude should be less influenced by how transporting the context is. The results confirmed our hypotheses.

In the third study, we approach the theoretical link between the transportation experience and the processing of the ad from the flip side. Rather than manipulating the ad processing, we manipulate the degree of transportation itself by giving half participants a cognitive load. All participants read one of the two versions of the same story, one more transporting than the other. The ad is inserted in the middle of the story for all participants. We show that the effects of interrupted transportation are eliminated when the transportation experience is diminished by a resource-demanding task.

In summary, we show across three studies that transportation leads to a more favorable product attitude when the ad is not intrusive to the transportation experience, whereas transportation leads to a less favorable product attitude when it is interrupted by the ad. We also show the robustness of our results by operationalizing both transportation and ad intrusion in different ways.

“Narrative Self-Referencing”*Jennifer Edson Escalas, Vanderbilt University*

Self-referencing occurs when one processes information by relating it to one’s self or personal experiences (Burnkrant and Unnava 1995). Some consumer research has found that self-referencing serves to increase product feature and ad message elaboration, leading to enhanced persuasion when message arguments or product features are strong, but not when they are weak (e.g., Burnkrant and Unnava 1989). The predominant explanation for these findings is that self-referencing facilitates elaboration of incoming information because the self is a highly organized, complex memory structure (Greenwald and Banaji 1989; Klein, Loftus, and Schell 1994). Other research has found that self-referencing can also serve to distract attention away from and thus eliminate the differential effects of strong versus weak arguments

(e.g., Sujan, Bettman, and Baumgartner 1993; Escalas 2004). In these studies, persuasion is still enhanced as a result of self-referencing, but the effect is due to affect transfer. When participants recall autobiographical memories or simulate about the future, they generate positive affect, which is linked to the brand. From this research, it appears that an important aspect of self-referent processing is its affective nature.

This paper proposes that there are two distinct types of self-referent processing: analytical and narrative, that is, in the form of a story. Narrative processing has been shown to affect persuasion through a mechanism called transportation, which is defined as “immersion into a text” (Green and Brock 2000, p. 702; Gerrig 1994). Narrative transportation leads to persuasion through reduced negative cognitive responding, realism of experience, and strong affective responses (Green and Brock 2000), mechanisms that differ from the traditional elaboration-based explanations for self-referencing effects (e.g., ELM, Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann 1983). Elaboration based models still apply to self-referent processing that is not in the form of a story, that is, analytical self-referencing. Here, cognitive elaboration is enhanced by relating incoming information to one’s self, resulting in a differential persuasive effect for strong versus weak arguments. These assertions are tested in three experiments.

Our first experiment examines the effects of narrative and analytical self-referencing on persuasion and examines whether transportation is at work in the case of narrative self-referencing. This experiment is designed to examine the differential effect of analytical versus narrative self-referencing across varying argument strength levels in a print advertising setting. Our results demonstrate that different types of self-referencing persuade via different mechanisms. We are able to manipulate self-referencing to encourage either narrative or analytical processing with our stimulus print ad for a fictitious running shoe. Under conditions of narrative processing, self-referencing serves as a distraction from message strength evaluation, resulting in enhanced ad attitudes and brand evaluations even when ad arguments are weak. Under conditions of analytical processing, self-referencing serves as to enhance elaboration such that only strong ad arguments are persuasive. The experiment finds support for the idea that narrative self-referencing persuades as a result of narrative transportation, with more compelling or “transporting” stories leading to lower consideration of weak arguments (and by extension, less consideration of other analytical factors, such as source credibility). In this case, we find that persuasion is mediated by narrative transportation, which leads to fewer negative cognitive responses and more positive affective responses.

The second and third experiments identify a moderator of narrative transportation, skepticism towards advertising, and test whether people who have a tendency to respond to advertising with skepticism (experiment 2) or are instructed to behave as an ad critic (experiment 3) are less likely to be transported by an advertisement that encourages narrative self-referencing. These experiments test the premise that consumers who are distrustful of marketers’ intentions will be less likely to engage in narrative processing and more likely to process the ad analytically (Friestad and Wright 1994). In both studies, participants are exposed to a print ad for a fictitious shampoo product that has text encouraging narrative self-referencing via instructions to imagine using the shampoo. Results for experiment 2 show that individuals who are highly skeptical of advertising are less likely to be persuaded by weak arguments because they are not transported by the ad’s instructions to imagine themselves using the product. These skeptical individuals are not distracted from paying attention to and analytically evaluating the

ad’s arguments. Less skeptical individuals, on the other hand, follow the pattern of results found in experiment 1: under conditions of narrative processing, self-referencing serves as a distraction from message strength evaluation. Here, persuasion occurs as a result of narrative transportation, with more compelling or “transporting” stories leading to less elaboration on weak arguments; narrative transportation mediates the effect of type of processing (here, operationalized as more likely to be analytical for consumers who are highly skeptical of advertising) by argument strength interaction on ad attitudes and brand evaluations.

Experiment 3 is also designed to examine whether ad skepticism moderates the effect of narrative transportation, but in this case, we manipulate whether or not participants act as ad critics while viewing the same shampoo ad used in experiment 2. In this study, we are again able to replicate the finding from experiments 1 and 2: under conditions of narrative processing, self-referencing serves as a distraction from message strength evaluation, while under analytical processing (evoked by our critique manipulation), self-referencing serves to enhance elaboration. Here, our critique manipulation evokes ad skepticism, which leads to analytical self-referencing, even in response to ad text encourages narrative self-referencing for less skeptical respondents. We again find that when self-referencing does not evoke narrative processing, persuasion occurs when product arguments are strong, consistent with a high degree of analytical elaboration. Finally, persuasion effects under conditions of narrative processing are again mediated by narrative transportation. Immersion into one’s storied thoughts leads to persuasion through reduced negative cognitive responding, realism of experience, and strong affective responses (Green and Brock 2000).

“The Impact of Prior Thinking on the Enjoyment of Experiences”

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Many consumption experiences take place after one has both planned for and then thought about an event. The purpose of our research is to determine contexts in which thinking in advance about an event increases its value and to develop a theory parallel to both transportation theory and mental simulation that accounts for this increase in preference. We demonstrate our findings with two laboratory experiments in which participants watched films of both short and feature length. We find significant increases in preference measures between participants who were encouraged to think and write about a film’s abstract prior to viewing the film and control conditions in which participants were not given such opportunities to expand on their thoughts about the upcoming film.

There are several mechanisms through which such prior thinking increases the pleasure attached to an event. We investigate these mechanisms by relating two theoretical frameworks. First, transportation theory (Green & Brock, 2000) has been typically applied to narratives and suggests that highly transported readers become more immersed into a story. Such immersion incorporates the self and often increases positive affect related to the story and its protagonists. In our experiments references to the self in the prior elaboration stage may have increased the degree to which those in the experimental conditions were transported by the films. Second, mental simulation (c.f. Taylor, et al., 1998) describes a mechanism in which people simulate (mentally rehearse) the process of experiencing an event. Mental simulation has been previously applied to goal setting and coping (Taylor, et al., 1998) as well as in reducing judgment errors associated with cognitive heuristics (Sanna, et al., 2004). Both of these mechanisms share the property that advance

thinking limits the cognitive interruptions that can interfere with acceptance and enjoyment of the narrative process. We extend these theories by examining how mental simulation and allowing oneself to be transported through preparation can lead to greater pleasure of experiences.

We report two studies demonstrating the effect of future thinking on preferences and enjoyment for experiences. In one study, participants viewed ten-minute instructional films from the 1950's. After reading an abstract, participants in treatment conditions spend either five minutes discussing what they think they will like about the story and how the film might be self relevant. In control conditions, participants read the abstract and then were given a five minute distraction task where they were asked to discuss their most recent movie going experience. We find that participants in the treatment conditions enjoyed the film more as exhibited by both ratings and choice measures. In addition, participants who thought ahead about a film performed better on a memory task in which they had to recall the order of scenes from the movie. These memory results are highly suggestive that participants who mentally simulated watching the film became highly transported during while watching the film.

In study second study, we formed a movie-club where participants watched four feature length documentary films over the course of one month. In two different treatment conditions, participants were emailed the movie's abstract ahead of time and were asked to write about aspects of the movie they would enjoy. In a control condition, participants were only able to read the movie's abstract upon entering the auditorium just prior to viewing the film. We find that participants who were emailed the movie's abstract ahead of time enjoyed the movie more so than participants who only read the abstract just prior to watching the movie. We also analyzed all participants' open-ended responses to measures following the movie and found that participants who read and thought about the abstract ahead of time were less likely to use negative affective words and critical thoughts. We also administered follow-up surveys several days after each movie night had taken place and found both of these results to be stable over time.

The results from both studies suggest a process parallel to transportation theory and mental simulation may account for the increase in pleasure and preference ratings. This process is also akin to a fluidity account whereby viewers who are highly transported are less likely to suffer from a cognitive interruption from watching the film.

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Interpersonal Behaviors during Service Encounter and Their Impact on Service Outcome: An Application of the Interpersonal Circumplex Model

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

Consumers and marketing researchers have recently paid an increased attention to the interface between clients and service firms. However, despite its critical importance, the interpersonal aspect of service encounters and its impact on service outcome remain relatively unexplored.

Research into the interpersonal aspect of service encounters typically rely on static measurement tools such as retrospective self-reports to assess the impact of personal exchanges on service outcome. Past studies suggest that a process approach could facilitate the exploration of personal interaction and provide additional insights into its impact on service outcome. Previous research also suffers from limitations in scope of inquiry. First, past research typically focuses on the impact of the providers' behaviours on service outcome (i.e., the *exposure* effect from the client's perspective), whereas few studies explored the impact of clients' own behaviours (the *expression* effect) and the interrelationship between provider and client behaviours. Second, past research typically focus on behaviours along the power/control dimension to the exclusion of behaviours on other major dimensions such as affiliation.

The primary objective of the present research is to contribute to our theoretical understanding of interpersonal exchanges that naturally unfold during service encounters and of their impact on service outcomes. We build upon the interpersonal circumplex model (ICM) to examine client-provider interactions in a healthcare context.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

The ICM holds that interpersonal behaviours can be characterized as a set of traits organized in a circle defined by two major dimensions, agency and communion. The agency dimension reflects an individual's strivings for mastery and power that enhance and protect the differentiation of the individual. This dimension is anchored by assured-dominant and unassured-submissive traits. The communal dimension, which is anchored by warm-agreeable traits and cold-quarrelsome traits, reflects strivings for union, intimacy and the participation in the collective.

Evidence suggests that during dyadic interaction, expression of, as well as exposure to certain type of interpersonal behaviours has significant impact on interactants' subjective well-being and satisfaction. Regarding expression effects, studies show that expression of agreeableness and dominance typically lead to better psychological wellbeing and adjustment outcome than expression of quarrelsomeness and submissiveness. Regarding exposure effects, studies show that exposure to agreeableness and submissiveness is generally associated with better positive interaction outcomes than exposure to quarrelsomeness and dominance. We therefore propose that during service encounters, clients' expression of agreeableness and dominance will have more positive impact on service outcome than client's expression of quarrelsomeness and submissiveness, whereas clients' exposure to provider agreeableness and submissiveness will have more positive impact than exposure to provider quarrelsomeness and dominance.

An important prediction from the ICM is the principle of complementarity, which refers to the extent to which behaviours of interacting partners fit with each other in prescribed ways. Complementarity is specified by similarity on the communal dimension (i.e., agreeableness invites agreeableness and quarrelsomeness begets quarrelsomeness) and reciprocity on the agentic dimension (dominance elicits submissiveness and submissiveness elicits dominance). Past research suggests that complementarity is central to maintaining relationship harmony and that complementary vs. a complementary behaviours typically lead to better interaction outcomes. We therefore propose that during service encounters client-provider interpersonal behaviours will generally show a complementary pattern, and that complementary interactions will have more positive impact on service outcome than a complementary interactions.

Method

Research design We adopted a longitudinal, naturalistic design and a process approach, collecting data on a series of service encounters in a natural setting, the dining room of a mid-term geriatric health care facility in Eastern Canada. On-line observation was made of clients' and providers' interpersonal behaviours and client's consumption behaviours over repeated meal episodes.

Participants 32 elderly clients (78.8 ± 12.7 years, 20 females, 10 males; all Caucasians) were recruited as participants. Clients who have insufficient cognitive ability (measured with Mini-Mental Status Examination) and who were in a state of clinical depression were excluded from the study.

Coding of interpersonal behaviours Provider-client interpersonal behaviours were coded using a validated inventory of behavioral descriptors (Moskowitz, 1994) designed to sample the four behavioral characteristics on the ICM. During each meal, coders simply endorsed the behaviours in a given coding list if that behaviour had been observed. Coders had been trained for 30 hours, using videotaped interpersonal exchanges. Inter-coder reliability was maintained at 80% or more over the course of the study.

Consumption behavior The major dependent variable is the amount of food consumed during a meal, which is also the primary service outcome from the perspective of the service providers. Consumption was derived from the estimation of plate leftovers using the Comstock scale. The estimated intake portions were translated into energy and protein intake using a standardized nutrient analysis program.

Results

As expected, correlation analysis of client-provider behaviors yielded a complementary pattern on both dimensions, and the pattern is stronger on the communal dimension than on the agentic dimension. The impact of interpersonal behaviors on service outcome was examined using random coefficient models. Quarrelsomeness was excluded from the model due to its extremely low frequency. Type of meals (breakfast, lunch or supper) and pre-meal hunger (assessed via subjective rating) were treated as covariates. Consistent with expectation, the results show that clients' expression of dominance and agreeableness made significant contribution to food consumption, whereas the expression of submissiveness had

no effect. Also consistent with hypothesis, clients' exposure to provider agreeableness had a significant and positive impact on consumption behavior. Contrary to expectation, exposure to provider dominance did not predict service outcomes. The hypothesized effect of complementarity on the communal dimension was also supported, with complementary behaviors resulting in more positive impact on consumption than complementary behaviors. However, complementarity on the agentic dimension failed to predict consumption. Further, mediation analysis shows that the expression effect of dominance and agreeableness and the effect of complementarity on service outcome were partially mediated through meal duration.

Discussion

This study shows that clients' own interpersonal behaviors, as well as provider behaviors, could significantly impact service outcomes. This study also complements existing literature on service marketing by demonstrating significant impact on service outcome of interpersonal behaviors on both agentic and communal dimensions, suggesting that focusing on one dimension to the exclusion of another could result in incomplete understanding of the interpersonal dynamics and their impact on service outcomes. Finally, this study recommends the ICM as a useful theoretic framework for examining the interpersonal exchanges in service encounters.

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The Waiting Game: The Role of Predicted Value, Wait Disconfirmation, and Providers' Actions in Consumers' Service Evaluations

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ABSTRACT

Management of consumer waiting experiences is critical for practitioners in that unpleasant waiting experiences may result in negative service evaluations. This paper develops a conceptual framework in which predicted value of service, wait expectation (conceptualized as "consumer zone of wait tolerance" derived from the service literatures), wait disconfirmation (consumers' comparisons between wait expectations and perceptions), and affective response to waiting are proposed to directly or indirectly affect service experience evaluation. In addition, this paper proposes that actions of the service provider moderate the relationship between affective response to waiting and service experience evaluation. Conclusions and contributions are discussed.

INTRODUCTION AND JUSTIFICATION

From a practitioner's perspective, waiting lines can be damaging to businesses and have become an important marketing issue. Even though a growing number of companies have attempted to manage consumer waiting experiences through various strategies (e.g., increase of front-line employees, video displays with news updates as waiting time filler, or providing waiting time guarantees to their customers) (Kumar, Kalwani, and Dada 1997), consumer waits remain an unresolved issue. Consequently, more efforts need to be made to understand the waiting process and to reduce the potential negative impact of waits on consumers' evaluations (Kostecki 1996).

From an academician's viewpoint, various theories have been utilized to explain waiting phenomena and how waiting affects consumers' evaluations and satisfaction, including social justice (e.g., Larson 1987), attribution (Chebat, Filiatrault, Gelinias-Chebat, and Vaninsky 1995; Taylor 1994), field theory (Dube-Rioux, Schmitt, and Leclerc 1989; Hui, Thakor, and Gill 1998; Houston, Bettencourt, and Wenger 1998), and social comparison theories (e.g., Zhou and Soman 2003). Among these studies, consumers' affective responses to waiting and service evaluations have been frequently examined (e.g., Dube-Rioux et al. 1989; Houston et al. 1998; Hui and Tse 1996; Taylor 1994; Katz, Larson, and Larson 1991; Pruyn and Smidts 1998). However, the role of personal wait expectations has not been well documented and needs more exploration (Durrande-Moreau 1999) as well as other gaps.

First, the "expectation" concept in waiting has been linked with the concept of wait tolerance (Durrande-Moreau 1999) without a solid theoretical explanation. It has been portrayed as "probable duration," "reasonable duration," "acceptance of waiting time," "acceptability of the wait," and "acceptable waiting time" (Antonides, Verhoef, and van Aalst 2002; Chebat and Filiatrault 1993; Chebat and Gelinias-Chebat 1995; Houston et al. 1998; Hui and Tse 1996; Pruyn and Smidts 1998). The terms, definitions, and operationalizations appear to be somewhat inconsistent. Service expectations literature, which views expectations as a range of two levels of service expectations (i.e., the zone of tolerance), may help to further understand and refine this construct.

Second, existing wait research fails to explain the phenomenon as to why consumers sometimes stay and wait in long lines (e.g., Disney Land) and how their tolerances for waiting may differ. The value concept that emphasizes what is received (i.e., service)

and what is given (i.e., monetary and non-monetary costs) (Zeithaml 1988) may provide an explanation. Nonetheless, little research addresses how different types of values may influence consumers' tolerance for waiting.

Third, past research suggests that consumers' service evaluations are positively influenced by their affective responses to waiting (Hui and Tse 1996; Pruyn and Smidts 1998; Taylor 1994). However, preliminary evidence indicates this relationship may not hold in all instances. Service providers' recovery strategies may help alleviate the negative effect of waits (e.g., Sarel and Marmorstein 1998).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this paper is to conceptualize a framework for waiting by incorporating predicted value, wait disconfirmation, affective response to waiting, and service evaluation. More specifically, there are three objectives. First, this research attempts to clarify the roles of consumers' wait expectations and wait disconfirmation in waiting. Second, it attempts to achieve a better understanding of the relationship between various types of predicted value and consumers' tolerance for waiting. Third, this paper expands the affect-service evaluation relationship and proposes that actions of the service provider play a moderating in that relationship.

Through an integration of three sets of waiting models examined by Taylor (1994), Hui and Tse (1996), and Pruyn and Smidts (1998), this paper provides a conceptual framework (see Figure 1) that centers on the wait expectation-affect-service evaluation relationship. In addition, one antecedent of wait expectation (i.e., predicted value of service) and one moderator (i.e., actions of the service provider) of the relationship between affect and service evaluation are incorporated into the proposed framework.

The following sections are dedicated to discussing the literatures for the constructs in the conceptual framework, including predicted value of service, zone of wait tolerance, wait disconfirmation, perceived wait duration, affective response to waiting, actions of the service provider, and service experience evaluation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

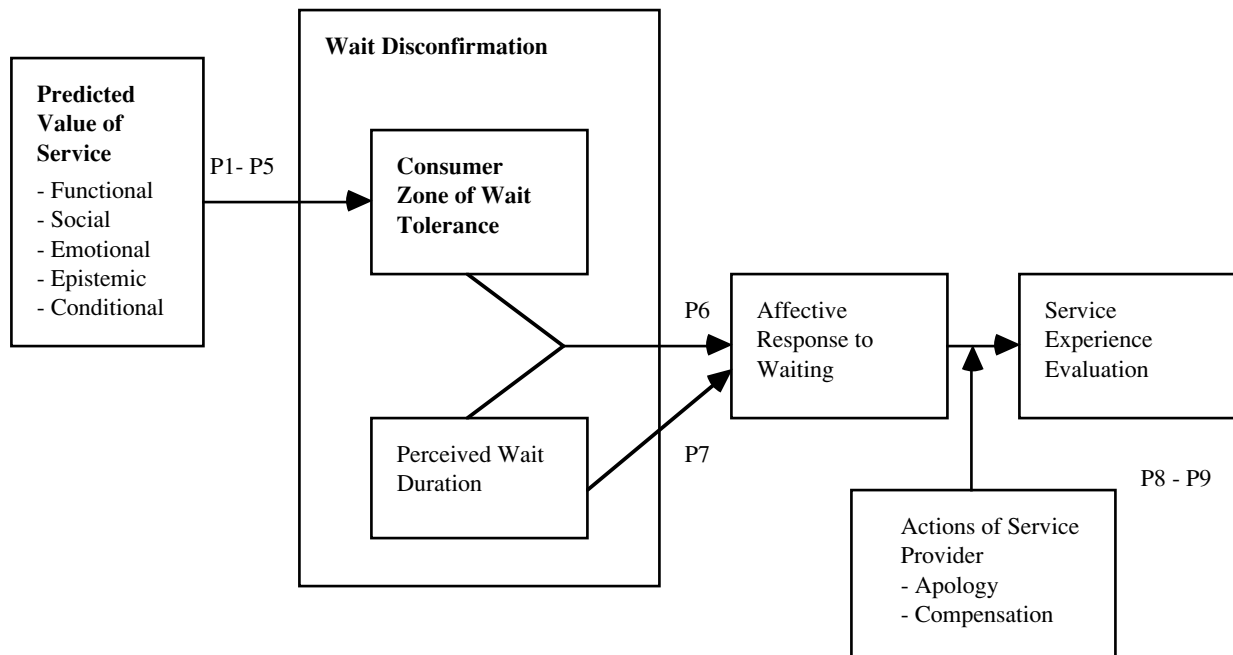
According to Taylor (1994), waiting for service is "the time from which a customer is ready to receive the service until the time the service commences" (p. 56). Waiting time is often regarded as a waste of time (Leclerc, Schmitt, and Dube 1995) and has been described by researchers as boring, frustrating, and irritating (Hui and Tse 1996; Katz et al. 1991). Nonetheless, research has suggested that overall value of service may help alleviate the negative emotions of waiting (Katz et al. 1991; Maister 1985).

Predicted Value of Service

The concept of perceived value has drawn considerable attention from consumer behavior researchers (e.g., Babin, Darden, and Griffin 1994; Bolton and Drew 1991; Sheth, Newman, and Gross 1991a, 1991b; Sweeney and Soutar 2001; Woodruff 1997; Zeithaml 1988). Zeithaml (1988) defined perceived value as "the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions

FIGURE 1

A Model of Waiting Experience Focusing on Value-Wait Disconfirmation-Service Evaluation Relationship



of what is received and what is given" (p. 14). This subjective value perception may exist not only after the consumption experience but also prior to it (Day and Crask 2000; Huber and Herrmann 2000; Sweeney and Soutar 2001; Woodruff 1997). It is possible that consumers may anticipate benefits from a product or service before consumption. This paper adopts this perspective of value concept and refers to it as "predicted value." When consumers are waiting to receive service, they are likely to anticipate certain types of value(s) they hope to obtain prior to consumption/usage regardless of their prior experience with the service. *Predicted value of service* refers to consumers' anticipated utility acquired from consumption of a service. For this paper, the framework of consumption values proposed by Sheth, et al. (1991a, 1991b) is adopted for its wide applications to further understand how various types of value may impact consumer zone of wait tolerance.

Zone of Wait Tolerance, Perceived Wait Duration, and Wait Disconfirmation

In the services literature, expectations are defined as "beliefs about service delivery that function as standards or reference points against which performance is judged" (Zeithaml and Bitner 2003, p. 60). According to Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1993), customer expectations are not static and tend to vary due to the heterogeneous nature of service performance. Therefore, customers may evaluate service performance based on two expectation standards: what they desire and what they view acceptable (Zeithaml et al. 1993). The range between these two standards is known as the "zone of tolerance." According to Zeithaml et al. (1993), the zone of tolerance is defined as the extent to which customers recognize and are willing to accept service performance variation. Researchers support the idea that both desired and adequate service levels should be considered to better understand consumer expectations

(e.g., Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1994; Walker and Baker 2000).

The concept of *consumer zone of wait tolerance* is developed in this paper representing consumer wait expectation. It refers to the extent to which customers recognize and are willing to accept the waiting time to receive the service. Consumer zone of wait tolerance, similar to zone of tolerance, consists of a range of two boundaries, i.e., desired wait and adequate wait expectations. *Desired wait expectation*, not previously discussed in wait research, refers to the most favorable waiting time in which the consumer hopes to receive a service and *adequate wait expectation* refers to the least favorable waiting time the consumer is willing to accept to receive a service. The former reflects what the consumer believes the wait "can be" and "will be" (Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml 1991). It is proposed that the zone of wait tolerance may contract and expand. The greater the difference between desired wait expectation and adequate wait expectation, the wider will be the zone of wait tolerance for the consumer.

Based on discrepancy theory (Michalos 1985), the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm suggests that a consumer will compare his/her experience with a set of expectations. Research suggests that consumers are likely to establish pre-consumption expectancies, make observations about performance, compare performance with expectations, and then form disconfirmation perceptions. According to Oliver (1997), negative disconfirmation refers to "the negative discrepancy that occurs when performance is below standard" and positive disconfirmation refers to "the positive discrepancy that occurs when performance is above standard" (p. 104). A confirmation of expectations, or zero disconfirmation, exists if performance is equal to the standard. This paradigm is mainly cognitive in nature due to the comparison process that requires deliberate processing of information (Oliver 1980). *Wait*

disconfirmation, in this paper, refers to the comparison made by the consumer between his/her wait expectation (i.e., consumer zone of wait tolerance) and perception of wait duration. *Perceived wait duration* refers to the subjective estimate of the time over which the consumer is engaged in waiting. Wait literature has suggested that consumers' perceptions of waiting time may influence their affective responses to waiting (e.g., Taylor 1994).

Affective Response to Waiting

Emotions are valenced reactions to events or objects. Clusters of emotions with the same polarity are usually referred to as either positive or negative affect (Oliver 1997). Affective responses in wait research have been referred to as emotional types of constructs and have been measured in various forms, such as anger (e.g., Taylor 1994) and pleasure (revised from Mehrabian and Russell 1974) (e.g., Chebat and Gelinias-Chebat 1995; Houston et al. 1998; Hui and Tse 1996). *Affective response to waiting* is defined as a series of consumers' feelings and emotions that are provoked by waiting for a service. Numerous studies in waiting identify affective responses as adjacent determinants of consumer service evaluations (Chebat and Gelinias-Chebat 1995; Hui and Tse 1996; Taylor 1994).

Service Evaluations and Waiting

Consumers' service evaluations are usually regarded in waiting research as either (1) evaluations of service quality (Chebat et al. 1995; Taylor 1994) or (2) evaluations of customer satisfaction (Katz et al. 1991; Pruyn and Smidts 1998). Transaction-specific satisfaction is adopted because it helps to capture consumers' psychological responses to a product's or service provider's performance on a given occasion (Oliver 1997; Olsen and Johnson 2003). *Service experience evaluation*, in this paper, refers to the transaction-specific evaluation of satisfaction with a service experience (Cronin, Brady, and Hult 2000). While the relationship between affective response to waiting and service evaluation has been examined in past research, little attention has been drawn to the potential influence of actions of the service provider in that relationship.

Actions of the Service Provider, Fairness Perception, and Waiting

Service providers' actions, from a social justice perspective, have been investigated in the service literature (Brashear, Brooks, and Boles 2004; Goodwin and Ross 1992; McColl-Kennedy and Sparks 2003; Smith, Bolton, and Wagner 1999; Smith and Bolton 2002; Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekar 1998). However, social justice has been discussed in waiting mainly in the queue management context (Rafaeli, Barron, and Haber 2002). While queue systems may alter consumers' fairness perceptions, other actions of the service provider may play roles in fairness perceptions as well (Taylor and Fullerton 2000). The role of these actions in waiting experience has received limited attention. In this paper, *actions of the service provider* refer to visible strategies implemented through service personnel in response to waiting customers. Both interactional and distributive justice variables, e.g., apology and compensation, respectively, are discussed in this paper.

According to social exchange theory (e.g., Deutsch 1975; Goodwin and Ross 1992; Tax et al. 1998), interactional justice represents the manner in which information is exchanged and outcomes are communicated and distributive justice concerns resource or reward allocation and the perceived outcome of exchange. For instance, an apology from the service provider has implications for quality of interpersonal treatment (e.g., courtesy, concern, empathy) which may help to enhance consumers' evalu-

ations of the encounter. In terms of service recovery, compensation (e.g., free merchandise, refunds) can be regarded as a strategy to restore distributive justice perceptions (Blodgett, Hill, and Tax 1997; Goodwin and Ross 1992; Tax et al. 1998).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

Types of Predicted Value and Consumer Zone of Wait Tolerance

Predicted functional value is defined as the anticipated utility acquired through utilitarian or physical performance of alternatives. Sheth et al. (1991a, 1991b) stated that functional values may be attained from product/service attributes, such as price, performance, durability, and reliability. Sweeney and Soutar (2001) further suggest that value for money and quality are aspects of functional value. Raman and Leckenby (1998) concluded that consumers tend to spend more time at advertising web sites when they perceive the ads to have high utilitarian value. When the ad web sites are considered as important and useful, the time for consumers to spend on visiting the sites is likely to be longer. Therefore, there may be a positive relationship between perceived utilitarian benefits and consumers' willingness to wait for a service. Correspondingly, when consumers predict higher functional value from consuming a service, it may be more likely for them to wait patiently and to be more tolerant compared to when the service is predicted to be of low/no functional value.

P1: The greater the consumer's predicted functional value of service, the wider the zone of wait tolerance.

Predicted social value refers to the anticipated utility acquired through association with specific social groups on a basis of demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural-ethnic groups (Sheth et al. 1991a, 1991b). That is, services that allow consumers to share with each other or enhance their social image possess higher social value. Houston et al. (1998) examined the effect of waiting costs on consumers' acceptability of waits and found that wait acceptability is a function of the cost of waiting and the benefit of receiving the service. When waiting prevents the consumer from being punctual for an appointment/activity, which in turn, might harm the image of that person in front of his/her peers and colleagues, it is less likely for the consumer to accept the wait. When consumers perceive higher social value acquired by the service relative to costs, waiting may become more tolerable. Thus, there may be a positive relationship between predicted social value of service and consumer zone of wait tolerance.

P2: The greater the consumer's predicted social value of service, the wider the zone of wait tolerance.

Predicted emotional value concerns the anticipated utility acquired from a service provider's capacity to arouse feelings or emotional states (Sheth et al. 1991a). Services which are able to provoke consumers' emotional responses usually possess emotional value. In the context of shopping, Hornik (1984) found that consumers who enjoy shopping perceive a shorter wait at the checkout line than those who do not enjoy shopping. The enjoyment provided via shopping activities may be considered as hedonic shopping value (Babin et al. 1994). That is, enjoyment, as part of consumer emotions, may help consumers reduce their attentions to how long they wait for a service, implying higher tolerance for the time spent waiting. Berry, Seiders, and Grewal (2002) further proposed that consumers would perceive the time and effort spent to experience the service as less important when the service has higher hedonic value. That is, consumers may not pay as much

attention to the time spent waiting when they perceive high emotional/hedonic value associated with the service. Therefore, when consumers anticipate higher emotional value, they may be more likely to approach the service and be more willing to wait for the service.

P3: The greater the consumer's predicted emotional value of service, the wider the zone of wait tolerance.

Predicted epistemic value refers to the anticipated utility obtained from a product's or service's "capacity to arouse curiosity, provide novelty, and/or satisfy a desire for knowledge" (Sheth et al. 1991a, p. 162). Usually, this type of utility is obtained from stimuli that are unfamiliar and ambiguous or complex (Sheth et al. 1991b). Purely new experiences with products, services, or shopping trips may offer epistemic value according to Sheth et al. (1991a, 1991b). The novelty aspect of epistemic value in services can also be associated with its uniqueness in the marketplace. In explaining factors that may affect the zone of tolerance, Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) posited that consumers may have wider zones of tolerance when they perceive no other similar alternative available for them. This implies that consumers may be more willing to wait, i.e., wider zones of wait tolerance, when they perceive the service as unique and novel and not commonly available elsewhere. Therefore, when consumers predict higher epistemic value of the service, which may arouse their curiosity and provide a novel experience, their zones of tolerance may be wider.

P4: The greater the consumer's predicted epistemic value of service, the wider the zone of wait tolerance.

Predicted conditional value is defined as consumers' anticipated capacity of an alternative to "provide temporary functional or social value in the context of a specific and transient set of circumstances or contingencies" (Sheth et al. 1991b, p. 69). When an alternative is chosen based on its conditional value, the utility perceived by the consumer may not be the same outside the specific situation (Sheth et al. 1991a, 1991b). For example, graduation gowns elicit conditional value due to the special occasions in which these products serve their functions and fulfill consumers' needs. Research has suggested that situational contingencies influence consumer purchase or choice behavior (Belk 1974, 1975) and time allocation, especially in discretionary activities (Hornik 1982). In services expectations, Zeithaml et al. (1993) proposed that situational factors are likely to temporarily lower consumers' adequate service levels and thus widen the zone of tolerance. Therefore, when consumers anticipate benefits that can be obtained in certain situations through the consumption of a service, they may be more willing to accept the wait.

P5: The greater the consumer's predicted conditional value of service, the wider the zone of wait tolerance.

Wait Disconfirmation and Affective Response to Waiting

Research has shown that disconfirmation influences emotional responses (Bolton and Drew 1991; Muller, Tse, and Venkatasubramaniam 1991). Literature has suggested that service performance that falls above the zone of tolerance results in a highly satisfying outcome (e.g., surprise and delight) (Cronin 2003; Johnston 1995); on the other hand, when service performance falls below the zone of tolerance, the customer will judge the overall service as unsatisfactory and he/she will feel frustrated (Zeithaml and Bitner 2003). Moreover, when service performance falls within the zone of tolerance, consumers may be indifferent to the service

performance and thus react in neither a positive nor negative manner (Cronin 2003; Oliver 1997; Zeithaml and Bitner 2003).

In the context of waiting in a polyclinic, Pryun and Smidts (1998) concluded that consumers' affective responses to waiting depend on the difference between perceived waiting time and acceptable waiting time. Consumers were found to experience negative feelings when their perceived waiting time was longer than their acceptable waiting time. Hui and Tse (1996) and Houston et al. (1998) reported similar findings. Research also suggests that consumers may not react in a very positive or negative way when service performance falls within the zone of tolerance (i.e., zero disconfirmation) (Cronin 2003; Oliver 1997, Zeithaml and Bitner 2003). Therefore, it is assumed that consumers experience positive wait disconfirmation when perceived wait duration is shorter than desired wait expectation. As wait disconfirmation becomes more positive, consumers are likely to react to waiting with more positive feelings. On the contrary, consumers experience negative wait disconfirmation when perceived wait duration is longer than adequate wait expectation. As wait disconfirmation becomes more negative, consumers are likely to undergo more negative feelings about waiting. Moreover, when consumers experience zero disconfirmation, i.e., perceived wait duration falls within the consumer zone of wait tolerance, their affective responses may be less pronounced as compared to those who experience positive and negative wait disconfirmation.

P6: When comparing consumer zone of wait tolerance and perceived wait duration, for consumers who experience positive wait disconfirmation, there is a positive relationship between wait disconfirmation and their affective responses to waiting. For consumers who experience negative wait disconfirmation, there is a negative relationship between wait disconfirmation and their affective responses to waiting. Moreover, for consumers who experience zero disconfirmation, there is a weaker relationship between wait disconfirmation and their affective responses to waiting compared with the aforementioned relationships.

Perceived Wait Duration and Affective Response to Waiting

Affective response to waiting has been identified as a variable that mediates the relationship between perceived wait time and service evaluation in a number of waiting studies (e.g., Chebat et al. 1995; Hui et al. 1998; Hui and Tse 1996; Taylor 1994). For example, Taylor (1994) concluded that consumers' overall service evaluations are directly influenced by their affective responses to waiting (i.e., anger and uncertainty). As anger increases, overall evaluation of service decreases. Therefore, the relationship between perceived wait duration and affective response to waiting is also proposed as follows:

P7: As perceived wait duration increases, consumers' affective responses to waiting tend to become more negative.

Moderating Role of Actions of the Service Provider

Although there is a direct relationship between consumer affect and service evaluation (e.g., Hui and Tse 1996; Taylor 1994), wait situations may be better managed by service providers with plausible actions, such as apologies and compensation (Taylor and Fullerton 2000). McColl-Kennedy and Sparks (2003) concluded that firms modify customer emotions through specific actions when service failures occur. Through modification of emotions, it is likely that customer satisfaction can be achieved even after service failures. When the service provider apologizes to the consumer, he/

she may feel better and more positive about the service, which in turn, may influence the overall evaluation of the service. Social exchange theory (e.g., Goodwin and Ross 1992; McColl-Kennedy and Sparks 2003; Smith et al. 1999; Tax et al. 1998) is utilized in this research to better understand the role of actions of the service provider (i.e., apology and compensation).

Apology

An apology is a means of re-establishing psychological equity and can be expected to make up for any inappropriate or rude behavior (Goodwin and Ross 1992). Research has found that giving an apology has a predictive positive effect on customer satisfaction (McColl-Kennedy, Daus, and Sparks 2003; Smith et al. 1999; Tax et al. 1998). In the context of waiting, Taylor (1994) concluded that service providers communicate recognition of the delay and their concern to customers through apologies. Additionally, Sarel and Marmorstein (1998) suggested that customers' anger responses tend to be lower when receiving a sincere apology from the front-line employees in the bank. Their studies did not further discuss how actions of the service provider (i.e., an apology) and consumers' reactions to waiting may interactively influence subsequent service evaluations.

Compensation

Compensation, or outcomes, can take various forms, such as additional free service and actual monetary compensation (Zeithaml and Bitner 2003). Research suggests that compensation helps restore distributive justice that, in turn, increases consumer satisfaction (Goodwin and Ross 1992; Smith et al. 1999). Bitner, Booms, and Tetreault (1990) first concluded that compensation given to a customer for his/her long wait in a restaurant may help reinstate customer satisfaction. Smith and Bolton (2002) further found that emotional responses tend to influence how customers react to compensation provided after service failure. Consumers with negative emotional responses valued compensation more than those with no emotional responses (Smith and Bolton 2002).

Therefore, consumers who are presented an apology or compensation when finally being served after long waits may perceive interactional or distributive justice, respectively, and will be expected to have more positive feelings about the service provider and thus enhanced customer satisfaction compared with those who are not provided any recovery attributes. The positive relationship between affective response and service experience evaluation may become stronger due to the fact that the service provider does not ignore but acknowledges and apologizes for the customer's long wait; on the contrary, the positive relationship may be weaker with the absence of apology and compensation.

P8: Affective response to waiting will have a stronger effect on service experience evaluation when an apology or compensation is present than when an apology or compensation is absent.

In addition to the individual effects, research has suggested that consumer satisfaction is enhanced by the combination of apology and preferred compensation (Goodwin and Ross 1992; Mattila 2001; McCollough, Berry, and Yadav 2000). Making customers feel better about a failure through a mere provision of interactional justice (e.g., apology) may not always be effective unless distributive justice (e.g., compensation) is also addressed. Thus, the following three-way interaction is proposed:

P9: Service experience evaluation is dependent on a three-way interaction involving affective response to waiting, the presence of apology, and the presence of compensation.

CONCLUSION

The proposed conceptual framework of consumer waiting experience is differentiated from previous models in four ways and may advance academic understanding of the consumers' waiting experiences. First, in response to the suggestion that models outlining direct and indirect relationships among various wait-related variables are limited and there is a need to establish more comprehensive models and refine related constructs (Taylor and Fullerton 2000), this framework expands the expectation-affect-service evaluation relationship with two additional variables (i.e., predicted value of service and actions of the service provider) which have not been well discussed in wait research. Second, the concepts of consumer zone of wait tolerance and wait disconfirmation are developed with a more solid theoretical foundation based on service expectation literature and expectancy disconfirmation paradigm wherein they consider two types of wait expectations (i.e., desired and adequate wait expectations) and perceived wait duration. Third, the relationship between various types of predicted value of service and consumer zone of wait tolerance is proposed. To our knowledge, this is the first framework that considers the pre-consumption value perception (i.e., predicted value) rather than post-consumption value perception, via the five types of value dimensions (Sheth et al. 1991a, 1991b) to understand consumer wait experience. Fourth, this paper discusses the moderating role of actions of the service provider (i.e., apology and compensation) in the relationship between consumer affective response to waiting and service experience evaluation. This is important as past studies in waiting have merely focused on the direct relationship between affect and service evaluation (Chebat et al. 1995; Hui and Tse 1996; Taylor 1994; Taylor and Fullerton 2000).

This paper develops a conceptual framework to better understand consumers' waiting behavior by incorporating services literature, value literature, expectancy disconfirmation paradigm, and social exchange theory. In terms of the concept of consumer zone of wait tolerance, this paper explores how zone of wait tolerance might expand or contract due to different types of predicted value without focusing on how each of the two boundaries (i.e., desired and adequate wait expectation) may be affected. Further discussion may examine consumer zone of wait tolerance from this latter perspective.

In summary, it is critical to empirically test the proposed relationships and to determine the effects of specific types of predicted value, wait disconfirmation, and providers' actions on service evaluations in service settings (e.g., restaurant). Due to the fact that value may vary across individuals and situations (Woodruff 1997), it may be necessary to develop items in accordance with the consumption value framework to measure predicted values that tailor to a specific context chosen for empirical investigation. Given support from the literature, wait disconfirmation (i.e., difference between consumers' zone of wait tolerance and perceived wait duration) should be measured via three measures, consumers' desired and adequate wait expectations and their perceptions of waiting.

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Customer Participation Strategies and Associated Goals: A Qualitative Investigation

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The interaction between service providers and customers in a service setting is a complicated topic in consumer studies. Strategies used by customers to influence satisfaction in encounters have been identified; however the corresponding goals that customers are trying to achieve have been predominantly overlooked. Expanding on previous consumer behavior literature, this research begins to create a typology of customer goals in relation to customer participation strategies through the use of two qualitative studies.

The first study composed of in-depth interviews, was effective at identifying specific action plans and goals used by customers in service situations. Study two, a critical incident survey, was then used to strengthen, support, or disprove the results from study one. Therefore the two sets of findings are discussed together. The six strategies uncovered by this study are relationship building/social dynamics, service definition, reputation building (fame), managing, negative feedback (complaining), and interaction avoidance. Relationship building is the creation of a common ground between employee and customer. An active strategy for a consumer to use, this includes smiling or flirting, showing real or feigned interest in the other person, the sharing of life stories or investigation into shared backgrounds or interests that will help bond you to the other person. Although *information seeking* to previous authors meant preparation before the service situation, the second strategy type found in these interviews focused more on defining the service provider standards by using detailed questioning throughout the service encounter. Reputation building (or creating personal fame) is a new type of strategy not previously mentioned by other researchers. Consumers reported attempting to increase their overall personal reputation at the service setting by being overly friendly, overly appreciative, or by exemplifying their ability to purchase goods. A fourth identified strategy is that of a customer behaving like management. Management behavior is seen as acting as a superior or boss to the provider through the dictation of orders or directions and is typically used in conjunction with high-profile service situations such as job meetings or other times when impression management is key. Negative feedback or complaining behaviors typically occur after service failures as a way for customers to get benefits once the scenario is completed. Although previous literature describes participation strategies in a way that makes the reader believe there has to always be participation of some kind, during the interviews conducted here it became clear that there are some times when consumers simply don't want to use a strategy—thus making the behavior of avoiding interactions a strategy in and of itself.

The second set of findings explored information regarding the goals expected or targeted through customer participation strategies. Although these could be called a number of different things—rewards, outcomes, etc.—the term goal was chosen based on its basic definition—something that a customer wants to achieve (Encarta World Dictionary). The results from the first study led us to identify seven preliminary goal areas: receipt of benefits (increased value), social comfort (rapport), anxiety reduction, future treatment, satisfaction, recompense, and server happiness. Satisfaction, although not a specified goal area in and of itself, must be included due to previous literature and the basic understanding that everyone is attempting to find satisfaction in service encounters. Receipt of benefits is a simple concept which could include anything from the

receipt of free or discounted items to additional perks. Social comfort as a goal, such as ease with the provider, rapport building and friendship, were the most frequently mentioned. Anxiety reduction addresses easing the amount of anxiety often felt in different types of service situations. Many people discussed the idea of reputation, of behaving in certain ways in the hopes of receiving positive treatment at future encounters with the same service provider. Although in this study satisfaction was not the primary goal that people identified, it was still worthy of a mention and a category of its own. Much of the previous research in customer participation has focused on satisfaction as the primary goal and found it to be a key component driving what people do in service settings. However, satisfaction was not mentioned as a primary concept in our study. Recompense for service failures is also a key goal named during both studies. After a service failure occurs many consumers appear to use a strategy as some type of intervention specifically to get something back from the provider. Finally a new and interesting goal was found, that of server happiness. Instead of trying to achieve a personal goal of better service or higher satisfaction, a large proportion of CIT responses referred to “*cheering the waitress up*” or ensuring the providers happiness with the process.

Additional findings included the fact that over half of the CIT surveys showed a personal belief that there was some type of influence being used by consumers over the service situation. Over one-third of respondents reported influencing service situations with their behavior in excess of 80% of the time. 20% believed that they had the power to influence goal attainment 90-100% of the time, while fewer than 15% of the critical incident participants felt they had little or no control at all. It is possible, therefore, that perceived ability to control the service situation is a moderator of the relationship between goal setting and strategy used—this should be tested quantitatively in future research as well.

The findings suggest that although consumers cannot always openly identify for the researcher what they are actually doing, they do believe that their interactions and behaviors have some impact on the service experience. The results here work to extend prior research through the discussion of new customer participation strategies and more importantly, the identification of previously undefined goals and rewards being targeted. The use of customer participation strategies for goal fulfillment is new, and the exploration of the phenomenon opens up the scope of future participation studies.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY
A Sociocultural Investigation of Consumer Credit and Consumer Debt

Jeff Wang, City University of Hong Kong

SPECIAL SESSION ABSTRACTS

“Consumers and Credit Cards: Building ‘The Good Life’ with Plastic Tools”

David Crockett, University of South Carolina
Randall L. Rose, University of South Carolina

In the consumption-centered quest to attain the good life it would be difficult to overstate the role played by credit cards. Yet historically, research involving credit cards has focused primarily on pathology and policy issues related to consumer pathologies such as compulsive consumption (Faber and O’Guinn 1988; O’Guinn and Faber 1989), impulsive consumption (Rook 1987), addiction (Hirschman 1992), and consumer self control (Hoch and Loewenstein 1991). This research has largely treated consumer credit either as a domain in which some other presumably more fundamental issue has been explored or as an arena for policy intervention rather than theoretical development. More recently however, there is growing interest among consumer researchers in exploring the role that credit cards play in facilitating the construction of consumer lifestyles. Credit cards facilitate the acquisition of consumption lifestyle markers much more easily than any other form of money. They make immediately obtainable consumption markers whose acquisition would have been less available to the majority of the working and middle classes of previous generations. In this sense credit cards facilitate a level of participation in contemporary consumer culture that is qualitatively different from what would be possible in their absence. Consequently, the entire range of practices consumers employ to manage their lifestyles with credit cards should be of particular interest to consumer researchers (Bernthal, Crockett, and Rose 2005). Bernthal et al. (2005) opine that the theoretical import of credit cards lies in their lifestyle-facilitating capacity, not simply in their ability to boost short-term purchasing power or to stimulate pathological consumption. They present a framework of credit card practice showing how consumers use them to both build lifestyles and to signal their efforts in this regard to aspirational referents.

The framework consists of two broad, categorical lifestyle spaces, achieving lifestyles and coping lifestyles, whose boundaries are defined in part by credit card practices that facilitate or impede movement between them (de Certeau 1984). They characterize achieving lifestyles by an ability to attain various consumption-defined lifestyle objectives. However, coping lifestyles, illustrated by use of the debtors’ prison metaphor, are characterized by restricted ability to attain them. The fluid and sometimes overlapping boundaries between achieving lifestyles and the debtors’ prison are paradoxical in the sense that consumers experience them distinctively yet simultaneously through credit card practices. The framework advanced by Bernthal et al. (2005), though insightful, focuses solely on card practices that display or enhance cultural capital. This focus likely understates the centrality of consumer credit in constructing lifestyle because it ignores the critical interplay between various forms of capital, traded off against each other in some instances but mutually reinforcing in others. Often credit card practice can determine the situated nature of this relationship by playing the lead role in translating social and cultural capital from one context into universally recognizable economic capital and ultimately into the markers that delineate lifestyle. Consequently this research further explores the relationship between credit card practice and consumer lifestyles from a social reproduc-

tion theory perspective, broadening the focus to account for the role of consumer credit in cultural, economic, and social capital formation.

To that end, in this project we investigate the role of credit cards in consumer lifestyle projects, focusing on lifestyle projects of those at the earliest stages of the traditional family life cycle (i.e., Bachelor/Bachelorette, Newly Married Couple, and Full Nest I). That is, we conduct in-depth interviews with consumers regarding credit cards and their role in facilitating the acquisition of lifestyle markers, particularly as they mark transition into and out of family life cycle stages often delineated by consumption acts (e.g., wedding, first home, first pregnancy, etc.). We include only those individuals living outside the proverbial debtors’ prison despite the fact that most consumers will experience their highest debt levels in the precise family life cycle stages highlighted in this research. Nonetheless, to generate the clearest understanding of the role of consumer credit in lifestyle construction we delimit our exploration to include only relatively stable lifestyle projects.

“It’s Not Who You Owe That Counts: Social Relationships and Consumer Debt”

Jeff Wang, City University of Hong Kong
Melanie Wallendorf, University of Arizona

The current study aims to integrate consumers’ various life domains to better understand debt’s manifest and latent functions in their life projects. As some research has suggested (e.g., Manning 2000; Ritzer 1995; Sullivan, Warren, and Westbrook 1989), consumer financial behavior is socially embedded and involves many aspects of social life. Debtors interpret and negotiate meanings of debt in line with their socially constructed environment and relationships in their networks. An uncharted area of consumer debt literature is how people employ debts in their life projects. Some aspects of life domains, such as consumption, personal relationships, and career development may be closely related to one’s debt situations.

Revolving debt is both a consequence of the past and an antecedent to the future. Therefore, debt needs to be studied dynamically, including an examination of how previous and future consumption behaviors are related to debt. Similar to consumer brand relationships (cf. Fournier 1998), debt represents the dynamic life projects of consumers and their meanings may evolve over time. Peoples’ life goals grow at different stages and debt may represent peoples’ foci at certain points in time. This study aims to integrate various aspects of one’s social life to better understand the meanings of consumer debt.

We also intend to understand how personal relationships and social networks play their roles for debtors. Consumer debt is simply an individual’s independent decision or behavior but it does involve his/her ties with many other actors in the network. A study on consumer saving found that non-savers hide their financial situations from their relatives and friends (Lunt and Livingstone 1991), which indicates that social support varies upon people’s financial situations. Debt is not only related to people’s personalities and values, but is often influenced by significant others. For example, people may accumulate more debt in order to reduce obligations with someone who provides financial support. On the other hand, debt may change one’s perception of his/her position(s) in the network and propel him/her to function differently in the network. The strength of ties and breadth of the network may thus

transform over time along with one's debt circumstances. We assume that one's strong ties are especially relevant to his/her debt situations.

How consumers use debts to accomplish their life projects and tasks in daily life has been unanswered. Before and after debts incur to consumers, we need to understand how consumers choose, interpret, and negotiate various types of debts. Debts may facilitate and hamper interpersonal relationships, expand or shrink personal networks, change family and friendship relations, and generate both obligations and freedom. It thus requires an in-depth analysis of debtors in order to delve into their personal stories that influence and are influenced by their attitudes toward coping with debt.

Our approach to studying consumer debt is to explore this phenomenon by painting a holistic picture of debtors' life domains. We make connections between consumer debts and the different aspects of a consumer's social life. We believe that consumer debt is not an isolated and purely individual decision or behavior; rather, it is embedded in consumers' social networks. In order to achieve this, the most appropriate method is to employ qualitative techniques to obtain information regarding consumers' backgrounds, goals, relationships, and consumptions, and then link them with debts. In-depth interview is an appropriate method to achieve this goal and we interviewed young debtors in college for this study.

By using in-depth interviews, we dig deep into college students' lifestyle, career goals, social relationships, as well as their financial behavior to provide a comprehensive picture. We then link consumer debt with college students' desires of independence and discuss how family support influences their debt accrual. Our findings reveal how college students employ debt as a leveraging tool to balance both obligations and freedoms in their social relationships. In addition, these young adults use debt as a mechanism to define and negotiate the meanings and boundaries of their responsibilities within their networks. Our study has demonstrated that consumer debt is a phenomenon which is inseparable from constraints in social relationships.

“Credit Card Advertising and Revolving Debt Management: A Poststructuralist View”

Nina Diamond, DePaul University

Suzanne O'Curry, DePaul University

Consumer credit may be viewed as an ideological system that manifests itself in the commodity texts of credit card advertising, and in the narratives and practices of credit card debt revolvers. We use the term, 'revolver' to refer to those who carry a credit card balance from month to month, and whose use of credit cards may therefore be inferred to reflect more than a desire for convenience. By bringing the notion of ideology to bear on the subject of credit, we suggest that ideas relating to credit are interdependent and emanate from a center or source to exert widespread cultural influence (Elliott and Ritson 1998)

Our investigation falls under the research program within Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould and Thompson 2005) called “Mass-Mediated Marketplace Ideologies and Consumers' Interpretive Strategies”. Within this realm of inquiry, consumers are viewed as meaning-creators whose interpretations of cultural signs and symbols reflect positions on a continuum between tacit acceptance of identity and lifestyle ideals promulgated by the dominant culture via advertising and the mass media, and conscious opposition to these ideological mandates.

We adopt a poststructuralist perspective, assuming that credit-related meanings are relationally constructed by a community of interpreters and are significantly constituted by practice-actions taken within a particular social context (Holt 1997). The poststructuralist frame within which we view credit-related phe-

nomena valorizes both the symbolic and the material, and locates 'actors' within a setting of power, conflict, and resistance (Elliott and Ritson 1998).

We employ discourse analysis to investigate the promotion of credit in popular culture, and the degree to which—and ways in which—constructs prevalent in credit card advertising are reflected in the household financial management narratives of consumers who revolve credit card debt. We examine the semiotic codes driving CitiGroup's “Live Richly” and Mastercard's “Priceless” campaigns (both of whose tag lines have entered the popular vernacular)—along with management commentary on these two campaigns from the business press—to explore the meanings implicit in these ads. The implied meanings are then mapped onto consumer narratives obtained from interviews with revolvers.

Fourteen semi-structured face-to-face interviews of 90-120 minutes each and fourteen 30-minute telephone interviews were conducted with Chicago area revolvers, many of whom described their financial situations in positive terms. All informants were “Household Financial Officers” responsible for day-to-day financial decision making and bill-paying; most were women. Interview topics included thoughts and feelings about financial history and current financial situation, budgeting, spending and saving, credit card debt management practices, associations to the terms “credit” and “credit card”, and credit card advertising recall.

We find that these campaigns both mirror and structure consumers' understanding of credit and revolving debt—and their day-to-day enactment of that understanding. Paradoxically, the fact that these ads incorporate implied criticism of advertising and—with a knowing wink demean the behavior they are intended to propagate—actually enhances their consumer appeal. Allusions to sentiments pervasive within the Zeitgeist (e.g., “You have to live a little”, “Time with your family is precious”, “There are things money can't buy”) add to the credibility and impact of the ads.

From their narratives we infer that a few consumers resist the appropriation of these sentiments by credit card marketers, sensing that the representations of credit being promulgated by these companies are false or duplicitous. Such consumers react by refusing to attend to credit card advertising, and may go so far as to cease to use—or even destroy—their cards. However, we find that the majority are re-appropriating meanings from the campaigns, and using them to make sense of their own revolving debt management practices. For example, time spent with young daughters on a new boat—purchased with a credit card—is described by the purchaser of the boat as “priceless”.

We consider the implications of these findings for both consumer behavior theory and public policy. We see this work as particularly relevant and timely, in light of the planned overhaul of the country's bankruptcy laws and rhetoric relating to the passage of this legislation by the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Goal Distance and Consumer Choice

Ran Kivetz, Columbia University
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SESSION OVERVIEW

A large body of literature has underscored the notion that goals play a central role in consumers' decision processes and ultimate behavior. Dynamic models of motivation (e.g., Atkinson 1957; Lewin 1951; Miller 1944) propose that people possess a strong achievement drive, which is heavily influenced by goals. The degree to which goals then affect behavior is determined by multiple factors. In addition to the valence and magnitude of goal outcomes, the degree of distance or remoteness from a goal or outcome has been recognized as an important determinant of how goals impact behavior. For example, the goal-gradient hypothesis, originally proposed by the behaviorist Clark Hull in 1932, states that the tendency to approach a goal increases with proximity to that goal.

More broadly, the notion that different forms of distance from a goal can affect consumer motivation is supported by a variety of theories of social-cognition and human decision-making. Researchers have investigated the impact on decision-making and behavior of individuals' *psychological distance* from their outcomes and goals (Kivetz and Kivetz 2004; Lewin 1951; Trope and Liberman 2003). Gollwitzer and Bayer (1999) identified two sequential stages of goal pursuit (and their associated mindsets) that exhibit increasing degrees of goal activation. Carver and Scheier's (1990) cybernetic control model further suggests that comparisons of the rate of progress toward the goal with a relevant criterion induces negative or positive affect and can therefore impact choices and behavior.

Building on the existing literature, the proposed session will contribute to a better understanding of the impact of goal proximity on consumer decision-making and behavior. The research papers in this session investigate the notion of distance from a goal or outcome based on multiple, yet related, theoretical perspectives and different conceptualizations of psychological goal-distance, including temporal, conceptual, and perceptual distance. The papers employ a variety of methods and data (lab and field experiments, paper-and-pencil problems, and secondary consumer data), and the session will offer a broad perspective on the ways in which the degree of goal proximity plays a role in the behavior of consumers.

In the first paper, Trope investigates the differential impact of central goals on choices concerning temporally near or distant outcomes. Building on Construal Level Theory he proposes that central goals, attitudes, and values, because of their relatively abstract and decontextualized nature, more readily guide choice for psychologically distant outcomes. In a series of studies, he demonstrates that temporal distance moderates the effect of central goals on consumers' choices, such that their central goals have greater influence on choices for the distant future, whereas their more peripheral goals and values have greater influence on choices for the near future.

Kivetz, Urminsky and Zheng build on the classic goal-gradient hypothesis to investigate the impact of progress towards a goal on consumer behavior. Using real reward programs, they demonstrate that participants purchase more frequently the closer they are to the reward goal and demonstrate higher frequency, effort and persistence as they approach that goal. They find that a stronger tendency to accelerate toward the reward, indicative of a higher degree of goal motivation, predicts greater retention and faster

reengagement. They further demonstrate that the mere illusion of progress toward the goal likewise induces effort acceleration. Their conceptualization and findings are captured in a parsimonious goal-distance model, in which effort investment is a function of the proportion of original (psychological) distance remaining to the goal.

Pocheptsova and Dhar investigate the interplay of mindset (deliberative or implemental) and goal focus (whether goals are activated) on subsequent preferences. They argue that for focal goals, whether an option is seen as facilitative or interfering with that goal determines preference for the option. In a series of studies, they demonstrate the effect and processes by which different mindsets influence preferences in a subsequent task. The paper shows that distinct mindsets have different levels of goal commitment, which affects how options are evaluated relative to the focal goal pursuit.

"Temporal Construal and Self-Consistent Choice"

Yaacov Trope, New York University

According to Construal Level Theory, people rely on more abstract representations, or high-level construals, of future situations when making decisions for the distant future than the near future. High-level construals consist of general, decontextualized features that convey the essence of information about future events, whereas low-level construals include more specific, contextual, and incidental details. Therefore, decisions regarding more distant future situations are more likely to be based on one's central, superordinate self-guides than on one's secondary, subordinate self-guides.

Initial evidence for this proposal came from studies on temporal changes in the effects of goals on choice. Depending on people's goals, some aspects of future options are primary and essential whereas others are secondary and incidental. Consider an activity consisting of two parts: A main task, which is the goal of the activity, and an unrelated filler task to be performed during a break in the main task. Because the main task is the primary goal of the activity, it is part of a high-level construal of the activity, and because the filler task is a secondary aspect of the activity, it is part of a low-level construal of the activity. CLT therefore predicts that temporal distance will increase the weight of the valence of the main task relative to the weight of the valence of the filler task in determining the overall attractiveness of the activity. Trope and Liberman (2000) presented participants with a choice between activities consisting of an interesting main task and a boring filler and activities consisting of a boring main task and an interesting filler. The activities were said to take place either on the same day or a few weeks later. The results showed that temporal distance increased interest of the activity with an interesting main task and boring filler, but decreased the interest in the activity with a boring main task and interesting filler. These studies show that people's primary goals are more influential in guiding distant future decision, whereas their secondary goals are more influential in guiding near future decisions.

Subsequent research examined temporal changes in forming value-consistent intentions. All of these studies used Schwartz's (1992) value questionnaire to assess the importance participants assign to a wide range of values (e.g., power, benevolence, hedo-

nism). The first study asked participants to imagine 30 behaviors (e.g., rest as much as I can) and to indicate the likelihood of performing each behavior either in the near future or in the distant future. We correlated the rated importance of each value and the mean likelihood for performing the behaviors corresponding to that value. As predicted, these correlations were higher when the behaviors were planned for the distant future than when they were planned for the near future.

In another study, participants read vignettes of hypothetical situations taking place in either the near future or the distant future. They were then asked to think about the importance and meaning of the event (high-level construal), about the concrete details of the event (low-level construal), or received no specific instructions (the control group). Participants indicated their intention to engage in the behavior described in each vignette. As expected, regression analyses showed that both greater temporal distance and higher level construal led to higher value-intention correspondence. Moreover, the effect of temporal distance on value-intention correspondence was mediated by changes in level of construal of the events.

Values differ in their centrality, with some values being central to an individual, and others being more peripheral and secondary. When a situation is related to different values, the individual's central values are more likely to guide choice from a psychologically distant than proximal perspective, whereas the individual's secondary values are more likely to guide their choice from the psychologically proximal than distant perspective. To test this prediction, Eyal, Liberman, Sagristano and Trope (2004) manipulated the centrality of values and examined how they predict behavioral intentions. In the first of these studies, participants were presented with both hypothetical and realistic situations in which two values were relevant to a particular behavioral intention. The framing of the scenario was varied to render one value primary and the other secondary. For example, one scenario involved carrying trash down a mountain, and this behavior was described either in terms of self-discipline or in terms of preserving the environment. Participants estimated their likelihood of undertaking the described behavior. The results showed that intentions regarding the more distant behaviors were better predicted by the primary values but not the secondary ones.

The second study used priming to manipulate centrality of values. Based on a procedure applied by Bargh et al., (2001), scrambled sentences were used to prime either cooperation or competition, after which participants had to decide between cooperation and competition in a resource-management fishing game, in which they had to decide on the number of fish they keep for themselves vs. the number of fish they return to the pool for common good. Results indicated that participants intended to keep more fish (i.e., exhibited more selfish behavior) when primed with competition in the distant future but not in the near future. That is, the value that was made primary or high level by priming affected distant future intentions more than near future intentions. Together these studies suggest that central values are more likely to be revealed in choices for the distant future, whereas peripheral values are more likely to be revealed in choices for the more immediate future.

“The Goal-Gradient Hypothesis Resurrected: Purchase Acceleration, Illusory Goal Progress, and Customer Retention”

Ran Kivetz, Columbia University
Oleg Urminsky, Columbia University
Yuhuang Zheng, Columbia University

The goal-gradient hypothesis, originally proposed by the behaviorist Clark Hull in 1932, states that the tendency to approach

a goal increases with proximity to the goal. In a classic experiment testing this hypothesis, Hull (1934) found that rats in an alley ran progressively faster as they proceeded from the starting box to the food. While the goal-gradient hypothesis has been investigated extensively with animals (for a review, see Heilizer 1977), its implications for human behavior and decision-making are understudied. In this article, we build on the behaviorist goal-gradient hypothesis and generate new propositions in the context of two real reward programs. We investigate these propositions using a variety of methods, data, and modeling approaches (e.g., field and laboratory experiments, secondary data).

The notion that goal progress affects consumer motivation is supported by theories of social-cognition and human decision-making. Dynamic models of motivation (e.g., Atkinson 1957; Lewin 1951) propose that people possess a strong achievement drive, which is heavily influenced by goals. Carver and Scheier's (1990) cybernetic control model suggests that comparisons of the rate of progress toward the goal with a relevant criterion generate affect. Researchers have also highlighted the impact of individuals' psychological distance from their outcomes and goals (Trope and Liberman 2003). Thus, prior theorizing regarding human motivation, affect, and cognition supports the relevance of the goal-gradient hypothesis for the human psychology of rewards. More specifically, as originally proposed by Kivetz (2000), the idea that achievement motivation increases with smaller goal-distance suggests that customers will accelerate and persist in their efforts as they near a reward program's incentive threshold.

To account for the hypothesized effort acceleration, we build on research in psychophysics and decision-making that has highlighted the sensitivity to relative rather than to absolute dimensions (e.g. Kahneman and Tversky 1979; Stevens 1957). We argue that consumers will spontaneously consider their distance to a goal incorporating the total distance as a reference point, leading to an evaluation of relative goal-distance. Accordingly, we propose a parsimonious goal-distance model, in which effort investment is a function of psychological goal-distance, defined as the proportion of the total (original) distance remaining to the goal. Algebraically, we denote this psychological distance as $d_t = (r - n_t)/r$, where r is the perceived total effort requirement of the reward (i.e., the starting distance to the goal), and n_t is the amount of the requirements already fulfilled by the individual at time t . The goal-gradient hypothesis implies that the latent motivation at time t to achieve the goal is a decreasing function of d_t . Because the underlying achievement motivation is unobserved, we model consumers' observed effort behavior.

In a large-scale field study, we recorded inter-purchase times for nearly 10,000 coffee purchases of members of a real café reward program (“buy ten coffees, get one free”). We found that as members approached the reward goal, the average length of time before their next coffee purchase decreased. On average, inter-purchase times decrease by 20%, or 0.7 days throughout the program. Using a hazard rate model, we found a significant linear effect of perceived goal-distance d_t , demonstrating purchase acceleration as a function of goal proximity.

In a series of tests, we demonstrate that the observed purchase acceleration cannot be explained by habituation, expiration concerns, other time-trend effects, or heterogeneity bias. For example, goal-motivated acceleration is observed after accounting for weekly sales and other time-varying covariates, and a majority of significant accelerators are found after accounting for unobserved heterogeneity in base purchase rates and the tendency to accelerate. Furthermore, using a sub-sample of members who completed at least two cards, we find that inter-purchase times reset (to a lower level) after the first reward is earned, and then re-accelerate toward

the second reward goal. Such “post-reward resetting” is consistent with our conceptualization but is inconsistent with the habituation rival account. In addition, we find deceleration among two groups of café customers who have low goal motivation: (1) “defectors,” who do not complete their card and (2) holders of “transparent” cards, who are paid a flat-fee to record their purchases irrespective of their purchase frequency.

Consistent with the notion that a steeper goal-gradient is generated by an increased drive to attain the reward (Hull 1934), we argue that members who exhibit stronger acceleration toward their first reward have greater goal motivation. Indeed, we find that members who accelerated more strongly toward their first reward exhibited greater retention and faster reengagement in the program. Importantly, these results were obtained after controlling for the duration and completion date of the first card, and for customers’ base purchase rate (a proxy for their coffee preference).

Next, we support the proposition that the psychological, rather than absolute, goal-distance drives motivation. We note that “illusory progress” toward the goal can be induced by increasing the total original distance to the reward while simultaneously increasing the perception of the requirements already completed (by giving bogus “head start” credits). Such a manipulation reduces the psychological (proportional) distance to the reward, d_p , while holding constant the real, absolute remaining distance. In a field experiment, we find that the mere illusion of progress toward the goal induces purchase acceleration. Specifically, customers who (through random assignment) received a “12-stamp” coffee card with two pre-existing “bonus” stamps completed the 10 required purchases significantly faster than customers who received a “regular” 10-stamp card. Separate process experiments show that the illusory goal progress effect cannot be explained by rival accounts like idiosyncratic fit and sunk cost.

In the last study, we analyze secondary data obtained from another real incentive program, akin to a freelance employment contract, in which participants earned a reward after rating 51 songs over the Internet. First, we replicated the finding of goal-motivated acceleration in inter-visit times (in the context of website rather than café visits). Second, we extended the goal-gradient effect to the domain of quantity decisions, demonstrating that the quantity of ratings per visit increases as a function of goal proximity. Third, we generalized the goal-gradient effect to the domain of effort persistence, showing that the probability of effort termination and program defection decreases with lower goal-distance. Finally, we again observed the phenomenon of post-reward resetting. In the general discussion, we explore the theoretical and practical implications of the findings.

“Mindset over Matter: The Interplay between Goals and Preferences”

Anastasiya Pocheptsova, Yale University
Ravi Dhar, Yale University

A major focus of choice research is on studying how consumers make tradeoff comparisons among the options provided. A major finding is that the manner in which people make tradeoffs is not consistent but changes with task and context (cf. Simonson et al. 2001). In much of this research, the manner in which consumer goals might influence preferences is relatively ignored as people are told to assume a goal (e.g., “Imagine you want to buy a VCR”). In contrast, a major finding in goals research suggests that most consumer behavior is goal driven and options that are consistent with active goals are relatively more valued. For example, Brendl et al. (2003) show a higher willingness to pay for a raffle ticket for a waiver on the university bill for students that were approached in

the bursar’s office (with a high bill paying goal) compared to students in the cafeteria.

Our paper looks at the interplay of mindset and goal focus on subsequent preferences. Past goals research has identified two distinct stages of goal pursuit, each of which is associated with different mindsets (Gollwitzer and Bayer 1999). The deliberation stage, for instance, consists of choosing between competing desires to form a goal. In contrast, the implementation stage is focused on when, how and where to act in order to achieve a chosen goal. These two stages give rise to different cognitive orientations or mindsets (i.e., deliberative and implemental mindsets) that extend to subsequent unrelated tasks. The purpose of this paper is to show that the mindset that participants bring to a choice task influences their preferences. Our key proposition is that an implemental mindset generates stronger commitment to the background goal than a deliberative mindset, and therefore one is less likely to purchase an item that might interfere with the background goal. Conversely, if the item in a subsequent task help pursue the background goal pursuit (for example, excelling in classes and purchasing a daily planner), implemental mindset participants are more likely to purchase this item.

Three studies are conducted to demonstrate the effect and processes by which the two mindsets influences preferences in a subsequent task. In each study, deliberative or implemental mindset was induced by asking respondents to either list pros and cons of a personal decision or plan an execution of an intended goal. The first study was designed to test the proposition that participants in an implemental mindset exhibit goal shielding (Shah et al. 2002) and are less likely to purchase items that are likely to interfere with the pursuit of their focal goal. In this study, after completing mindset manipulation, the participants were presented with a cell phone with hedonic features (e.g., a digital camera). Participants in the implemental mindset were less likely to purchase the hedonic item than participants in the deliberative mindset. Further, a content analysis of goals revealed that the goals generated by the respondents were of serious nature (for example, doing well in classes) supporting the proposition that a purchase of a hedonic item would interfere with the pursuit of a background goal.

The next study examines differences between mindsets when a subsequent item is facilitative to current focal goal and therefore we predict that implemental mindset would lead to increased purchase preference. At the same time, if an item is unrelated to the focal goal (meaning it is neither facilitative nor interfering) the two mindsets should lead to similar preference for this item. In Study 2a and the participants were asked to focus on either serious academic or fun travel-related goal. Following the mindset manipulation, participants were asked to rate their preference for either an alarm clock and a water filter (Study 2a) or travel guide and a water filter (Study 2b). Pretests have shown that an alarm clock was seen as highly facilitative product for academic goal pursuit, whereas a travel guide was highly facilitative item for fun travel-related goal. At the same time a water filter was judged as unrelated to both goals.

Consistent with our predictions, we found a complete reversal of the choice pattern obtained in Study 1. Participants in the implemental mindset were more likely to purchase an item, which was seen as facilitative to their current goal pursuit compared to the participants in the deliberative mindset. At the same time, when an item is not related to the current goal pursuit, no differences were observed between the two mindsets.

As a further test of our theory, in Study 3 we show that the participants in the implemental mindset exhibit significantly higher commitment and determination to pursue the focal goal than those in the deliberative mindset. This difference in their commitment to

the goal that people bring to the next task, we stipulate, moderates goal shielding by implemental mindset participants. In particular implemental participants, due to higher goal commitment, inhibit preferences for items that are inconsistent with their background goal. At the same time, deliberative participants, whose commitment to the focal goal is weaker, do not engage in such goal shielding.

Research on goals demonstrates that people evaluate options based on active goals whereas choice research ignores the goals that people bring to the study. An option can be seen as facilitative or interfering to the active goal and this determines the preference for an option. Two distinct mindsets (created by successive stages of goal pursuit) have different levels of goal commitment, which affects a degree to which an option is evaluated relative to the focal goal pursuit. Our paper examines the extended effect of mindsets on preferences for goal-consistent and inconsistent alternatives.

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Triple Acculturation: The Role of African Americans in the Consumer Acculturation of Kenyan Immigrants

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The U.S. is a nation of immigrants and the study of immigrant adaptation process has been undertaken in different fields. These research efforts have concentrated on examining the movement of the immigrant towards the dominant group. Studies of this genre include among many others, Gordon (1964) who examined assimilation of life in America. Berry (1980) developed a typology that examined the degree to which immigrants desired to have a positive relationship with the dominant culture. In this research Berry develops four acculturation strategies that an immigrant can adopt. These strategies are: assimilation, separation, marginalization and integration. Cross cultural psychologists have shown that immigrants who adopt an integration strategy have the best mental health. The examination of immigrant acculturation to dominant culture was adequate when the majority of immigrants to the United States were white. Changing demographics in the United States are resulting in research efforts that examine the differences between the acculturation of white immigrants and those from other ethnic groups.

In order to survive in the new environment, new immigrants must quickly "learn" new consumption habits, where to shop, what brands to consider, and/or how to evaluate different products and services (Tse and Lee 1994). Marketers have sought to understand immigrant consumer behavior by investigating different aspects of ethnic consumer behavior. For example, Hirschman (1981) looked at Jewish-American innovativeness. One of the classic studies on consumer acculturation was conducted by Penaloza (1994) who examined Mexican consumer acculturation in the United States. Oswald (1999) examined the experiences of Haitian immigrants in the U.S. All of the aforementioned studies examine consumer acculturation of immigrants to the dominant group. Researchers (see Hirschman 2001) have questioned the adequacy of existing acculturation models in examining the experiences of non-white immigrants. This research is offered in this genre. As stated elsewhere acculturation models do not examine the role of a subcultural group such as African Americans in the consumer acculturation of immigrants. It is our contention that the experience of black immigrants in the United States is different from that of other non-white groups because of the existence of a large African American population and the complexities of race relations. Historically, the legacy of slavery and racial discrimination has shaped the experiences of African Americans in the United States. This research introduces subcultural group acculturation by extending Berry (1980) and Penaloza (1994).

Thirty interviews were conducted with Kenyan immigrants in a metropolitan city in the Southern United States. Interviews were conducted one on one and respondents were provided with anonymity and confidentiality. All of the interviews were conducted in English and respondents were recruited using the snowball method. In our interviews we examined progressive learning (Tse and Lee 1994) of the immigrants but we also utilized a modified critical incident technique (Flanagan 1954) to understand their experiences in the consumption environment.

Reported here is one critical incident and two progressive learning patterns. The critical incident of interest across respondents was that of accessing hair-care services. The two progressive learning patterns discussed are with regard to choice of music and

dressings style. Our findings suggest that one of the ways that Kenyans learn about the importance of African Americans in their consumer acculturation is when they first look for a hair dresser or barber. They find out that there are dual delivery systems of services in the United States. In sum, recognition of the need for triple acculturation may come with a first critical incident that alerts the immigrant to subcultural requirements.

The musical tastes of the immigrants have changed. In a sense their consumption of music has been redefined. The immigrants expressed the fact that they no longer listen to country music because it was not considered appropriate to enjoy this music as a black person in the United States. There was a clear movement towards appreciation of African American music. Some of the immigrants have begun to appreciate their tribal music as a result of being away from home, expressing some nostalgic attachment to this music. They have progressively learned what music is appropriate in what sphere of interaction. An interesting finding of this research is that the immigrants' sense of style has been changed. There was a definite movement towards the subcultural group, i.e. the respondents described their sense of style to be in alignment with African American notions of style. Our data clearly shows prevalent subcultural acculturation with regards to clothing.

Our findings highlight the role of critical incidents in shaping the immigrant's understanding of potential subcultural acculturation requirements. From the critical incident, the immigrants progressively learn of the necessity to acculturate to the subcultural group. The findings of this research have implications for marketers and public policy makers.

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Consumer Acculturation as a Dialogical Process: Case Studies from Rural-to-Urban Migrants in Turkey

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Consumer acculturation has received considerable research attention (e.g. Gentry et al 1995; Metha and Belk 1991; Oswald 1999; Penaloza 1989, 1994). Drawing mainly from literatures on acculturation, socialization and learning, these studies develop models that explain how consumers acquire and use consumption skills and practices while interacting with a new culture. Most of these studies concentrate on immigrants coming from less developed countries to the developed countries such as the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, and investigate their adaptation to Western consumer cultural environment. Prominent in this literature is the model of acculturation strategies proposed by Berry (1980), which perceives acculturation as a linear process with four possible outcomes of assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. However, a few studies challenge the assimilationist view of acculturation and demonstrate that consumers can move between different social worlds without necessarily conforming to one culture (Askegaard, Arnould, and Kjølgaard 2005; Ger and Ostegaard 1998; Oswald 1999; Penaloza 1994). This perspective, which Askegaard et al (2005) refer to as 'postassimilationist acculturation research', regards consumer acculturation as a dynamic and multidimensional process that includes ongoing cultural negotiation or "culture swapping."

We aim to contribute to the existing literature by studying acculturation as a "dialogical process that involves a constant moving back and forth between incompatible cultural positions" (Bhatia 2002); we focus on rural-to-urban migrants' experiences in a less developed country, Turkey. We seek to understand how these migrants negotiate and articulate their cultural identities through consumption practices related to the body and physical appearance. Two premises underlie our research. First, we need to acknowledge that people from developing countries not only immigrate to the "West" in pursuit of a better life; many leave their villages and immigrate to the economically more promising cities in their own countries. Newly modernized cities in developing countries act as magnets that draw migrants from all over the country, promising them a relatively secure and recognizable glimpse of global modernity. These spaces, where Western consumption imaginations and experiences mingle in novel ways with traditional values and practices, make the acculturation process multidimensional and hybrid (Ma 2001).

Second, we direct our attention to consumption practices related to physical appearance and the body because they are significant components of self-identity (Schouten 1991). Previous studies demonstrate that acculturation incorporates cultural identity, language usage, religion, and social activities. Our premise is that one's cultural identity is linked to one's self, which is always embodied. Body and physical appearance can be altered through consumption so that individuals can achieve the desired set of meanings in new contexts. The few studies that discuss consumption of clothing and beauty products in relation to acculturation do not offer a detailed analysis of how people's understanding of their body and physical appearance are transformed as a result of migration and how people use consumption practices related to appearance to negotiate their cultural identities (Lindridge et al 2004; Oswald 1999; Penaloza 1994). We hope that our research both provides new insights into the concept of consumer acculturation and also generates new research questions as well.

RETHINKING CONSUMER ACCULTURATION

Acculturation is mainly concerned with "phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (Redfield, Linton, and Herskovitz 1936, cited in Berry 1980, p.9). The term "consumer acculturation," a subset of acculturation process, is used to refer to "the general process of movement and adaptation to the consumer cultural environment in one country by persons from another country" (Penaloza 1994, p.33). Consumer acculturation involves both buying and consuming goods and services, and learning the meanings attached to them; therefore, it is an "eclectic process of learning and selectively displaying culturally defined consumption skills, knowledge, and behaviors" (Penaloza 1989, p.110).

Consumer behavior scholars use the concept of acculturation to study the consumption experiences and practices of immigrants and ethnic minorities (e.g., D'Astous and Daghfous 1991; Gentry, Jun, and Tansuhaj 1995; Herche and Blasubramaian 1994; Khairullah 1996; Lee and Tse 1994; Metha and Belk 1994; Penaloza 1994). Drawing from Berry's (1980) framework, which conceptualizes acculturation as a process with four possible outcomes—assimilation, integration, marginality and separation—most of these studies seek to categorize the immigrants in terms of their acculturation levels and map out factors that have an impact on acculturation. Many studies also make a distinction between attitudinal and behavioral components of consumer acculturation. Their findings indicate that one can own mainstream consumer objects without relinquishing one's cultural identity (e.g. Gentry, Jun, and Tansuhaj 1995); on the other hand, consumer acculturation can also result in more and deeper ties with the homeland (e.g. Metha and Belk 1994; Lee and Tse 1994).

Some exceptions notwithstanding, the consumer acculturation research tradition makes certain assumptions that need rethinking. First, there is a tendency to regard acculturation as a linear and stable process in which one goes from one mode to the other. However, Penaloza's (1994) findings suggest that there are times when immigrants' consumption patterns might suggest assimilation; yet at other times, the way products are used suggest ties with the original culture. Similarly, the concept of "culture swapping" introduced by Oswald implies that rather than conforming to one ethnic category, people constantly negotiate cultural identities and choose "when and where to wear their ethnicity" (1999, p.315). Although these studies indicate that people can and do assume multiple and even contradictory subject positions, they do not offer much insight into why people use a combination of adaptation strategies. Second, many studies assume a homogenous host culture to which the immigrant aspires. As Penaloza (1994) argues, underlying the assimilation framework is a modernist view of the nation, which assumes a socially integrated and culturally homogenous entity. However, this is neither an accurate nor sustainable argument, especially in the contemporary world where difference and fragmentation are even more pronounced.

Recognizing the limitations of the traditional approaches to acculturation, researchers, both within marketing and outside, made calls for alternative ways of thinking about the relationship between immigration, identity, and acculturation (e.g. Hermans and Kempen 1994; Ger and Ostegaard 1998; Bhatia 2002; Askegaard

et al 2005). Hermens and Kempen (1994), for example, argue that in a period of increasing globalization, with its rapid creation of multinational citizens, massive flows of transmigration and border crossing, acculturation becomes increasingly complicated. Rather than thinking of immigrants as moving linearly from one culture to another, they suggest that we should think of acculturation and identity issues and “mixing and moving” (Hermens and Kempen 1994, p.1117). Ger and Ostegaard (1998) also suggest that identities can be formed through a moving junction of multiple and diverse cultural and subcultural forces. Similarly, Bhatia suggests that acculturation should be conceptualized as a “dialogical process that involves a constant moving back and forth between incompatible cultural positions” and entails “feeling simultaneously assimilated, separated and marginalized” (2002, p.57). Drawing from a dialogical model of acculturation, this study focuses on rural-to-urban migrant women in Turkey, and investigates how these women negotiate their cultural identities through the consumption of products related to the body and physical appearance. We limit our study only to women as the relation between the self and the body is historically more pronounced and problematic in the case of female identity (Bordo 1993). Next, we briefly discuss the relationship between the body and self-identity, and then rural-to-urban migration in Turkey.

BODY AND SELF-CONCEPT

The self is embodied; the perception and evaluation of one’s own body and physical appearance contribute significantly to one’s self-concept (Schouten 1991; Thompson and Hirschman 1995). The body communicates physically and culturally salient meanings about an individual. Emphasis on the body as the source of meaning suggests that the body should not be considered only as an object but also as the subject of culture. The symbolism of the body as the embodiment of culture implies that “a complex cultural ideology of body underlies consumers’ satisfaction with their appearance, their sense of ideal or more desirable body, and the consumption activities that these self-perceptions motivate” (Thompson and Hirschman 1995, p.151). Contemporary consumer culture plays an important role in the proliferation of stylized images of the body (Featherstone 1982). Advertising and popular media make individuals more conscious of their physical appearance and they constantly compare themselves to the idealized images of youth, fitness, and beauty. The fluidity and indeterminacy of body—the possibility of altering one’s body or body image through various consumption practices—cast the body as an on-going process, an unfinished entity that needs to be worked on in order to achieve the desired set of meanings. Emphasizing the unfinishedness of the body, Schilling observes that “in the affluent West, there is a tendency for the body to be seen as an entity which is in the process of becoming; a *project* which should be worked at and accomplished as part of an *individual’s* self identity” (1993, p.5)

The notion of the body as project is of central importance in Giddens’s theorization of the relationship between agency and social structure. Giddens (1991) perceives the body as intrinsic to the reflexive project of self-identity. He suggests that, in conditions of high modernity, the body “becomes a site of interaction, appropriation and reappropriation,” that is, it becomes a project increasingly subject to intervention and constant revision (1991, p.218). In late-modern societies, the body becomes a central component of constructing, negotiating, and altering self-identities. Within the logic of consumer culture, the body turns into a site of endless choice and possibility. Furthermore, the growing preoccupation with the body and physical appearance in present Western cultures disseminates to the rest of the world through global flows of

consumer products, advertising images, and popular media. However, if the relation between identity and the body is one in which both are increasingly open to choice, then it becomes important to ask what choice really means in relation to one’s body in contexts where freedom is restricted by differential access to material resources, asymmetrical power relations, and the disciplinary power of traditions and localized modernities.

RURAL-TO-URBAN MIGRATION IN TURKEY

The newly modernized cities of the developing world offer a hybridized and domesticated version of Western modernity. These cities, which Ma (2001) refers to as sites of “satellite modernities” draw, like a magnet, rows of migrants seeking better living conditions, from rural and less-developed regions of the country. Several factors underlie rural-to-urban migration in developing countries like Turkey (Hemmasi and Prorok 2002). Limited availability of agricultural land and non-agricultural work, increasing mechanization of farming, political turmoil, natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods push rural people to the cities. On the other hand, shifting expectations due to social modernization and exposure to globalization as well as easier access to health, education and cultural amenities make city living attractive for rural people. Given the insufficiency of public housing and high levels of unemployment, rural migrants typically settle in squatter houses located at the periphery of the city and find employment in the informal sector of the economy. Eventually some move into the formal sector and generate enough financial resources to purchase or build a squatter house of their own. However, as Hemmasi and Prorok observe “new migrants to urban squatter settlements often experience significant levels of deprivation and adversity” (2002, p.400).

A recent survey (Uzuncarsili and Ersun 2004) reports that squatter houses comprise 35% of all dwellings in Turkey, and around 60% of those in Ankara, the country’s capital where the present study was conducted. Squatter settlements in Turkey date back to the late 1940s; at that time they were perceived as a temporary solution to the housing shortage experienced in big cities due to rapid urbanization. By the end of the 1960s, squatter settlements had not only expanded but become permanent features of all the major cities. Beginning in the mid 1980s, Turkey embarked of a massive economic and cultural liberalization and globalization program. As a result, big cities quickly turned into showcases of the global consumer culture, catering to a small segment of wealthy entrepreneurs and professionals who were eager consumers of imported products and services. However, the 1990s also witnessed the increasing income gap between the haves and have nots. Economic polarization fostered cultural polarization. The squatter settlements were stigmatized as ghettos and the residents came to be perceived as the ‘threatening Other,’ attacking the city’s values, its social order and the very core of its secular ideology of consensus and unity (Erman 2001).

The first migrants to cities were young men seeking jobs; later, the most migrants started moving to the city as family groups (Ozbay 1985), predominantly nuclear families (Kandiyoti 1982). The proportion of migrant women who are formally employed is low, although many work informally as cleaning ladies in the homes of the better-off urbanites (Kandiyoti 1982). This can partly be explained by patriarchy, which is much stronger in rural areas than urban contexts where more egalitarian gender roles are present (Moghadam 1993). Despite popular stereotypes, migrant women are very diverse in their backgrounds and levels of adaptation to the urban life (Erman 1998; Kadioglu 1994). While some do not experience much change in their lifestyle and role within the family,

others try very hard to break out of the traditional, patriarchal mold by demanding greater freedom in their lives (Erman 1998).

METHODOLOGY

As we noted earlier, our study aims to question a number of assumptions in consumer acculturation research, and thus, provide useful insights into the development of a more comprehensive theory of consumer acculturation. Given this motivation, we adopted a case study method. The scientific benefit of the case study method lies in its ability to open the way for discoveries (Shaughnessy and Zechmeister 1990). Like other qualitative research methods, an important virtue of case study research is that it lends itself to theoretical generation and generalization. Theoretical generalization involves suggesting new interpretations and concepts or reexamining earlier concepts and interpretations in major and innovative ways (Yin 1984). Since the case study seeks to capture people as they experience their natural, everyday circumstances, it can provide empirical and theoretical gains in understanding larger social complexes of actors, actions, and motives that affect acculturation. In other words, it permits us to examine not only the complex of life in which immigrants to urban Turkey are implicated but also the impact of the complex web of social interaction on beliefs and decisions.

The research design used in this study is an adoptive and emergent one. The design unfolds as fieldwork unfolds, and the emergent nature of the design affects decisions regarding sampling, data collection and analysis. An initial, exploratory analysis of earlier interviews with several immigrants, and an intense engagement with the chosen squatter area through participant observation for one year was followed by more focused and directional in-depth interviews with cases selected on the basis of differences in notions of physical appearance and differences in consumption practices.

Our data collection took place in a squatter area called Atapark in Ankara, the capital city of Turkey. The area is located in the northern part of the city and is approximately thirty minutes drive from the city center. The dwellings are one-storey, freestanding houses with electricity and running water. The primary data collection method for the case study was in-depth interviews. Focus groups were used to solicit the informants for the case study, and observations and pictures were utilized for methodological triangulation (Wallendorf and Belk 1989; Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg 1991). Initial interviews were conducted during April and May 2004, and focused interviews were conducted during February 2005. Prior research noted intergenerational differences in immigrants' cultural adaptations (e.g. Penaloza 1994). In order to see if such variations exist, we sampled both first and second-generation immigrants.

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). The aim of the intra-text analysis was to identify the codes and categories of the findings. Once codes and categories were identified, we used inter-textual analysis to look for patterns of relationships (e.g. similarities and differences) across three cases (Thompson 1997). Due to page limitations, below we present only an abbreviated version of our case study data.

CONSUMER CASES

Ayse

Ayse is a 52 year old widow with one child. She is a first-generation migrant, who moved to Ankara 27 years ago. She lives together with her son, daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren. Her

family used to live in a village in Corum, a city 150 miles northeast of Ankara. Her father was a carpenter and her mother was a housewife; both of her parents were illiterate. Ayse attended to school only for three years, and then quit, which is the usual practice in her village where girls are not typically permitted to further their education. Her husband was a blue-collar worker in a bread factory. Ayse is originally from a very religious and conservative village where all women are covered. She states that men in her village do not even interact with women who are not covered, believing that such women are sinful. She is also covered, and believes that one's physical appearance is granted by God and no one should change his/her appearance, as this would mean rejecting God's will. She admits that city culture is very different from the culture she experienced in her village. She does not approve of urban women who wear revealing clothes and show their bodies, and thinks that there is too much emphasis on the physical appearance. Although she is aware that she is overweight, she is not concerned with how her body looks and not interested in changing her body shape. Ayse never wears make-up and does not use any skin or hair care products. However, she believes that it is necessary to wear a clean and more appealing dress during special days like religious holidays and weddings. She states that the only change in her physical appearance since her migration concerns the way she covers herself. While in the village, she used to wear a traditional headscarf with wide shirts and loose trousers; she now covers her head with a wide turban and wears a long, loose overcoat when she goes out.

Suna

Suna is a 24 year old housewife, married with one child. She is a second-generation immigrant and has a high school degree. Her parents are from a village in Bolu, a city 120 miles northwest of Ankara, where she visits from time to time. Her father is a cook and her mother is a housewife. Her husband works as a driver for a private bank. Although both her mother and mother-in-law are covered, she is not; however, she strongly believes in Islamic rules. She thinks that women should not cover themselves but should not appear very "inviting" either. For example, they should wear make-up, but use pastel colors. She believes that physical appearance is much more important in the city and feels the urge to adapt her appearance to fit the urban culture. According to Suna, while beauty is associated with cleanliness in the village, it is associated with bodily adornments, such as make-up, clothes, and hair in the city. Suna is highly involved in cosmetics and other beauty products, and uses advertisements and the sales personnel of cosmetics stores that she visits occasionally as information sources. She puts on make-up whenever the situation demands, such as dinners and family get-togethers. She mentions that some of the beauty products, such as powder and mascara, are indispensable, and she would not be able to live without them. Suna is not very happy with how her body looks. She thinks that after giving birth to her son her hips have become larger and she tries to reshape her body. While she dreams of having a treadmill, she cannot afford one due to financial constraints. Instead, she tries to exercise by walking with her husband around the squatter area or playing volleyball with children. Suna is also interested in fragrances and like to use them. However, as with her consumption of cosmetic products, she cannot afford the originals. Instead, she purchases fake versions of well-known Western perfume brands.

Cennet

Cennet is a 24 year old, single, second-generation migrant from a village in Cankiri, a city 80 miles north of Ankara. She is a high school graduate and is currently looking for employment. Her

father is also a high school graduate and works as a fireman. Her mother finished primary school and has never worked outside the home. Her family is religious and her mother is covered. While she is with her family, Cennet covers herself, does not wear any make up and tries not to look attractive, as her parents do not approve of women who draw attention to their physical appearance. When she is socializing in the neighborhood, she is generally covered; but when she visits the city she does not cover herself. When she meets her boyfriend, who is not a squatter neighborhood resident, she pays extra attention to her appearance. She does not cover herself, wears more fashionable clothes, and puts on make-up. She believes that, unlike the rural environment, city life demands that one change her physical appearance to fit into different contexts. For example, when she goes to a movie theater or a café, she cannot wear the clothes that she wears in the neighborhood; she needs to do her hair and apply make-up. Cennet mentions that she and her friends try hard to look like the city girls. However, such attempts may lead to highly dramatic results sometimes, especially when the girl does not have enough financial and cultural resources and skills. Examples include applying hydrogen peroxide on hair to highlight it, but ending up with terribly burned hair; or using watercolor paint as make up. Cennet is highly concerned about her physical appearance and constantly compares herself with others. She finds herself fat and unattractive, and believes that she needs to work hard to reach the ideal. She says she always observes how women look when she goes to the city center and pays attention to women featured on television. She tries to find out what is fashionable and how she can look beautiful without paying too much. Overall, she is highly alert to social cues indicating how she should dress and quite skillful in modifying her appearance to achieve what is expected from her.

ANALYSIS

Across our three immigrant cases, we note the existence of different notions and practices of beauty, physical appearance, and body exist. For Ayse, physical appearance is a God-given attribute that should not be questioned. Guided by this strong religious position, there was only a limited transformation in how she relates to her body following the move from the village to the city. Suna's family is also religious and she is herself a strong believer. However, unlike Ayse, she is highly involved with her physical appearance. She makes a distinction between looking attractive but not being too revealing. While beauty means cleanliness in her village, it connotes adorned, made-up, and well-dressed bodies in the city. Similar to the other two, Cennet comes from a religious family. Yet, she is the one who is most concerned and dissatisfied with her appearance. She believes that, unlike village life, urban culture demands that one pay attention to her body and adjust her physical appearance to fit different contexts. Similar to Penaloza's (1994) observation about Mexican immigrants in the United States, our findings suggest that immigrants are not necessarily homogeneous groups who draw from a uniform set of cultural meanings and practices. On the contrary, three cases indicate that the meanings the informants attach to their bodies and physical appearances are highly diverse and even conflicting, as in the case of Ayse and Suna.

We observe that, although it was not evident in the earlier research, religion is an important determinant of the acculturation process and resulting identities. More specifically, we see both a liberating and restrictive role of religion in the cultural adaptation of immigrants. Religious beliefs and practices may restrict an immigrant's adaptation to urban life as in the case of Cennet who feels obliged to cover her head when she is with her parents. At the same time, religion may have a liberating effect on the cultural adaptation of the immigrant. Among the three cases studied, Ayse is the most religious-looking respondent. From the traditional

acculturation standpoint, which assumes a fixed host culture, Ayse can be classified as a "separated" immigrant because she basically rejects the seemingly dominant urban secular notion of body and physical appearance, which favors the uncovered, Western-style dress code. However, from a dialogical acculturation point of view, which abolishes the distinction between dominant and dominated cultures, Ayse has successfully adapted one of the dress codes of the city-culture. In Turkey, there is a difference between rural and urban covering styles. While women in the villages cover themselves using the "traditional" headscarf, women in the cities use the "turban" (Sandikci and Ger 2001). Thus, it is possible to argue that Ayse has been assimilated into the city culture in terms of her physical appearance. While she used to wear a headscarf in the village, now she embraces city life by wearing a turban.

Patriarchy is another factor that affects the cultural adaptation of our immigrant respondents. Cennet is an interesting case showing that, even though patriarchic pressures are very difficult to overcome, there are strategies that one can creatively employ to negotiate the cultural borders. When she is with her family, she is always covered and never applies make-up. While she is socializing with other people in the squatter neighborhood, she still feels the patriarchic pressure and continues to cover herself. However, when she goes to the city center, or meets her boyfriend, she is open, wears more fashionable cloths, and applies make up. From the traditional acculturation stand point, it would be challenging to categorize Cennet in terms of her cultural adaptation. She would paradoxically demonstrate the characteristics of both assimilation and separation. However, from a dialogical acculturation point of view, the cultural adaptation of Cennet does not represent a paradox. The multiple and incompatible subject positions she assumes indicate the constant negotiations she undertakes while she tries to break out of the patriarchal mold and construct herself as a free individual.

DISCUSSION

In this study, we aimed to contribute to the existing literature by studying consumer acculturation as a dialogical process. We sought to understand rural to urban migrants' negotiation and articulation of their cultural identities through consumption practices related to body and the physical appearance. As Giddens (1991) suggests, in late-modern societies, body and physical appearance become a central component of constructing, negotiating, and altering self-identities.

Bhatia (2002) argues that the term *culture* used by the traditional acculturation theorists both implicitly and explicitly assume a single India, or China, or Japan, and so on 'out there' in a fixed geographical space. This assumption misleadingly suggests that all immigrants, irrespective of the differences in their backgrounds and subjectivities will adopt an integration strategy to successfully fit into the 'mainstream' society. Our findings, however, indicate that not only are the informants' notions of beauty, physical appearance, and body different, but their self-concepts and cultural adaptation strategies also vary. A closer look at our informant's stories suggests the complexities of the consumer acculturation process and the multifaceted nature of cultural adaptation. Each of our respondents assumes multiple subject positions in terms of their relationship to the urban culture. Our data highlight that conflicting voices and cultural positions can and do exist simultaneously, and this does not necessarily mean being caught in a cultural conflict (Ballard and Ballard 1991). As Oswald's study illustrates "in order to negotiate the day-to-day border crossings between home and host culture, immigrants switch cultural codes constantly, adapting to the expectations of both home culture and host culture as the situation demands" (1999, p. 307). Although previous studies noted that cultural adaptation of first and second-generation immigrants

differ, we did not observe such an intergenerational effect. Instead, our findings indicate that a number of factors, such as religion and patriarchy account for this moving back and forth between different cultural identities.

Our study also suggests that rural-to-urban immigrants could negotiate their identities through the use of a combination of adaptation strategies not only because there is no one immigrant culture (home culture) out there, but also because there is no one fixed host culture to which one tries to adapt. As Appadurai argues, global consumer culture is a “complex, overlapping, disjunctive order” that deconstructs the dominant-dominated dialectic (1990, p.226). It is the fragmented and polysemic characteristics of modern consumer cultures that facilitate the dialogical process of consumer acculturation. Consumption cultures of non-Western countries like Turkey present an interesting context to observe the intricacies of acculturation. In such places, characterized by different modes of modernities, traditions and Western imaginations mingle in novel ways (Giddens 1990), rendering conventional categories of consumer acculturation problematic. Contemporary urban culture in Turkey demonstrates a hybrid and fragmented characteristic where secular and religious consumption orientations and practices co-exist (Sandikci and Ger 2001). For example, although secular (Western) and religious dress codes appear conflicting, they have become equally acceptable modern urban forms. This makes Ayse emerge as an immigrant who has integrated into one fragment of the city culture and simultaneously separated from the other. However, while hybridity and fragmentation foster a dialogical acculturation process, this does not necessarily mean that individuals are free from all the structural constraints and power dynamics, and experience “culture swapping” without any cost. As much as our informants struggle to adapt to the city culture, they are still stigmatized as the “threatening Other” by the urban elite.

Our study contributes to the acculturation literature both by extending the notion to within-country immigration and by looking at how cultural identities are negotiated through body-related consumption meanings and practices. However, given its exploratory nature, it suffers from some limitations. First, future studies should draw from a broader set of informants and engage in more ethnographically oriented investigations of rural-to-urban immigrant culture. Second, similar studies could be conducted in other developing countries to find out if similar experiences are observed in different contexts.

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Poverty Consumption: Consumer Behavior of Refugees in Industrialized Countries

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ABSTRACT

To date, consumer research has devoted no attention to the consumer behavior of the unprivileged group of refugees in industrialized nations. This article summarizes research investigating the experiences of young refugees in a western country and the coping strategies they develop in consumer behavior in order to deal with the new situation of living in an affluent society. Moreover, the study focuses on "sacred" possessions and on the question of whether they have a significant meaning for the refugees and for what reasons. The research was conducted in an Austrian shelter for adolescent refugees and was based chiefly on ethnographic fieldwork, collage techniques and long interviews, especially making use of male informants from Africa and Asia.

INTRODUCTION

In industrialized countries, consumption plays an important part in everyday life. The affluent members of society can satisfy their needs and desires from a variety of goods and services. On the other hand, there are people living in poverty with little or no consumer choice-and to this group belong the refugees. Hill (2001, p. 2) stated in his study about the poor that "the material lives of such individuals are markedly different from those of the affluent population" as they suffer from constraints and restrictions.

This article should draw the attention on the particular situation of refugees and show the restrictions and difficulties they endure in a consumer society by portraying their living situation here. Thus, the awareness of politicians and the society should increase by highlighting the fact that this subpopulation constitutes a relevant group in western societies and that especially with regard to their integration, a profound knowledge about these individuals living in a consumer world is required. Consequently, the study should contribute to a better understanding of refugees asking for asylum and "help rid society of the common stereotypes", as Hill (2001, p. 7) stated relating to the poor. It is important that the citizens in industrialized countries get a more complex picture of the refugees' lives to avoid evaluations often based on little knowledge which only takes into consideration the own point of view.

In this context, also the differences between average consumers of industrialized countries and refugees who have to deal with poverty, uncertain future prospects and sometimes with psychological traumata due to their flight and/or their former living conditions are emphasized.

Two aspects are stressed in this work:

The primary part of this paper presents an analysis of adolescent refugees' experiences in and perceptions of an affluent society and the resultant coping strategies they develop in order to deal with these circumstances. Thereby, the characteristics of this group of people who are nearly adults when they first encounter the western world where they face legal and financial restrictions are highlighted.

Furthermore, "sacred" possessions also have been investigated as they may have a significant meaning for the refugees. Sacred entities which may embrace people, things and places involve some mystery or myth and they are exclusive, powerful, and unique, as stated by Wallendorf, Belk and Heisley (1988).

Further, they are worshiped and treated with inordinate respect unlike ordinary consumer commodities.

To date, consumer research has devoted no attention to the consumer behavior of refugees in industrialized countries. While earlier research investigated the consumer behavior of immigrants and of various subpopulations among the poor in western countries (Hill and Stamey 1990; Hill 1991, 1992; Penaloza 1994; Gilly 1995; Hill and Somin 1996; Hill 2001), this paper focuses on refugees, highlighting three particular aspects of this group of the population.

Firstly, while immigrants leave their countries voluntarily in search of a better life, the refugees are forced to flee their homes due to (the threat of) persecution, with no possibility of returning given the risks (whether real or perceived) to their health and safety. Moreover, most of them do not bring anything with them, mainly because of their short term decision to flee, as well as due to political concerns not risking to alert the authorities (Hill, Somin 1996, p. 207).

Secondly, those refugees who come from very poor countries in general were not part of a consumer society before and therefore have to face a different situation here than those who have grown up in industrialized cities of threshold countries. Nevertheless, both groups suffer from their status of being refugees. As stated by one of the informants: "You are born into this world like a baby with the big difference that you are shaped already by a completely different culture. You are in the situation of being a refugee and thus reduced to a Mr or Mrs 'Nothing' who have to orientate themselves in the new world."

Finally, despite the fact that many of the refugees are not accustomed to a consumer society, this topic is interesting particularly with regard to the fact that certain consumer products such as for example cuddly toys or mobile phones gain special values for all refugees in the course of time. Some of them are even considered as "sacred" possessions and serve as coping strategy for the young people helping them to deal with the difficulties they encounter in a foreign country.

Unlike immigrants, the refugees have to deal with a significant uncertainty concerning their future prospects as they do not know whether their application for asylum will be supported. At least during the initial period of their stay, they do not have the right to work in the host country, which may have a very negative impact on their lives, not only with regard to their financial situation but also to their psychological health. These restrictions affect their self-esteem since they feel useless and not integrated in society, as stated by some of the informants.

The refugees consequently depend on welfare which provides the basic commodities. They have to renounce many things a typical middle-class consumer takes for granted due to the small subsidy. On the other hand, they dispose of a lot of time, not knowing how to pass it since they often do not have the financial means to undertake specific activities. One informant has huge problems with his actual situation, saying: "If you consume, you have to pay back. Only consumption is not good!" He suffers from the fact that for the next months he will not have any possibility to earn his own money, neither being able to do professional sports nor

any other kind of work. The fact that he gets a weekly pocket-money, that allows him to a certain extent that he can go shopping or go out without doing nothing does not make any sense to him.

This may also explain the danger that individuals who have lost any hope for a better future and thus are deeply despaired may drift easily into criminality. Moreover, the young people during the rite of passage from adolescents to adults associated with the forming of their own identity may become open for ideological ideas and may even get deeply influenced by extremist body of thought.

According to recent statistics of UNHCR (2005), 368.000 refugees applied for asylum in 38 industry nations in 2004. But the total number of refugees is significantly higher: about 17 Mio. people are 'of concern' to UNHCR, such as refugees or asylum seekers who crossed the borders of their countries, while other 25 Mio. people are considered as refugees in the inland because of civil wars or other internal conflicts. Thus, the issue of refugees is still a pressing one, also in western societies. These individuals constitute an important group of the population worth to investigate since politics as well as societies of industrialized countries are concerned with this specific phenomenon.

The refugees' situation in an affluent society is maybe best pointed out by Hill and Somin (1996, p.208), although they referred to immigrants in the U.S.: "Unfortunately, when they arrived they often experienced profound disappointment at the lack of opportunity and overt or covert racism. National debate, of course, will continue to concentrate on the ethnocentric issue of how many, but a humane society also must consider the quality of life of these individuals once they exist with our borders."

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the available literature about various subpopulations among the poor, there are, firstly, studies about poor U.S. citizens such as homeless people, people who move from one shelter to another, welfare mothers and their children, etc. Another interesting group are the immigrants in the U.S. Finally, former research of "sacred" possessions is relevant in this context as it depicts their meaning for the various subpopulations, also including the immigrants.

Poverty consumption

An example of the former type of study is that of Hill (2001, p. 162) who undertook ethnographic fieldwork to investigate the lives and survival strategies of various subpopulations among the poor in the U.S. such as homeless people, welfare mothers and their children or those of children who are in prison because they committed property crimes with the purpose to gain access to the material world presented to them by the media. Hill finds that these groups are excluded from the affluent society and have to face considerable constraints in order to satisfy their basic consumption needs. Thus, unlike the average consumers, they spend a lot of time in search of basic commodities.

This is best depicted in Hill's stories about the poor (2001, p. 53). One of his stories for example is about a welfare mother and her child who is in continuous search for the fulfilment of her basic needs which has a substantial impact on her life as her decisions are strongly influenced by this fact (even regarding the choice of her man). Only after the basic commodities are satisfied, she detaches from material possessions considering them as merely functional objects not worth focusing too much on them. In other stories, Hill (2001, p. 3) reveals the homeless' manner of acquisition and consumption of basic commodities by describing on the one hand the lives of homeless mothers and their children who depend on shelters for their lodging, food, and clothing. On the other hand, he

describes the living conditions of other homeless people who try to live on their own by constructing their own homes of materials scavenged from construction sites and who earn their living by scavenging recyclable objects. Hill states that the homeless often use items such as for example clothes or shoes until they are consumed at their maximum and thus cannot be worn any longer. Moreover, they rarely waste food, even if it is spoiled. Consequently, they are considered as secondhand consumers because they consume what others have thrown or given away.

Immigrant consumers

Focusing on immigrants, Hill and Somin (1996) conduct long interviews with recently arrived immigrants and find that their informants, when confronted by reality, have "lowered their expectations" substantially regarding material fantasies. The few items brought from their home countries, "as well as customs such as food preparation, play an important role in the maintenance of the pre-immigration self". As one of the "atypical" possessions is mentioned the acquisition of English language skills seen as indispensable for a successful integration into the foreign society.

In an overview regarding the acculturation of immigrants, migrants and expatriates, Mary C. Gilly (1995) cites two aspects of the cross-cultural living experience: on the one hand, the ways in which consumers adapt to and adopt their new culture's products and behaviors and, on the other hand, the meaning of possessions. She describes emigration as a special challenge since it implies "daily cross-cultural consumer experiences" due to the differences in consumption concerning the "products available and the way of conducting transactions."

Immigrant consumers face difficulties in the evaluation of goods due to little knowledge of the country as well as language barriers (see Penalzoza 1989). McCracken (1986) demonstrates in his work the particularities of a "consumer society" and the cultural meaning of consumer goods drawn from a "culturally constituted world and transferred to an individual consumer".

The ethnographic investigation of the consumer acculturation of Mexican immigrants by Penalzoza (1994) describes their consumption experiences in the U.S. Her study leads to outcomes of assimilation, maintenance, resistance, and segregation.

Sacred possessions

When one decides to go and live abroad, this is always linked with the leaving behind of possessions as well as familiar products. Thus these may gain in importance "for the emigrant" (Belk, 1992). Certain possessions have a "deep meaning" for the lives of the informants because they are considered beyond the status of "merely utilitarian things" (Wallendorf, Belk, Heisley, 1988). They further note that some of these possessions even gain a sacred status as they are treated like sacred religious icons, and are therefore considered as priceless things and not as mere consumer products (see also Hill 1991).

Hill investigates in this context the meaning of possession and finds consistent with former studies that possessions representing a better life in the past or future hold symbolic value for the individuals (Wallendorf and Arnould 1988; Hill 1992). One respondent, for example, considers those items most valueable which reminds her of better times such as a small gift from her father and photographs of her family (Hill 2001, p.53). But also objects which symbolize ethnic or religious identities are meaningful (Mehta and Belk 1991; see also Belk 1988).

As a result of the actual political and social situation of refugees, it has to be emphasized that the investigation of this subgroup is important as they are part of our consumer society. This

work thus should contribute to a better understanding of these individuals and enhance the peaceful living together based on mutual respect and tolerance.

METHODS

The present study is based on ethnographic fieldwork, projective data involving collage techniques and long interviews with the informants. The fieldwork was performed in an Austrian shelter for adolescent refugees where one author acted as a volunteer for two months for data collection.

By choosing the various methods, the prudent attitude of the informants waiting for the official permission to remain here had been taken into consideration. Thus, the ethnographic method should help to gain a deep insight into the informants' lives, citing Hammersley and Atkinson (2002): "The ethnographer participates, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned." In this context, it was important to establish a trustworthy relationship with the informants. In order to fulfil these conditions, one author volunteered at the shelter between twice and three times a week for three to five hours and performed some work in the kitchen where the author got easily in touch with a group of individuals at the same time. The author usually arrived in the morning and remained until noon as this period of time was the most active part in the shelter (see also Hill 1992, p. 276). Sometimes, the author took lunch together with the people there and participated also at various events organized by the shelter such as a Samba workshop or a so-called "literature café" where several refugees recited their own-written poems. Such occasions provided an excellent opportunity for observation as well as talks.

In order to elicit detailed information and to learn more about the informants' psycho-social characteristics (Levy 1985, p. 69) and thus, about their thoughts and feelings often unconscious or difficult to express for them, the refugees were invited to construct a collage, (also others used this method as for example Belk et al. (2003)).

This technique had been chosen in view of the specific living conditions of the informants, following Levy (1985, p. 80) who states that projective techniques often enable people to overcome constraints and express themselves in a more fully and subtly manner. In this case, such techniques achieve greater validity than traditional research because qualitative as well as quantitative methods may be limited (Belk et al., 1997, p. 24).

Therefore, the author met the informants twice for a couple of hours in the shelter. The first time, the informants were given various magazines and asked to choose pictures which would best express their perception of a material world as well as their consumption desires and to stick them on a big piece of paper. The next day, when they had finished their collages, they were invited to interpret them by means of short interviews.

As far as this technique is concerned, it has to be pointed out that the informants had been beforehand prepared for the issue of consumption, for during their German lessons they had been dealing with the various expressions regarding this subject. As they had never lived in a consumer society before, they had little or no knowledge about the meaning of the relevant terms.

Finally, to complete the study, long interviews were conducted according to the interviewer's guide (see Table) with four voluntary male refugees at the shelter. The females, who constitute only a marginal percentage of the refugees, were not disposed to provide any information about themselves apart from the collage

technique where they participated assiduously. The informants were between 17 and 18 years old and came from different cultures and social backgrounds.

Further, one interview was conducted with an African university teacher who came to this country about 20 years ago on a scholarship. Despite the different circumstances, he had made similar experiences and developed coping strategies similar to those of the refugees. Moreover, he was the director of a shelter for refugees for some years. Therefore, the information obtained from him represents an important part of this study.

The interviews were conducted in English or German depending on the informants' language skills.

All the data gathered by the different methods was analyzed and the findings presented by means of four short stories including the collages to provide a "vivid portrait of the lived experience" of each informant (Hill 2001, p. 3). In this regard, the author used "thick description" as suggested by Geertz (1973).

According to former studies with an interpretative approach, subcategories of this research direction were identified on an "iterative basis" as discovered by the data during fieldwork (Fetterman 1989; Ozanne and Hudson 1989). The various points were discussed in the Findings of this work and emergent themes were identified to clarify the meanings inherent in these experiences for the refugees (Denzin and Lincoln 1994).

Consistent with Belk, Sherry, and Wallendorf (1988), Sherry (1990) and Hill (2001), real names were changed and their countries of origin not mentioned in order to avoid any identification of the informants.

Recapitulating, it can be stated that the decision for the variety of methods employed in this study was crucial for data collection. First, the ethnographic fieldwork established the necessary trustworthy relationship between the author and the informants. But only the collage technique enabled the authors to obtain relevant data because this method facilitated their access to the informants' thoughts and feelings. Finally, both methods served for conducting successfully the final interviews which took place only at the end of the fieldwork.

FINDINGS

The findings are divided into the following parts: 1) insights into the refugees' former lives and the reasons for their flight, 2) their experiences in an industrialized country with reference to the completely different way of living, focusing on the role of consumption, 3) their coping strategies in consumer behavior taking into consideration the significance of "sacred" possessions, and finally, 4) their future dreams and desires as presented in their own collages (see Fig. 1 and 2).

Having the results, it is important to point out that the informants are unaccompanied adolescent refugees and that most of them have been living here for less than a year.

Insights into the refugees' former lives and the reasons for their flight

In order to provide an understanding of the refugees' coping strategies in consumer behavior and with regard to their appropriate interpretation, it is important to portray their former living conditions. Starting with the question about the informants' former lives two aspects become apparent: firstly, the reasons for their flight such as violence, oppression, persecution were still occupying their minds. An Asian stated: "People fear to express themselves in public. I didn't even have the right to learn my mother tongue at school." An African explained: "I did not run away in order to have enjoyment but to save my life. I fled the war!" This condition was

TABLE
Interviewer's Guide-Refugees

1. Tell me a bit about yourself. (Probe for age, [note sex and race], education, country of origin, mother tongue). Does anyone from your family or former friends live abroad?
2. How long have you been staying here? Did you live elsewhere in this country before coming to the shelter?
3. What was your image of this country before your arrival? (Probe for the political and economic system—same or similar products as in industrialized countries). How did you come to adopt this image? (Media, school, specific individuals).
4. What is your impression now? How do you experience the affluent society? (positive and negative sides—probe for material things like shopping-centres, clothes, food, etc.; opportunities; restrictions, racism, etc.).
5. Tell me a bit about your day? (Probe for living in a shelter, structure of a normal day). How do you pass your spare time? (Hobbies, friends).
6. What did you bring from your home country that is especially important for you or what would you have brought with you if you had had the opportunity? (Probe for special possessions, especially “sacred” ones like photographs, gift, etc.). What do you miss from your home country and how do you compensate for it? Are there certain traditions or rituals of your home country which you still practise here? (Probe for cultural meaning in relation to the self).
7. How much money do you have at your disposal and how do you spend it? (Probe for coping strategy in consumer behavior). What did you buy first after your arrival and why? Do you buy some products of your home country here and why?
8. What are your expectations of this country? (Probe for future desires, plan for living).

perhaps best depicted in an African's collage (Fig. 1) that highlighted a skeleton reminding him of violence and death caused by a civil war. Also the following poem written by one of the refugees deals with violent death since it is about the loss of some family members in his homeland:

<p>Sag mir, wo steht ihr auf dem Himmel? Wie eine Wolke so schön. Sind in Frieden gegangen. Nehmen Lieben mit. Nehmen Lieben mit. (Asian refugee, 18 years old)</p>	<p>Tell me, where are you in the sky? Beautiful like a cloud. Gone in piece. Take the loved with</p>
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The second aspect concerned the material situation in their home countries. The informants did not live in a consumer society and had therefore no access to the material world a middle-class family in an industrialized country takes for granted. One group of informants did not know anything about the country they fled to; the others only knew that it was a democratic nation and that people there had a good life. Thus, they had to face a completely new situation, learning to deal with the material world.

Experiences in an industrialized country

One of the first challenges confronting the refugees was the climate since most of them were used to considerably warmer temperatures; in addition, the refugees had to come to terms with the food and the German language. Only later did they have to face up to the issue of consumption and making consumer choices.

When asked about their perception of the consumer society, the refugees' answers depended on the length of their stay here to date. Those informants who had only recently come to this country

were overwhelmed by feelings of being lost, disorientation, homesickness and nostalgia for their families whereas those already living longer here were well accustomed to consumer society, appreciating especially the cleanliness, high technical standard, functionality and the high quality of life. One African stated: “Walking around is still like cinema to me! I can't believe my eyes seeing all these beautiful things” (referring to the houses, cars, shopping-centres, goods, etc.). Another informant was particularly impressed by the shopping centres: “If you enter (the shopping centre), there is all in one. There is a big door, then lifts, light everywhere. You can either take the steps or the elevator. Ah, it's beautiful! They are selling a lot of things there. It's expensive, I know. But the beauty in the hall and the shops there, they are super, they are cool!” One Asian noted that he liked going into town and admiring the nice products shown in the numerous shops although he knew very well that he could not afford them and was thus restricted to window shopping. However, just the fact that he has the opportunity to enter a shop where so many of the goods promoted by the media can even be tried out for free, fascinates and provides a certain satisfaction to him. Most of the informants know the shopping centres of the city very well and are able to distinguish precisely the various kinds of supermarkets. Consequently, they know where to buy nice items cheap.

Nonetheless, the authors noticed that some of the refugees had serious problems dealing with the way of consumption here as well as the vast choice of products most of which they were not at all acquainted with as they have never been members of an affluent society before in their lives. They seemed being lost in a material world in which they were dropped inexperienced like babies without a real sense of how things were going on. As a result, they measured the goods solely by the different price levels. Only expensive items seemed desirable to them as a high price was

Meanwhile, they found some parallels between certain well-known products from home and those offered here, as explained by one informant.

By the time, they agree to a compromise in consumption patterns (Mehta and Belk 1991), as for example to food, they appreciate the meals offered at the shelter but when they have the possibility to cook for themselves, most of them often prepare some traditional dishes of their home countries.

Unlike immigrants, refugees usually arrive in the country they flee to with nothing else than the clothes on their back. Consequently, they do not dispose of any item of their home countries that might serve as transitional object providing to some extent security (Halpern 1968; Kahne 1967; Nemy 1986; Mehta and Belk 1991) and comfort like the so-called "security blankets" for children separated from their mothers (see Hong 1978; Passman and Halonen 1979). As compensation for the missing items, the informants focus on a few products they had acquired in the host country and that gained "deep meaning" in their lives (Wallendorf et al. 1988), amongst others also cuddly toys. The authors noted that surprisingly almost every refugee in the shelter owned one, even the male. This was also depicted in the various collages (see also in Fig. 1 and 2) of the informants. By means of observation and further discussions, it turned out that they had one in order to deal with the difficulties they encountered by living abroad, alone from their families, facing racism. Thus they clung to something providing a bit of personal security, in this case even to a consumer good.

Also mobile phones played an important role for the informants. Apart from the fact that everybody possesses one, they are also well informed about the latest models. In order to be able to purchase at least one phone offering more than the standard functionality, they accept the need to renounce many other items so as to keep up with the youths of industrialized countries, as noted by the remarks of the informants. Besides, it serves as an important means of communication as expressed by the informants saying that they would need it to arrange appointments with their friends, but mainly to be reachable for their families.

It was also striking that all informants wear an earring. When asked about the motivation for it, one informant answered, "because all of my friends wear one" and he wanted to be part of them.

Further, all informants mentioned clothing. Despite the financial restrictions, they, like the youths of industrialized countries, set high value on wearing smart, fashionable clothes preferable of a certain brand to impress people as one informant remarked: "People would say—oh, sexy, cool!" It procures him a sense of social affiliation to a group of people who define themselves by consumer goods. One of the refugees used to wear a red cap of a certain brand when he left the house, similar to this one in the collage (see Fig. 1). For him, this special garment had the same significance as to put on shoes, namely to complete his outfit and to look smart. As to shoes, he started to wear them only after he had been living here already for a certain period of time. Like most of the young people at the shelter, in the beginning, he generally wore slippers the whole day, even when he went out.

Apart from certain products, there are also some activities that have a very special, almost "sacred" meaning for them, namely sports, like football, and music. Since playing football was an important part of their former lives, practising it here reminds them of home and help them to accommodate to their new environment. On the other hand, practising a kind of sport or playing an instrument like drums (as offered by the shelter) are some of the few possibilities to pass their time, since they do not have the right to work. These activities provide some stability in their lives as refugees. Some of the informants even dream of a football-career, however, being aware that it would be very hard to succeed. But

they make efforts in their daily training in order to be accepted by a club.

As to music, the informants are used to listening to English or American Pop music as well as to interpreters of their home countries, but their favourites are Rap music or HipHop. An African explained: "When I listen to HipHop, I forget my family. I miss them so much! (...) HipHop gives me a sense of delight." Besides, he believes that the texts of those songs correspond to the reality like those of Bob Marley, "no matter you come from, no matter who you are, if you are white, if you are black, we are all one." It helps him to cope with the problems he has to face as a black in a western country.

Moreover, according to the study of Mehta and Belk (1991), it could be observed that the informants treasure photographs of their families (are part of these items the informants miss most), food and music of their home countries as well as certain activities like sports or rituals like praying they used to do at home because they offer a "symbolic source of security and cultural identity" as well as a connection to their former lives and "some familiar continuity in behavior" (Mehta and Belk 1991).

Finally, the German language as an "atypical possession" is considered as a condition precedent to a successful acculturation and to economic success by the informants (Hill, Somin 1996, p. 207).

Besides all these issues, the most important "possession", however, is the positive official notification giving them the right to remain in a democratic and industrialized country which is crucial for their further lives.

Dreams and desires

Future dreams and desires are best expressed in the collages (see Fig. 1 and 2) being similar to those of a typical middle-class family as they wished to own a house and a car. But they differ with regard to their significance for the refugees because possessing such objects would go beyond the meaning of merely status symbols but imply a considerable turn towards quality and stability and thus towards a "better life" for the informants.

An African explained that his favourite house would dispose of many windows and glass-doors giving a bright, modern impression not comparable to the mud cottages in his country. Another informant said he would like to have a bright, modern apartment equipped with a stylish furniture, including a big refrigerator which provides enough space for a lot of food. Disposing of enough food has an essential meaning for all refugees, especially for those who suffered from starvation. In the shelter, it could be observed that these individuals took their plates full to the brim and gorged their meal as if they would not get anything to eat for the next week. One informant explained: "At home, I often ate some rotten bananas for dinner." As to cars, all informants would like to have one as they consider them as prestige objects and they have a weakness for certain brands like also the youths here. At present, however, they do not aspire for one of a certain brand because just the fact that one possesses a car at all means something special to them, as they could not have afforded one in their home countries.

Also electric and electronic facilities are desired as they serve to make life more comfortable such as a washing machine, a television set or a stereo set. For some of them, a computer constitutes one of the most important items stating: "It seems that everywhere you go, people talk about computers!" Some of them aspire to a job in this field and would like to acquire the necessary skills for it.

In general, the collages are dominated by various prototypical consumer goods (see also Fig. 1 and 2), the informants daily encounter and it is noticeable that they are highly familiar with

FIGURE 2
Collage of African refugee



brands, in spite of the fact that only a few number of items are available for them. Most of them declare that if they had the choice, they would prefer products of a certain brand rather than no names, especially with respect to clothing or electronic items as brands stand for high quality in their eyes.

Apart from these material wants, the informants wished to have a family of their own, one day. They prefer attractive, erotic and feminine-looking women wearing elegant or fashionable clothes with adequate accessories and jewellery as expressed in some of the collages (see Fig. 2). An African found that in his country, there were very beautiful women dressed worse than the Europeans but in his opinion the latter were very pale. One informant desired to be accepted inspite of being black, stating "Liebe kennt keine Farbe." (Love does not look at the color.)

Further, it could be observed that due to the difficulties the refugees have to face abroad including the hardships they experienced at home, they became more sensible for values and attitudes and are concerned with issues rather unusual for people at their age. This may also explain the following statement of one informant: "Children are like angels! They cannot do any harm", or the opinion of another: "The main task of a mother is to protect her child", expressing his fear of violence and his longing for protection. Being

alive and being healthy plays thus an important role for them since the respect of their lives and appropriate health care was not provided in their home countries. As a result, the informants put much value on cleanliness and a cosy atmosphere that should contribute to their health and pleasure. In one of the collages (see Fig. 1), there is the picture of an ice-bear having a "soft silky fur" representing strength and health. Also the perfumes refer to this tendency citing one of the informants: "If you put perfume on your skin, you make it smell nice. Having a pleasant smell means you are healthy."

But the majority of the informants showed serious concern about their future situation: they neither know whether they will obtain the permission to stay in this country nor how they were to improve their financial situation from the day they had to leave the shelter. As a result, it could be observed that all of the young people were torn between feelings of hope and fear.

In a consumer society desiring is life-affirming. Since the poor members of the population cannot hope to fulfil their desires, they have to find other means such as avoiding to desire or imagine the consumption in their fantasies (Belk et al., 2003, p. 347; see also Hill 1991). However, not everybody succeeds in doing so. Some of the adolescents found that the best way to take their minds off their

difficult situation was to sleep long hours. Others smoked a lot of cigarettes to get some relaxation. Depending on their religious identity, they hope to find confidence and sustain in the continuity of their religious practises. It was striking that some informants often mentioned "God" in conjunction with their future desires: "God helps me, maybe, to stay on my own," or "Let's pray that I'll make it." Others put their confidence in the help of the angels and some young men determine their lives by the rules of the Koran.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

The experiences the informants had made here can be summarized by the following aspects: on the one hand, they consider the industrialized countries as a consumer paradise for those who fulfil the premises to take part in it. On the other hand, they often feel discriminated by certain rules established by a part of the society, excluding special individuals from the consumer world even having enough money. The African informants for example said: "We mustn't enter the disco because the door steward said 'No Blacks admitted!'" Other refugees remarked that they did not feel treated as individuals but stereotyped as asylum-seekers or criminals.

Besides, they believe that a high developed infrastructure including numerous shops full of goods attest to a well-functioning business system where new jobs are created and thereby a high living-standard is provided. They think that the citizens of the western world in general dispose of enough money to acquire the desired goods and services.

It was striking that although most of the informants have not lived in a consumer society before, they were well acquainted with a high number of brands which they considered as symbols of a modern way of life. Thus, they were longing for brands which seemed desirable to them expressing the lifestyle of the affluent members of western societies. This fact shows also their wish to be part of those individuals who define themselves by consumption.

The informants unlike the typical middle-class youth of western countries suffer from restrictions and must renounce a lot of things. They often feel like unwelcome guests waiting in front of the door for the permission to enter and to participate, instead they only can have a glance on a world in affluence and their wish to fit in seems unrealizable.

One substantial difference between members of affluent societies and those who are not part of them is that the latter have limited access to the numerous goods and services on offer. Thus, their consumer behavior is markedly different from the average consumer of western countries since their primary goal is to come along with their financial means in order to satisfy their basic needs.

Furthermore, due to their status as refugees in the host country and accordingly the feelings, experiences, and difficulties involved, consumption can take on a very special meaning for them as it may serve as coping strategy helping them to come to terms with the problems they encounter abroad.

The authors found that there are certain possessions getting a special meaning for the informants such as cuddly toys helping them to cope with loneliness or homesickness on the one hand and special pieces of clothing of a certain brand or even mobile phones giving them the feeling of being similar to the youths of the western countries on the other hand.

As the informants do not have the same security as the members of affluent societies that their basic commodities are met, they often imagine their future in fantasy how life should be like, serving as coping method.

Despite all the difficulties the informants have to face, they wish nothing more than to obtain the permission for staying in a democratic country where they are in safety and where their basic

needs are satisfied. They cannot imagine to go back to their home countries citing one informant: "I only want to have security and the permission to live here because I am accustomed to so many things (referring to all the facilities and commodities) here." Although the adolescents enjoy living in an affluent society and therefore aspire to become a member of it, they are highly aware that the respect of their life is more important than consumption.

In their desperate strive for remaining here, they would be disposed to accept also such opportunities which might seem strange to members of the affluent societies and not find their moral approval.

Hill (2001, p. 167) stated in his work about the poor, "when we remove our middle class lenses of affluence and opportunity and replace them with lenses of poverty and restriction, our understanding of how and why people become or remain impoverished is forever changed." In the case of the refugees, it would also mean to take into consideration the reasons for their flight and the problems they have to deal with in the host countries.

Since there exist conditions in countries which will threaten people's life, there will be always refugees fleeing to get in safety. In order to provide a climate facilitating the untroubled living together of different races among a society, the politics as well as the media are claimed to get over stereotypes and prejudices, so that a revise of people's opinion can take place. For a successful integration of refugees who are a significant group in western countries, it is therefore important to develop strategies which take into consideration their particular consumption habits and avoid that they remain a disadvantaged group in a consumer society.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The first limitation of this research is that the author cannot be absolutely sure that the informants are political refugees rather than economic ones. But the various methods employed such as shelter fieldwork and collage technique depicting torture scenes or other signs of violence provided a deep insight into the informants' lives. Having observed how they behaved and what they said, it can be supposed that the refugees' flight was politically rather than economically motivated.

Other limitations of this study stem from the particularities of informants and of the field sites examined. As a result, it was very difficult to get access to potential informants. Due to the psychological and emotional state of some refugees as well as the fact that the procedure for granting asylum to the informants was pending, only four persons were willing to give an interview. In this context, it has to be pointed out that their approval to an interview depended on the trustworthy relationship established during the previous two months of fieldwork and that the interviews were conducted only in the end of this period and after having employed the collage technique. Only by means of this projective method, the authors obtained relevant data. Moreover, it facilitated a lot the interview situation as the informants already concentrated on this very subject.

As stated already in the beginning, the investigation of young refugees is interesting because they are in the rite of passage from adolescents to adults involving the process of forming their own identity. Although they are already shaped by the culture of their homelands and the experiences they made there, they, unlike adults, are more flexible concerning the adaptation and integration process in the foreign country as well as the development of useful coping strategies. The situation of adolescent refugees living in a shelter is a very specific one and as typical to the interpretation of consumer research not generalizable. A comparison between adolescents and

adults would have been interesting but it was not possible to obtain access to adult refugees in time as in general, it is very difficult to gain informants for such delicate issues as this of refugees.

While this work has provided an insight into the consumer behavior of adolescent refugees in industrialized countries, it remains a tentative glimpse into its subject matter. Many questions remain. Thus it is necessary that further research follows informants over time.

In order to obtain a more complex idea of the situation of refugees, there are a number of promising research directions such as the study of other refugee groups in other nations. One question worth investigating is the gender aspect, for it would be interesting to see to what extent the experiences of male and female refugees in a consumer society as well as their behavioral and emotional coping strategies differ from one another.

It would also be interesting to focus more closely on the cultural, social and educational background of the refugees and to examine whether or not these aspects play a significant role in their acculturation process.

Moreover, all informants who were interviewed in this study come from very poor countries. Further research is, therefore, called for that investigates refugees being from highly industrialized cities of threshold countries. This would be particularly interesting with regard to the fact that these individuals have already lived in a consumer society before.

Another question that could be addressed is the situation of children compared to that of adults. Do there exist some parallels as far as the challenges both groups have to face are concerned and to what extent do they develop similar coping strategies?

As to families, it would be interesting to examine whether they, as a closely-knit group, find it less hard to deal with the new situation than refugees who arrive on their own in the foreign country. Is it easier for families to cope with the difficulties arising from their legal and financial situation in the western world?

In this context, the meaning of sacred possessions in the phase of acculturation could be investigated and compared to the present findings.

The present study focused on refugees living in a shelter. It would be interesting to know how refugees who are accommodated in other forms of housing perceive their present situation of living in a material world and whether this has an impact on their consumer behavior.

Further, also the question about the future prospects of refugees could be examined to see whether they have a real chance of becoming a member of the affluent society or instead will remain poor and, as a result, at the low end of consumption. Therefore, it would be necessary to interview those to whom asylum was granted some time ago.

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Consumer Market Orientation: Measurement and Prediction in a Developed and a Transitioning Economy

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Problem

The marketplace in countries transitioning from former socialist regimes to free market economies is characterized by continuous change, uncertainty, and much consumer and seller frustration (Lasclu et al. 1993). Consumers need to find ways to cope with increasing complexities and inconsistencies in the market. Despite these difficulties, a market economy has the potential to improve consumer welfare in a variety of ways. As an economy becomes more market oriented, we would expect consumers to see greater product assortment, more price competition, greater use of mass media advertising, and more competitive service.

However, a key assumption for an economy to move toward a market orientation is that consumers can identify and will reward such an orientation. This may be difficult in transitioning economies either because consumers lack the necessary attitudes and skills, or because the institutional framework does not support such actions. Consumers need to be able to recognize and buy products of higher quality or with better value propositions. They need to be able to evaluate the credibility of advertising claims and to patronize retailers offering better service. Therefore, we introduce and investigate a new concept: "consumer market orientation" i.e., behavior oriented toward improving and rewarding marketers' market orientation. We believe that both consumers and firms must possess market orientations to achieve a successful, sustainable transition to a market economy.

Romania is a good example of an economy still in transition. Romania's restructuring lagged the rest of Eastern Europe and it remains one of the poorest countries in the region. To better understand consumer responses to the marketplace in Romania seven in-depth interviews were conducted with ten Romanians. Generally the interviews suggested that consumers in transition economies face resource constraints and lack certain consumer skills, such as the ability to accurately evaluate price/quality relationships. These erode the ability to reward marketers for communicating and providing superior value.

Conceptualization

Based on the interviews and an examination of the literature we propose a model using consumer values, resources, and expectancies to predict market-oriented consumer behaviors. The consumer values included in the model are social interdependence (Triandis, McCusker and Hui 1990) and materialism (Moschis 1981). Social interdependence refers to the presence and importance of close personal relationships. Materialism is the extent to which a person values physical possessions. Resources are time and money, while expectancies relate to marketplace risk, action-outcome expectancies, and perceived marketplace self-efficacy (Bandura 1997) and are described below.

Marketplace Risk. Consumer actions in the marketplace only matter if different outcomes are possible: getting a better product, getting a better deal, avoiding a scam. The range of possible outcomes represents marketplace risk.

Action-Outcome Expectancies. Consistent expectations about what happens when you act a certain way are at the heart of making sense of the world. Action-outcome expectancies involve results that flow from personal action and are sometimes called "response efficacy" (Block and Keller 1997). These expectancies involve beliefs about the relationship between customer actions and marketplace rewards. They are categorized in our model as collective expectancies (e.g., if people complained more, then service would improve) and individual expectancies for themselves (e.g., if I complain I might get my money back).

Perceived Marketplace Self-Efficacy. Even if you believe that a particular action leads to a particular outcome, you may not believe you can execute the action yourself. Self efficacy refers to people's beliefs in their own capabilities to perform actions that affect desired outcomes. In the marketplace this might involve skills in evaluating information, such as advertising, comparing alternatives, or accurately judging the relationship between price and quality.

Market-oriented behaviors such as demonstrating good customer service or high product quality can be rewarded by loyalty to the firm and generating positive word of mouth. Conversely, consumers can punish a firm for behavior such as deceptive advertising, price-gouging, or shoddy products. Switching and complaining are the main punishments. In addition to behavior that rewards or punishes specific firm behavior, consumers can engage in behavior that is either helpful or harmful to the market (i.e., that either aids or hinders the ability of marketers to offer better customer value). Helpful behaviors include things like offering ideas for new products or taking the time to participate in market research. Harmful behaviors include things like switching price tags or returning damaged merchandise when the consumer caused the damage.

Method

Scale items measuring the constructs described above were both adapted from previous and or created specifically for this study. A survey containing these measures was administered to participants in the US and Romania. US participants were 209 students enrolled in business classes at the University of Oregon. Romanian participants were 232 students enrolled in business classes at Sibiu University. Principal components and reliability analyses were used to assess dimensionality and reduce the number of items in each scale. Coefficient alphas across both samples indicated acceptable scale reliability.

Results

The most important factor for Romanian consumers is perceived self-efficacy in the marketplace. Overall, Romanians are more likely to engage in reward (positive WOM and loyalty) and punishment behaviors (switching and complaining) versus specific marketers if they have higher levels of self-efficacy. In addition, self-efficacy has three moderating effects which suggest that Romanians who have low levels of self-efficacy and perceive high levels of marketplace risk are more likely to reward good marketing

and behaviors and punish bad ones. For US consumers, self-efficacy is a less important factor in exhibiting a consumer market orientation. Both Romanian and US respondents are most likely to engage in helpful behaviors (e.g., participating in marketing research) if they believe that consumers collectively have the power to improve the marketplace. Finally, a consumer's sense of social interdependence has a pervasive positive effect on all types of market-oriented behaviors. Both Romanian and US consumers expressing high levels of social interdependence are more likely to engage in market-helpful behaviors and are less likely to engage in market-harmful behaviors.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

It Matters Who You Are: New Perspectives on the Role of the Individual Differences in Brand Evaluations

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INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES:

Past research in the area of branding has uncovered several important findings relating to how information about brands is perceived (Aaker 1997), how it may be updated (Ahluwalia and Gurhan-Canli 2000; Loken and John 1993) and the extent to which consumers form relationships with brands (Aaker, Fournier and Brasel 2004; Fournier 1998). This research, however, has typically overlooked the role of consumer individual differences in understanding branding-related phenomena.

The session attempts to bridge this gap. It included three papers, one from each of the major areas of branding research (brand personality, brand extensions, consumer-brand relationships), which examine this issue. Taken together, these papers provide a (a) deeper understanding of the role of consumer characteristics/individual differences in understanding branding phenomenon, (b) the opportunity to generalize and generate higher level models to understand the role of individual difference variables in branding, (c) an array individual difference variables to examine in this regard, and (d) identify new and important boundary conditions for previously well-researched findings in the branding area.

OVERVIEW

Gita Johar presented her research, coauthored with Jaideep Sengupta and Jennifer Aaker which builds on past research in the area of brand personality (e.g., Aaker 1997). Their research focuses on the role of *consumer's personality* in influencing the mechanism adopted for updating brand personality inferences. It delineates two mechanisms that guide the updating of personality trait inferences about brands. The results of three experiments show that chronics (those for whom the trait is accessible) update their initial inferences based on the trait implications of new information. Interestingly, nonchronics (those for whom the trait is not accessible) also update their initial inferences, but do so based on the evaluative implications of new information. The framework adds to the inference making literature by uncovering two distinct paths of inference-updating and highlighting the moderating role of trait accessibility.

Rohini Ahluwalia presented her research in the area of brand extensions which examines the effect of culture (as operationalized by salient self-construal— independent versus interdependent) on consumer evaluation of brand extensions. Data collected from two countries (United States, and India), utilizing different assessments of interdependence (at the nation-level, as individual difference variable, as well as via priming), was used to test two alternative perspectives on this issue. The results reveal that interdependent and independent consumers differ in their evaluations of the moderate fit extensions, but not the close and far extensions. The findings obtained with consumers whose interdependent self was either chronically or temporally accessible, were remarkably different from those obtained in past research in this area, where the independent self was more accessible (e.g., Ahluwalia and Gurhan-Canli 2000; Loken and John 1993).

Susan Fournier presented her research co-authored with Marcel Paulssen which builds on past research in the area of consumer-brand relationships (e.g., Fournier 1998). Their research provides a new perspective, rooted in individual differences, for understand-

ing the strength of the consumer-brand relationship (e.g., brand loyalty, commitment). They argue that people have different attachment styles, and the likelihood that a company may be able to convert them into loyal consumers is to a great extent a factor of consumer attachment styles. As such, some individuals are more likely to become loyal consumers as compared to others. The research attempts to identify who such individuals might be.

LISREL results demonstrate that secure and anxious personal attachment styles predispose individuals toward different satisfaction, trust, and loyalty responses, revealing patterns parallel to those found for interpersonal relationships. Results reinforce the legitimacy of inquiries that extend relationship and personality theories in consumer research.

Individually, each paper offered an interesting viewpoint, based on an individual difference perspective, on a previously well researched branding phenomenon (e.g., brand personality, brand extensions or brand relationships) and thereby, outlines some new boundary conditions.

Deborah Roedder John (University of Minnesota) served as the discussion leader. She pointed out that the extant research in the area of branding has tended to focus heavily on identifying and understanding the role of features and characteristics of brand stimuli (e.g., fit, name, brand characteristics). However, the future research in the branding area would benefit from a better understanding of the role of individual moderators as well as examining the influence of situational factors. She provided a typology for categorizing the relevant individual-difference moderators for this area: (i) processing style variables (e.g., interdependence, self-referencing); (ii) interpersonal style variables (e.g., attachment style of consumers); (iii) processing states of consumers (e.g., trait accessibility).

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Wanting a Bit(e) of Everything. The Role of Appetitive Desire in Variety Seeking

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Conceptualization

Most people prefer some variety in their activities, snacks, music, clothes, restaurants... In this article, we examined the effect of appetitive desires like hunger, thirst, and the desire for holidays on the tendency of individuals to seek diversity in the desired product classes like food, drinks, or holidays. Drawing on cognitive emotion theory (Lerner and Keltner 2000), we expected appetitive desire to facilitate variety seeking. By the reasoning that desire is an affective state that triggers changes in the attractiveness of the object of desire, we expected that desire makes it easier to divert from one's favorites.

Experiments

In a first study, we examined how hunger influences variety seeking. We asked hungry versus satiated participants to choose five sandwiches from a set of eight for the coming week. Variety seeking was operationalized as the number of different sandwiches participants ordered. We found that hungry participants chose significantly more variety than satiated participants. Moreover, our results indicated that this effect was mediated by increased food attractiveness. In particular, consumers rated food items more positively when hungry, and, because more food items satisfied their needs, they opted for a more varied choice set. Further analyses revealed that in comparison with satiated participants, hungry participants chose more in proportion to their food ratings and less for their favorite.

A follow-up study confirmed the crucial role of food attractiveness. In the second study, we also manipulated sandwich attractiveness by placing a plate of sandwiches in the laboratory. Previous research has shown that seeing a food stimulus has a positive effect on consumers' food attractiveness (Lambert and Neal 1992). Here, however, instead of using fresh sandwiches, we displayed sandwiches that were about two days old. In a pilot study (n=63), we found that a plate of stale sandwiches as a food cue increased the sandwich attractiveness for low disgust sensitive people, and decreased it for high disgust sensitive people. The results corroborated the findings of study 1 regarding the facilitating effect of hunger on variety seeking. We also found that the presence of the stale sandwiches was able to block the hunger effect in high disgust sensitive people. So, hunger does not increase variety seeking when the presence of stale food blocks the increase in food attractiveness that typically follows a hunger state. We can conclude that an increase in food attractiveness is a necessary condition for hunger to influence variety seeking.

In a third study we tried to generalize the above-found effects to other types of "hunger", namely thirst and desire to go on holiday. We found that consumers who are thirsty (at the exit of a fitness centre) or desirous to go on holidays (at a travel agency) prefer more variety in their drinks, respectively in their holiday activities, compared to consumers who are not particularly thirsty (at a travel agency) or not particularly desirous to go on holidays (at a fitness

centre). Thus, desire appears to increase variety seeking, at least when the objects to choose from are relevant for the specific desire.

Major findings

In sum, the three studies reported in this article provide strong evidence that appetitive desire leads to more variety seeking in the desired object class, caused by an increase in the attractiveness of the object of desire. We propose that, because of this increase in the attractiveness, more items in the desired object class are considered as satisfying, which makes it less threatening to divert from the absolute favorites.

Our results strongly support the view that when consumers are in a non-neutral visceral state, in this case desirous, they fail to correctly predict their future tastes (Loewenstein 1996). Several articles report that the current hedonic response provides a powerful anchor in predicting future tastes in the relative short term (Kahneman and Snell 1992; Read and van Leeuwen 1998). So, in predicting, consumers do not take sufficiently into account how much their tastes change over time (Kahneman and Snell 1992). Instead, they persist in weighing their current tastes heavily when predicting what they will want, even though these are poor or useless guides to future tastes (Loewenstein 1996).

All in all, our findings point to the power of appetitive desires. Although our findings suggest that desire has an unmistakable role in consumption decision making, previous studies have devoted little attention to the role of desire (but see Belk et al. 2003). Our studies provide evidence that, when trying to increase the attractiveness of a product, marketers do not only have to focus on the product features. One should be aware that marketers can often increase a product's attractiveness via the desire of the consumer. Gibbs and Forehand (2003) recently found in their experiment that desire can be primed. Our results indicate that also 'natural desire' states, like hunger, thirst and desire to go on holiday, can offer a possible means to influence variety seeking tendencies.

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The Unhealthy=Tasty Intuition and Its Effects on Taste Inferences, Enjoyment, and Choice of Food Products

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In December of 2001, the American Surgeon General announced that approximately 300,000 deaths were associated that year with a preventable health problem: obesity (Parloff 2003). The same year, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) classified 39.2 million Americans (or roughly 30% of the population) as obese, a 74% jump from 1991 (Vence 2004). This trend is of grave concern not only because a variety of ailments including hypertension, heart problems, diabetes, liver malfunction, arthritis, and respiratory problems are directly linked to obesity (Allison et al. 1999; Parloff 2003; Spake 2004), but also because of the economic cost of treating ailments associated with obesity, which was estimated at \$117 billion in 2000 (American Obesity Association 2002).

To many consumers and consumer activists, fast food restaurants and organizations interested in promoting “unhealthy” eating habits (e.g., lobbyists for grocery manufacturers) are to blame for the obesity epidemic (e.g., Brownell and Horgen 2003). However, in this research, we examine whether a more subtle (and as yet unrecognized) factor may also contribute to the over consumption of food perceived as being unhealthy. What if people consume food that is considered unhealthy not despite of its perceived unhealthiness but *because* of it? That is, what if part of the attractiveness of food lay in its perceived unhealthiness? This can happen if consumers intuitively believe that unhealthy food is inherently tastier. The operation of such a belief would increase the chances that people will over consume food portrayed as less (vs. more) healthy since such food will be expected to taste better. Consistent with this idea, we propose that the perceived unhealthiness of food has the ironic effect of enhancing its attractiveness.

In this paper, we derive predictions of how the intuition affects three variables of theoretical and substantive interest: (1) taste inferences of food products when information pertaining to their healthiness is provided, (2) differences in enjoyment of the same food product when it is presented as being more versus less healthy, and (3) choice between a more versus less healthy entrée from a restaurant as a function of differences in the propensity to pursue a hedonic goal.

Based on the idea that people assume an inverse relationship between tastiness and healthiness—an assumption that we term the Unhealthy=Tasty intuition—we hypothesize that when information pertaining to assessing the healthiness of food items is provided, foods perceived to be less healthy will be: (1) inferred to taste better, (2) enjoyed more during actual consumption, and (3) preferred in a choice task when a hedonic goal is more (vs. less) salient. Results from three controlled experiments confirmed our expectations. Participants in Experiment 1 inferred that the less healthy an item, the better its taste. Participants in Experiment 2 derived greater actual enjoyment from consuming food that was portrayed as less healthy. Finally, participants in Experiment 3 chose an entrée portrayed as more unhealthy when they were prone to seeking hedonic (enjoyment) goals due to greater hunger. Interestingly, these results were obtained both among those who agreed and those who disagreed that healthiness is inversely related to tastiness.

Our research also speaks to the important issue of why consumers continue to believe in the Unhealthy=Tasty intuition despite

a lack of rigorous evidence for its validity (reflected in the general difficulty in determining if a specific ingredient is healthy or unhealthy). A conjunction of two mechanisms appears to underlie this phenomenon. The first is the generation of the hypothesis that unhealthy food is tastier. We posit both internal and external sources for the generation of the hypothesis. The fact that the Unhealthy=Tasty relationship is a specific manifestation of a more general principle—of an assumed inverse relationship between the wholesomeness and hedonic potential of stimuli—is a potential internal source for the hypothesis. Externally, an inverse relationship between healthiness and tastiness is at least implicitly, if not explicitly propagated across a variety of media sources. Once the hypothesis that healthy food is less tasty is generated, the second mechanism of the hypothesis confirmation bias (Hoch and Ha 1986) helps sustain belief in the intuition. Results from Experiment 2, in particular, demonstrate how, once the hypothesis that unhealthy food is tastier is generated, it tends to be confirmed—even when there is a lack of objective evidence for it.

This research makes two other significant theoretical contributions. First, it attests to the robustness and generality of the influence of the Unhealthy=Tasty intuition on judgments and decisions concerning food. It is well known that consumers’ decisions are influenced by their lay theories and intuitions (e.g., Mukhopadhyay and Johar 2005), even when the lay theories are invalid (e.g., Broniarczyk and Alba 1994). What is noteworthy in the present research is that our predictions were confirmed across three different types of food products, three types of judgment tasks, and two conceptually different types of unhealthiness manipulations. The generality of our findings across these experimental differences hints at the prevalence and strength with which people believe in the Unhealthy=Tasty intuition, suggesting that overcoming the influence of the intuition may be difficult.

The final theoretical contribution, which also points to the robustness of the influence of the Unhealthy=Tasty intuition, stems from our finding that the intuition can influence the judgments and decisions of even those who explicitly disagree with the idea that unhealthy food is tastier. This finding indicates that the influence of the intuition may lie outside of the awareness of consumers making judgments about what to consume. At a conceptual level, this finding shares similarities with the work on implicit learning by Lewicki and his colleagues (e.g., Lewicki, Hill, and Czyzewska 1997). At a more substantive level, this finding raises the disturbing possibility that consumers may be unaware of *why* they seek and over-consume food that is perceived or portrayed as unhealthy. Without such awareness, controlling one’s consumption patterns becomes much more difficult.

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Taste Discrimination: The Influence of Visual and Verbal Cues

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Perceptual discrimination is a precursor to choice in many categories, yet previous research has largely ignored consumers' discrimination skills. The present research focuses on the extent to which consumers accurately perceive the degree of difference between identical and nonidentical gustatory stimuli when presented in the context of visual and verbal marketing cues. The visual cue of interest is color. We consider the conflict between color and taste—an interaction that is not without precedent in marketing research but one that has been investigated primarily from the perspective of affective response rather than sensory discrimination (e.g., Garber, Hyatt, and Starr 2000). We test the effect of color by focusing on two measures: (a) the perceived difference between stimuli that are identical in taste but different in color and (b) the perceived difference between stimuli that differ in taste but not in color. Both discriminations are tested against a same-color control to determine whether color dominates taste such that there is greater perceived similarity between two stimuli that share the same color but differ in taste than between two stimuli that share the same taste but differ in color. The verbal cues consisted of well-established market-based cues that previously have been shown to alter consumer perceptions (e.g., Allison and Uhl 1964; Hoyer and Brown 1990).

Experiment 1. Experiment 1 involved an orange juice taste test that compared the influence of subtle color differences (i.e., similar hues of orange) against two benchmarks. The first was a same-color control condition. The second was a verbal-label condition that should prompt expectations of difference. Specifically, the labels referred to the juice samples as having been produced in California versus Florida. The orange juice was manipulated to create three levels of sweetness: low, medium and high. Participants were presented with four cups of juice: one low sweet, two medium sweet, and one high sweet. In the color condition, the low sweet and one of the medium sweet items were both a lighter color whereas the other medium sweet and the high sweet items were both a darker color (counterbalanced). In the Label condition, the low and one of the medium sweet items were labeled "Florida" whereas the other medium sweet and the high sweet items were labeled "California" (counterbalanced). In the Control condition, the samples were labeled 1, 2, 3, and 4. Participants tasted the juices in random order and then expressed their perceptions of taste difference between (1) the two identical (medium sweet) items with different colors or labels and (2) the distinct items (low-medium or medium-high) with the same color or label. Results indicated that, relative to the control, participants in the Color condition exaggerated the difference between identical tasting stimuli and minimized differences between distinct stimuli. In fact, participants in this condition perceived a greater difference between identical tasting stimuli that differed in color than between different tasting stimuli of the same color. Thus, color dominated taste. Participants in the Label condition exaggerated the difference between identical stimuli with different region labels but did not minimize differences between distinct stimuli with the same label. Thus, the region label influenced but did not dominate taste.

Experiment 2. Experiment 2 was conducted to (a) confirm the color dominance observed in Experiment 1, and (b) strengthen the label manipulation by replacing the region labels with cues that have previously been shown to influence preferences, namely,

brand and price labels. Participants in the Brands condition were told that the stimuli were either Tropicana Pure Premium Orange Juice (a premium brand) or Winn-Dixie Orange Juice from Concentrate (a generic EDLP brand). Participants in the Prices condition were told that the stimuli were either \$3.29 or \$1.89 for two liters. To maximize the believability of the labels, the sweetened juices used in experiment 1 were replaced with actual Winn-Dixie and Tropicana juices. In all other respects the procedure was identical to Experiment 1. The results of the Color and Control conditions replicated the findings from Experiment 1. Surprisingly, and in contrast to prior work on the influence of brands on taste perception and preference, the Brands condition mirrored the control. The Prices condition was statistically indistinguishable from the control group, showing no exaggeration of between-group differences. Thus, the visual cue again dominated taste, but the verbal cues did not overwhelm taste perception. One possible explanation for these results involves consumers' expectations of differences. Participants might have assumed two samples of different hue could not both be pure orange juice—which would lead to stronger expectations of taste variance relative to the verbal labels. However, a follow up study assessing expectations of difference across the three cues rendered such an explanation unlikely.

Experiment 3. Experiment 2 suggested that taste discrimination may operate differently from preference. Experiment 3 provided a more direct test of this possibility, comparing preference to discrimination for brand labels and color differences. Using identical-tasting stimuli only, participants either rated the perceived difference or rated the extent to which they preferred one over the other. Results showed that color creates greater perceived difference in taste than do brands, but, consistent with prior research on brand effects, brand labels result in stronger preferences.

Together the studies offer a starting point for much needed research on perceptual discrimination. The results suggest that discrimination does not map directly onto preference. Visual cues can dominate taste perception, whereas verbal cues, which are known to have dramatic effects on preference, exert less influence on discrimination ability.

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Sensory Metaphor and Meanings: Development of a Cross-Sensory Heterogeneity Index

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

“All human knowledge comes from the senses” (Marks, 1978, p. 2).

In the early 1980s, Holbrook and Hirschman (1982, p. 132) noted that little research had focused on the nonverbal multi-sensory properties of consumption situations, despite the fact that many products project important nonverbal cues that must be seen, heard, tasted, felt or smelled to be appreciated properly. During the past two decades, consumer researchers have considered the importance of our physical senses and sensory imaging, yielding important insights about effects of senses in memory, processing, attitudes, and purchase intentions. The vast majority of this research, however, has focused on an individual sense, that is, taste, touch, sound, smell, or sight; at most, studies have concurrently considered two of the five senses (see for example, Macklin 1994, Wirtz and Mattila 2001). Recently, Joy and Sherry (2003) have argued that it is important to sell an experience, not a product, and that the experience should be a combination of all senses; marketing practitioners concur (Gobé 2001, Lindstrom 2005; Schmidt 1999).

A number of observations are critical to our research. First, we assume that different senses can provide information on an object of interest—the rough texture of sand paper is evident via sight and touch; we can smell and taste a homemade apple pie. Second, each sensory modality provides information, and in some instances, the information is identical across two or more senses; for example, the peacefulness associated with financial security can be articulated in terms of sound of the ocean and the blue sky; this cross-modal correspondence is referred to as auditory-sight synesthesia. Third, individuals convey their sensory experiences with words that reflect intersensory analogies or cross-modality matching in terms of sensory metaphors—smooth (touch) music or bright (visual) sneeze. Thus, “language acts as an internal medium of communication among different [sensory] modalities” (Marks 1978, p. 24).

An important component of language, generally and with regard to the senses, is the metaphor, the representation of one thing in terms of another (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Literatures as diverse as cognitive psychology, cognitive neuroscience, linguistics, and anthropology indicate that metaphors are central to thought, and are important means of expression (Lakoff and Johnson 1999; Ortony 1993). Recently, metaphor has received considerable attention in the consumer and marketing research (Burroughs and Mick 2004; Coulter, Zaltman, Coulter 2001; Joy and Sherry 2003; Zaltman and Coulter 1995; Zaltman 2003). Zaltman (2003, p. 38) observed that metaphors reveal “‘embodied cognition’—the referencing of our sensory and motor systems to express our thinking” (see also Danesi 1990; Lakoff and Johnson 1999). Sensory metaphors are articulated in our everyday conversations through metaphorical expressions—the words, phrases, or sentences that are the surface realization of the cross-domain mappings (Baron-Cohen and Harrison 1997; Cytowic 2002; Howes 1991; Marks 1978). Sensory metaphors provide a window into deeper meanings consumers associate with products and experiences; “metaphor is a means to disclose new analogies and equivalences” (Marks 1978, p. 252).

The objective of our research was to bring attention to sensory imaging and metaphor in consumer research and to develop a

measurement tool to assess consumers’ multi-sensory imaging; that is, the extent to which consumers report thematic meanings consistently across senses. We employed the sensory imaging step from the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) (Zaltman 2003; Zaltman and Coulter 1995) to examine sensory metaphors as a means for eliciting thematic meanings that consumers associate with a given topic across the senses. Specifically, in two different data collections, we asked participants to “imagine that you are explaining the meaning of financial security to some friends using sensory images.” For each sense, participants were asked to identify one sensory metaphor, and provide the meaning(s) that they associated with the sensory metaphor.

The first data collection (72 undergraduate students) served as a basis for identifying sensory metaphors (e.g., touch of velvet; sound of classical music) and developing of a coding scheme for the thematic meanings (e.g., freedom; no worries) associated with financial security. The procedure for the analysis was systematic and grounded in qualitative data analytic procedures (Spiggle 1994).

Based on the coding scheme developed, the second data set (139 undergraduate students) was analyzed. Perhaps not surprisingly, we found money (including cash/money, money to buy expensive items, and simply money to buy things) as relatively consistent themes across these senses. The frequency with which other meanings were articulated varied across the senses and we identified uniquely important meanings for each sense: touch—strong and comfort; taste—rich/elegant/sophistication; smell—fresh/refreshing; and sound—money to buy things.

Finally, we developed the *Cross-Sensory Heterogeneity Index* to calibrate the diversity present in the set of thematic meanings reflected across senses by each individual. *CSHI* involves three measures, N , U , and H , where N is the total number of meanings mentioned by an individual across all the senses, U is the total number of unique meanings mentioned by an individual across all senses, and H is the number of homogeneous pair-wise connections for an individual. N and H are used to construct a pairwise connection homogeneity ratio (F), i.e., $[H/((N*(N-1))/2)]$, and *CSHI* is calculated as: $[((U-1)*(1-F))/N]$, and ranges between 0 and 1. A higher *CSHI* indicates more the individual identified a greater number of meanings, as well as more heterogeneous meanings across the senses.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

When Increasing Control Decreases Consumers' Well-Being: The Negative Psychological Consequences of Choosing

Simona Botti, Cornell University
Tom Meyvis, New York University

SESSION OVERVIEW

Classic research in both psychology and economics has shown that people want to have choices because choosing leads to beneficial consequences such as greater intrinsic motivation, more positive affect, and superior cognitive performances. Consistent with this view, modern marketing practices as well as public policy reforms increasingly rely on the provision and exercise of choice as a means to increase individuals' satisfaction. For example, stores offer increasingly large assortments and entice shoppers to customize product offers, and the current US administration has proposed reforms in the field of healthcare, social security, and education that switch choice from the government to the citizens. The papers presented in this session challenge the assumption that choice is always beneficial by investigating situations in which the provision of choice in different degrees (from no-choice to too many choices) have negative psychological consequences, thereby worsening, rather than improving, consumers' well-being. In addition, these papers indicate that in specific circumstances consumers may be willing to restrict their choice. This result is particularly important because it contradicts prior findings showing that, even when dissatisfied with the decision outcome, people still prefer autonomy and choice. These studies contribute to a nascent body of literature that posits that decision makers' evaluation of decision outcomes depends less on their ability to match personal preferences and available alternatives than on the psychological processes experienced during the decision task. Marketers as well as policy makers should therefore reconsider policies aiming at providing or increasing choice in light of the potential negative psychological effects of choosing.

"Avoiding Pain: Choice Preferences and Emotional Responses in Medical Decision Contexts"

Simona Botti, Cornell University

Sheena S. Iyengar, Columbia University

Kristina Orfali, Columbia University, ISERP

Prior research has found that people prefer situations in which they can make their own choices to those in which these choices are externally dictated (Brehm 1966). This preference for self-choice is supported by findings showing that the provision of choice improves emotional states while the removal of choice negatively affects psychological and physiological well-being (Langer 1975; Taylor and Brown 1988). Even in the field of bioethics there is a general consensus about the benefits of choice. Indeed, the autonomy model, according to which patients know what is the best treatment for them and should decide for themselves, prevails over the paternalistic model, which considers patients cognitively and emotionally unable to decide so that physicians should make the decision on their behalf.

More recent evidence has however challenged the assumption that choice is always beneficial. Research has shown that the emotional conflict often involved in decision making heightens when the importance of the choice increases (Luce 1998). In addition, choosing among all undesirable options has been found to generate psychological distress, thereby reducing outcome satisfaction (Botti and Iyengar 2004). Some evidence in medical deci-

sion research also suggests that, contrary to the principles of the autonomy model, patients are sometimes reluctant to decide and that their actual desire for autonomy is overestimated by both the physicians and the general public (Schneider 1998). The present research examines whether the psychological pain of choosing raises so much in highly consequential, aversive choices to weaken people's preferences for personal choosing. This question is important because it contributes to the current literature on the detrimental effects of choice (e.g., Iyengar and Lepper 2000) by directly assessing choosers and non-choosers' affective reactions to real-life decisions about medical treatments.

Study 1 is an ethnographic study about infants' healthcare. We analyzed the protocols from 32 in-depth interviews with parents of critically ill newborns under life-sustaining treatments in two similar Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs), one located in the United States, where the autonomy model is adopted, and the other in France, where instead the paternalistic model is used. These parents were facing the decision of whether or not to interrupt the treatment: The usual outcome of treatment interruption is the death of the baby, whereas the decision to prolong the treatment generally involves a higher probability of severe neurological impairment versus a lower probability of death. The sample included only cases in which the treatment was terminated causing the death of the babies, with the difference that the decision was taken by the parents in the American unit and by the doctors in the French unit. Results suggest that American parents reported more intense negative emotions such as anger, depression, guilt, or regret as compared to French parents following the death of the babies. In addition, both French and American parents expressed an ambivalent attitude towards being the decision makers, on one side resisting the idea of making a choice that will hunt them for the rest of their lives, and on the other side associating the decision to forgo the choice with being irresponsible caregivers.

Two follow-up laboratory studies were conducted to control for factors other than decision autonomy that could potentially influence the parents' affective reactions observed in the ethnographic study. For example, cultural variables could explain the different emotions felt by French and American parents. More importantly, French parents were not always aware of the uncertainty involved in the doctors' decisions because these decisions were often framed as the "only" solution in the baby's best interest. In the first laboratory study participants read a scenario describing the situation of a premature baby undergoing a life-sustaining treatment. In the choice condition, participants were asked to choose between continuing the treatment, with 40% probabilities of death and 60% probability of severe neurological impairment, and withdrawing the treatment, which would determine the death of the baby. In the risky-no choice condition participants were given the same information as in the choice condition but were also told that the doctors had made the decision to withdraw the treatment and let the baby die. Finally, in the sure-no choice condition participants were told that the doctors had decided to withdraw the treatment and let the baby die without being informed about the alternate course of action. Results were consistent with those of the ethnographic study. Participants in the risky-no choice condition experienced the

most positive and least negative emotional responses, while no significant affective difference was found between participants in the choice and sure-no choice conditions, ruling out the framing of the decision in terms of medical certainty as an alternative explanation. Also consistent with the ethnographic study, participants were ambivalent towards their preference for choosing: choosers liked their experimental condition less than both non-choosers. Nevertheless, the willingness of choosers to have the doctors make the decision for them was lower than that of risky and sure non-choosers to decide autonomously.

The second laboratory study controlled for yet another alternative explanation. It might in fact be argued that the lower positive affect experienced by choosers as compared to equally informed non-choosers is a consequence of choosers' inability to engage in preference matching, as the preferences of those who will be directly affected by the decision are not known to those who actually decide. In this study we used the same hypothetical decision of the previous study, with the only difference that the consequences of the choice were to be experienced by oneself rather than another. Results showed that even when the choice consequences were endured by the decision maker, self-made choices led to less positive emotional responses than doctor-made choices, and decisional autonomy was not fully endorsed.

Overall, these studies indicate that highly consequential, average choices may negatively affect emotional reactions and that people's desire for autonomy in these choice contexts is more ambiguous than that observed in prior research. This research is relevant for public policy makers in that it suggests that the autonomy model may not ensure individuals' welfare in healthcare decisions.

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"When Consumers Choose to Restrict Their Options: Regret and Choice Set Size Preference"

Cenk Bülbul, New York University

Tom Meyvis, New York University

Past research studies have found that the provision of choice increases intrinsic motivation and enhances performance on a variety of tasks (Deci, 1975, 1981; Deci and Ryan, 1985; Taylor and Brown, 1988). Yet, Iyengar and Lepper (2000) find that—while having a choice is a good thing—having an abundance of choice

alternatives is not. Choosing from larger assortments decreases purchase instances and makes people less satisfied and more regretful about the choice they make. Interestingly, Iyengar and Lepper (2000) also find that people would like to choose from larger assortments, even though it tends to make them regretful and demotivated.

We conducted three studies to examine whether people always prefer more choice however de-motivated, frustrated and regretful they feel in the end. More specifically, we investigate how the anticipation of regret determines how much choice people allow for themselves. We argue that anticipated regret play a critical role in determining consumers' ideal choice set size. Furthermore, we propose that to understand the impact of anticipated regret, it is important to distinguish between the different sources of regret (and the corresponding consumer focus). In each of the following studies, regret was manipulated in an unrelated first study, after which participants were asked to specify how many desk lamps they would like to choose from.

We argue that consumers' normative strategy is to "keep their options open" and maximize the number of alternatives they can choose from. Given that this is the default strategy, the anticipation of regret should increase consumers' preference for large choice sets (Kahneman and Miller, 1986). However, we propose that the activation of regret may also have an opposite effect depending on the type of regret that is being anticipated. In particular, when the choice process itself is made more salient, we expect that the anticipation of regret will increase the preference for *smaller* assortments in order to minimize the pain of choosing. One factor that may increase the salience of the trade-off difficulties in the choice process is the presence of a concrete exemplar from the choice sets. In study 1, we manipulated anticipated regret (none versus primed) and exemplar priming (none versus primed) between subjects. Regret was primed in a seemingly unrelated task that was adapted from Simonson (1992). The exemplar priming consisted of a picture of a typical desk lamp. As predicted, regret priming increased the preference for the large assortment when subjects were not primed with the exemplar, but decreased preference for the large assortment when they were primed with the exemplar.

In the second study, we examined how exemplar priming may moderate the effect of regret anticipation. Exemplar priming could create a *process focus* by making people anticipate the trade-off difficulties during choice process or it could create an *outcome focus* by making people think about the product they will end up with. We propose that, while a process focus would explain the observed increased preference for smaller choice sets when primed with regret, an outcome focus would instead activate the keep-your-options-open norm and increase their preference for the larger sets when primed with regret. In study 2 we tested these predictions by directly instructing participants to either focus on the actual choice process or the outcome of their choice. As predicted, we found that when people focused on the choice process, the anticipation of regret shifted their preference away from the larger assortments. However, when people focused on the outcome of their choice, the anticipation of regret shifted their preference towards the larger assortments.

In study 3, we found converging evidence for our choice process theorizing using a 2 (Regret: Anticipated versus None) X 2 (Timing of actual choice: Now versus Later) between-subjects design. Based on Construal Level Theory (Trope and Liberman, 2003), we hypothesized that a short-term perspective would induce a process focus, which is more contextual and includes more incidental details, while a longer-term perspective would induce an

outcome focus, which is more de-contextualized and general. In the “choose-now” condition, participants were told that they would make their actual choices immediately after indicating their preferences for the choice set size, whereas in the “choose later” condition, participants were told that they would make their actual choices in the next experimental session three weeks later. As predicted, anticipation of regret in the “choose later” condition increased the preferred size of the choice set, while anticipating regret in the “choose now” condition decreased the preferred size of the choice set.

These results suggest that the impact of anticipated regret on choice set size preference depends on the focus of this regret. We propose that in our exemplar priming, process focus, and ‘choose now’ conditions, that focal regret is the anticipated regret during the actual choice process (i.e., the negative feelings people experience when making trade-offs between alternatives). In order to minimize this regret, participants preferred smaller assortments. However, anticipation of regret can also work in the opposite direction and boost people’s preference for more choice. We propose that in our baseline (no priming), outcome focus and ‘choose later’ conditions, the focal regret was the regret of having passed up better outcomes than the one obtained. To minimize this particular regret, participants wanted to keep their options open and hence boosted their natural preference for larger assortments.

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“Choosing Inside The Box: When More Choice Narrows Our Thinking”

On Amir, University of California at San Diego

Sheena S. Iyengar, Columbia University

Consumers face decisions which vary on the amount of choice. One can choose between two music CDs, or from amongst five or six CDs. We propose that larger choice sets, that is, choice-sets that include more products from the same category, generate narrower and more mundane thinking in the decision process. In particular, we predict *less creative* thinking, or greater thinking within “the box”, as the choice categories are invoked more strongly, hindering associations to non-category schemas. For the abovementioned CD example, this would mean that consumers will be less likely to think of alternatives that are not other CDs when choosing from the larger choice set as compared to the smaller one.

In Experiment 1, we demonstrate that as within category choice increases, consumers are less likely to consider outside alternatives. Specifically, we offered participants the option to buy a discounted CD in three conditions that varied on the number of possible alternatives (1, 2, or 3 CDs). We then asked participants to write all the alternatives that came to mind when making their decision. While the overall number of alternatives written by participants did not significantly vary across conditions, participants were reliably more likely to refer to other CDs as alternatives the greater the choice set. In contrast, the smaller the choice set, the greater the likelihood of participants considering alternatives that were not related to the choice category, such as meals, DVDs, etc. We hypothesized the stronger invocation of the category and its subsequent heightened accessibility as the driver of this effect. If indeed this effect is driven by hyper accessibility of the focal category, we should find the same effect on creativity. We tested this in Experiment 2.

Experiment 2 tested whether this enhanced accessibility would influence thinking “outside the box”. Participants were asked to aid the process of the development of a new product. To better explain the process, they were given a choice from either a set of two MP3 players or five MP3 players, as examples of products with innovative features. Participants were then asked to write ideas for product innovations. Specifically, we asked participants to try and predict “the next ‘coolest’ and most innovative product”. We counted the number of ideas and measured the likelihood of those ideas to relate to MP3 players. In addition, the data was given to two independent judges that were asked to rate their creativity. As predicted, participants choosing from a larger set were reliably more likely to be confined to that category (i.e., MP3 player) when thinking of new product ideas. In contrast, participants choosing from the smaller set were much more likely to write ideas judged to be more creative and diverse. In this experiment participants in the smaller choice set were even more likely to suggest more ideas than their large choice set counterparts.

We conclude that a choosing from amongst a larger set of same-category products seems to focus thoughts on that category and obstruct considerations of external alternatives. An example of this might be that the more types of cakes one can choose from as desert, the less likely is one to think of fruit salad or of not having desert as viable alternatives. Greater choice has been shown to have negative consequences for consumers (Iyengar and Lepper 2000). Our findings suggest another mechanism by which having more choice interferes with increasing our well being, as it decreases our flexible use of resources (money, time, etc...)

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY
The Production of Consumer Representations
Julien Cayla, Australian Graduate School of Management
Lisa Peñaloza, University of Colorado

SESSION SUMMARY

This special session investigates one of the key practices of consumer research: representation. Academics, consumers and marketers are all at one point or another engaged in the practice of representing. First, academics make choices about what type of consumer experiences they want to represent and how (Stern 1998). From this perspective, the word “consumers” is not an ontological given but a socially constituted and institutionally-produced category. Second, consumers are often engaged in representing themselves when asked to participate in consumer research (Applbaum 1998; 2000) or when using products and services to enact identities (Firat 1998). Finally, marketers also spend much of their time imagining and constructing consumers. With the increasing institutionalization of markets, producers and consumers rarely meet each other and managers rely on mediated images of consumers to design their strategies. Representations may be seen in the images appearing in television and print ads, in the intermediary stages of market research and theorizing about consumers, in talk and other social practices that give meaning to consumer research, and in symbols that stand in for the experiences of consumers. This session looks specifically at the way marketing practitioners represent consumers.

By focusing on the cultural work of casting consumers in different roles and turning them into actionable targets for action, the present papers converge on the question of how marketers represent. Cayla and Peñaloza look at the lack of representation of Muslims in advertising and other forms of popular media in India. They show advertisers and marketers discussing what it means to be Indian, ignoring certain consumer differences and emphasizing others in the process of developing ads and marketing strategies. The paper then turns to a sample of Muslim consumers and their reaction to the hegemony of Hindu representations. Rather than showing Muslims resisting these representations of Indians as Hindus, the data speaks to a Muslim desire of not being represented. Overall, the paper discusses the politics of consumer representations, in the form of their construction by marketers, their reception by consumers, and the dialectic implication of both processes. Sandikci and Ger also look at the representation of Muslims, but in a very different cultural context: Turkey. Starting from the observation that marketplace activities and religious practices influence each other, they investigate how fashion marketers construct and represent Islamist women in advertising and other commercial imagery, and how these representations transform over time as a result of competition, consumption ideology, and global capitalism. They argue that Islamist style clothing companies have adapted contemporary fashion marketing tools, and the stereotypical image of the veiled Muslim women as the oppressed and the non-fashionable has given way to the images of a modern consumer. Overall, the paper demonstrates how changes in advertising representations relate to the underlying social, economic and political forces.

Finally, investigating representation in electronic consumption spaces, Zwick and Nyman examine the cultural work of database marketers. Drawing from interviews with customer data workers, the authors examine the logic of the database as it abstracts consumer bodies from their territorial settings, recodes them into a series of data flows, and then reassembles them into distinct data

subjects, which can be analyzed and targeted for intervention. The authors argue that database marketing should be regarded as a response to the twin condition of marketing modernity, the increasingly mobile consumer and the disappearing consumer body. Systematic surveillance of consumers’ movement and transactions, an inherently ambiguous process that should not be considered in a merely negative light (Lyon, 2001), produces a new regime of signification, which entails a number of managerial and theoretical implications. Of particular interest is the authors’ claim that equipped with digital facsimiles of consumers, marketers now regard all consumer actions and movements, indeed even *life itself*, as having value (Arvidsson, 2004). Moreover, the digital format allows for techniques of customer assemblage that the authors call *laboratory marketing*.

Overall we make three important contributions to consumer research. First, this session explores managerial practices of representation, which has largely been ignored by consumer researchers (exceptions include Kover 1995). Anthropologists have been at the forefront of analyzing marketing practice as discourse for “framing” consumers (e.g. Applbaum 1998). Their studies show how television producers and advertising professionals imagine their audiences and how the shows and commercials they produce are shaped by this act of imagining. Consumer researchers, on the other hand, study representations with regard to their effect on consumer behavior (O’Guinn and Shrum 1997) or as objects of interest in and of themselves (Belk and Pollay 1985), but not as social practice. In addition, while past studies locate representations within their historical, cultural, and social context, consumer researchers rarely analyze how these representations are constructed. Of special importance is what type of consumer differences marketers choose to emphasize and why. Not all differences receive the same treatment. The market is selective in gleaning those parts that lend themselves to representation and incorporation. This session will map how marketers select these differences and why.

Second, illuminating how consumers exist in marketers’ minds and materialize through their practices, we hope to better understand the chasm we see between marketing practitioners, consumer researchers, and consumers. Put differently, all can benefit by examining and potentially overcoming the boundaries that exist between marketers, consumers, and academics’ representational paradigms. Malefyt (2003) shows how advertisers and marketers together represent consumers and eventually come to reinforce the boundary between consumers and themselves. As they work together to define the contours of consumer profile, they come to think of “us versus them.” Our discussion will revisit these practices as well as basic models of consumer behavior that are predicated on separate notions of marketers, consumers, and researchers. A key question here is how these practices and models would change if consumers and marketers were more or less integrated.

Third, we highlight the relationship between the politics of representation and consumer identities. Denzin (2001) remarks that the interpretive rituals and practices surrounding consumption are anchored in a larger system, called the “circuit of culture” (du Gay et al. 1997, p. 3) where meanings are defined by the mass media, including advertising, cinema, and television. These processes mutually influence one another, continually shaping consumers.

By looking at marketers' practices of representation, we hope to provide a complementary perspective on the circuit of culture and identities that goes beyond representations as texts to integrate structures that constrain their production.

ABSTRACTS

“Domesticating the Indian Imagination”

Julien Cayla, Australian Graduate School of Management

Over the last two decades, advertising and other popular media have increasingly addressed and represented Indians as global consumers. With the liberalization of the Indian economy, the ideology of a self-sufficient socialist nation has receded from the Indian landscape. The ideologies of globalization and capitalism have risen to the fore. Previously, advertising had helped construct the prototype of the patriotic consumer who rejected British and other foreign goods in support of local industries (Doctor and Alikhan 1997). The “new India” is now a postcolonial nation embracing globalization and advertising representations of hybridity abound as modern and traditional, Indian and Western ideas, objects and practices come into articulation.

In constructing representations of modern Indians, marketers and advertisers have to deal with the complexity of the subcontinent: the extreme variety of languages, communities, religions and social classes (Venkatesh and Swamy 1994). Because of this heterogeneity, advertisers heavily borrow from a Hindu religio-ritualistic imagery that most Indians can relate to (Rajagopal 1998, 2001). Hindu gods and goddesses, housewife characters wearing *bindis* and *mangalsutras* all endow contemporary domestic commodities with the aura of a Hindu-Indian heritage that cuts across regions and social classes. While advertisements cater to the desire of upper-middle class Indians to join the global elite, many of them combine images of successful Indians with explicitly Hindu and “traditional” signs of Indian identity.

This paper problematizes the construction and reception of these Indian mainstream representations by Indian Muslims. How successful are advertisers in domesticating the Indian imagination? Since Indian advertising predominantly portrays Hindu men and women, many questions emerge about the way religious minorities respond to these messages. There are more than a hundred and forty million Muslims in India. But apart from a few billboards, films and television series representing Muslim families, this huge community remains largely absent from television screens and ads (Mishra 2002). A focus of this research is to examine how Muslim consumers negotiate their sense of identity, citizenship and ‘Indian-ness’ in a cultural world dominated by Hindus.

This paper relies on eleven months of ethnographic work in Mumbai and Hyderabad. I spent the first nine months of fieldwork engaging in participant observation and interviewing advertising executives about the development of advertising campaigns. During the remaining time, I interviewed fourteen informants from the Indian middle and lower middle social classes, focusing on the ways they negotiate their position of consumers. Field notes, interim transcripts, in-depth interviews, archives of agency correspondence and artefacts (i.e. local newspaper articles; print and television ads) comprise the data.

Preliminary analysis indicates that while upper-middle class Muslim Indians easily play the role of global consumers, Muslims from the lower social classes tend to resist this position. This is nuanced, however, by their desire to connect, through the consumption of TV programs and products from the Middle-East, to another sphere of globality which is less influenced by Western consumerism. Another key finding is Indian Muslims’ desire to blend in as

well as their reticence to being represented as a marketing group standing out to be targeted. Finally, Muslim consumers seem to be especially responsive to the depiction of family life in advertising, despite the prevalence of Hindu symbols in such depictions. These representations seem to transcend the Hindu/Muslim divide and continue to symbolize what it means to be Indian.

“Representing the Islamist Consumer: Transformation of the Market”

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One of the fundamental ways that the consumerist ethos circulates and continuously reproduces itself is through commercial imagery. Advertising, marketing and fashion discourses construct and disseminate aestheticized and stereotyped images of the modern consumer. Who is represented how in the marketing discourse reveals forms of identity that are legitimized and privileged over other identity formations. As Schroeder and Zwick argue “advertising representations influence cultural and individual conceptions of identity, and must be understood as the result of changing social and cultural practices” (2004, p.24). While there is a wealth of literature dealing with the nature and politics of stereotypical representations in advertising, there is little on how stereotypes are created and transformed as a result of social, cultural, political and economic factors. This study looks at how marketers in Turkey construct and represent the Islamist women in advertising and other commercial imagery, and how these representations are influenced and transformed by the local and global forces of consumerism and capitalism.

The issues of who is represented and how become critical in the case of Islam and fashion where the conventional images of the veiled Muslim woman almost always take the form of the oppressed, non-modern and non-fashionable. In contrast to these stereotypical images, contemporary advertising and other commercial representations of the Islamist women in Turkey portray a modern consumer who draws from multiple cultural references and resources. In this paper, we map out various representations of Islamist female as a modern consumer and the marketing agents authoring these representations. Specifically, we investigate the following questions: How Islamist women are constructed and represented in advertisements, catalogues and other commercial media? What assumptions are embodied in these representations? How do marketing and advertising representations create, reinforce, subvert or mock the existing assumptions about the Islamist female identity?

Previous studies outline the emergence of a prolific Islamic consumptionscape in Turkey in last decade, and indicate that consumption orientation has become particularly visible in the domain of fashion (Kilicbay and Binark 2002; Sandikci and Ger 2001, 2002, forthcoming; Navaro-Yashin 2002). While these studies trace the changes of the meanings and practices of the headscarf, they remain mostly silent on the relation between marketing activities and religious practices. Religion affects marketplace activities (Mittelstaedt 2002; Mittelstaedt, Klein and Mittelstaedt 1998). Religious traditions and institutions can influence the rules of trade, prohibit or obligate the trade of certain products, and affect the time and place of markets. Spiritual practices and beliefs translate into demand for certain goods and services and markets develop to meet that demand. Market forces, however, also affect religious practices and traditions. Mittelstaedt (2002) argues that through political, institutional, moral and competitive mechanisms, markets can affect the parameters of religion and can force the organizations to make choices between being faithful and competitive, and the

believers to reevaluate what it means to be faithful. We focus on Islamist market agents, namely companies that sell clothing and related products to Islamist women in Turkey, and explore how their discursive practices influence religious identities and activities as well as how they themselves are affected and transformed as a result of local and global forces of market and consumption cultures.

We draw from data collected through ethnographic work conducted over a period of three years in Turkey. These include in-depth interviews with owners and personnel of Islamist style clothing stores in Ankara and Istanbul, observations at Islamist fashion shows, shopping centers and hotels, and a visual archive that consists of pictures taken by us as well as pictures circulating in the media, advertisements and company catalogues. We find that Islamist advertisements and catalogues represent covered women as attractive and well-groomed females with shapely bodies, much like the representation of uncovered women. The global ideals of beauty of both the face and the body are evident in these images. These representations counter the existing assumption that covering is a practice of faith and the secularist supposition that the sight of a covered woman is ugly and outdated. We also observe that the market agents have evolved overtime, adapting fashion marketing tools and practices in order to compete with their secular counterparts. They now employ more globally fashionable looks as well as looks that they consider would be more acceptable to the secularists. The shift from “religious attire” to “fashionable outfit” indicates a change in the understanding of the identity—from a ‘pious woman’ to a “modern consumer.” We argue that this shift is a co-production of the political milieu, the global and local market forces, and the demands of the urban Islamist women.

“Consumer Representation: The Age of Database Marketing”

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At the beginning of the 21st century, data-driven marketing is ubiquitous and shaping business practice in a growing number of industrial and consumer markets. Consumers are under permanent and systematic surveillance by marketers, whose panoptic techniques are capable of capturing the physical, social, and cultural mobility of consumers that has been described as the hallmark of postmodern life (Arvidsson 2004). With the rise of database technologies and electronically mediated communications, new forms of marketing power have emerged that are typically realized as improved market segmentation and targeting capabilities and often captured in concepts such as customization, customerization, personalization, one-on-one relationships, and interactivity. In this sense, customer databases constitute massive computer-assisted classification systems that operate, according to Haggerty and Ericson (2000, p. 606), “by abstracting human bodies from their territorial settings and separating them into a series of discrete flows. These flows are then reassembled into distinct ‘data doubles’ which can be scrutinized and targeted for intervention.”

Marketing and consumer researchers have ignored the “cultural innovations brought about by the integration of database technology into existing political, economic, and social institutions” (Poster 1995, p. 78). In particular the role of databases as language constructing markets and consumers has not been given due attention by marketing and consumer theorists (cf. O’Shaughnessy and Holbrook 1988). A poststructuralist perspective upholds that new systems of representation—be it writing, statistics, or digits—articulate newly ordered spaces of knowledge in which the object of representation (e.g. the consumer) becomes observable, measurable, quantifiable, in short, known (Foucault

1972; Poster 1995; Holt 1997; Thompson and Hirschman 1995). The systematic surveillance of consumers’ movement and activities, an ambiguous process that should not be considered in a merely negative light (Lyon 2001), produces such a new regime of representation that results in the constitution of consumers as *data subjects*. Hence, database marketing enables what Michel Foucault called biopower: making people up by classifying them according to categories.

Whether consumers accept the digital representation of themselves or not and under what circumstances is an empirical question. However, contrary to the logic of traditional types of marketer-produced consumer representations such as advertisements, for database representations to “work” consumer acceptance of the category is not essential. In other words, as soon as consumers are abstracted from the “real” and subsequently reassembled as data flows they always already constitute actionable representations. Paul du Gay’s observation that market research, while aiming at capturing the ‘Real’, in fact produces ‘Reality’ (du Gay 1996, p. 60) seems instructive for understanding the theoretical effect of the representational power of the database.

For this paper, we draw from interviews with database marketers in a wide range of industries to illustrate a number of managerial and theoretical implications of the recoding of consumers into digital representations.

First we elaborate on our claim that database marketing should be regarded as a response to the twin condition of marketing modernity: the increasingly mobile (spatially, economically, culturally) consumer and the disappearing consumer body (Dholakia and Zwick 2004; Lyon 2003). Then we argue that the ability of the customer database to appropriate what Arvidsson (2004, p. 467) calls “the communicative action of life in all its walks” effectively turns increasingly complex and mutable consumer practices into value. In other words, ubiquitous information gathering transforms what has previously been seen as a problem in need to be contained and reduced—the mobile and disappearing consumer and her changing activities and diverse practices—into a productive force. Finally, we theorize the effects of database-driven customer intelligence on marketing practice by proposing the metaphor of *laboratory marketing*. This term refers to a process that conceptualizes the database as an *experimental structure* akin to the scientific laboratory where marketers, in an attempt to continuously valorize consumer life, generate an ongoing cycle of testing, revelation, discovery, and evaluation of the representations they create. Herein lies in fact one of the most fascinating contradictions of database marketing. The possibility of generating an unlimited amount of digital customer representation via creative yet undertheorized data mining activities at the same time facilitates and always already undermines the process of materially defining the consumer object for targeted intervention.

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Individual Preferences Versus Group Preferences: The Effect of Cultural Orientation on Consumer Receptivity to Customized Offers

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Marketing activities are shifting increasingly from a focus on market segments and targeting to a focus on individual consumers and customization. While providing products or services to satisfy the wants and needs of customers has always been at the core of the marketing concept, the degree to which companies seek to match their offerings to customers' *individual* tastes has changed dramatically over the past few years (e.g. Simonson 2005).

While both customers and companies may benefit from customization (e.g., Alba et al. 1997; Häubl and Trifts 2000; Lynch and Ariely 2000), the success of tailoring product offers to individual preferences is based on assumptions that may not always hold. Specifically, customization assumes that consumers rely on their individual preferences when making choices and will reward those companies that provide them with products that match their preferences most closely. However, prior research in cross-cultural psychology has shown that, in many cases, consumers' individual preferences may be less important (and hence less predictive of choice) than the average preferences of relevant in-groups.

One of the most widely researched cultural difference variables in marketing and psychology relates to Hofstede's (1980) dimension of individualism-collectivism (e.g., Han and Shavitt 1994). Referring to the relationship between an individual and the larger collective, individualism-collectivism describes how individuals weigh their personal goals against those of a relevant group, such as their family, friends, or co-workers. Furthermore, in relating to how valued the individual is relative to the group, the individualism-collectivism dimension affects how individuals construe the self, others, and the interdependence between the two (Markus and Kitayama 1991).

Differences in how individuals define themselves in relation to others have stable and predictable consequences for cognition, emotion, and motivation (Markus and Kitayama 1991), including for the relative importance of individual preferences compared to social norms or collective preferences. For example, Singelis (1994) shows that members of collectivistic (vs. individualistic) cultures are less likely to perceive it to be their right or duty to make choices that reflect their personal inner attributes, and are much less concerned with being distinct from others. This is, collectivists (vs. individualists) tend to rely more on external factors, such as their role in a group or their relationship with other group members, than on their internal attributes (Hofstede 1980; Markus and Kitayama 1991; Morris and Peng 1994). Collectivistic (vs. individualistic) consumers tend to act in accordance with the expectations of others to express their interdependence and connectedness, rather than in accordance with their individual preferences. Furthermore, Iyengar and Lepper (1999) find that Asian American children are more motivated and perform best in situations in which choices were made for them by relevant in-group members, but for Anglo American children motivation and performance are best when they make their own choices.

This suggests that the success of customizing marketers who uniquely tailor product offers to individual preferences may be limited by the cultural orientation of their customers. In particular, consumers who exhibit interdependent or collectivistic tendencies may be less receptive to product offers that are based on their

individual preferences, and more likely to patronize marketers that provide them with offers that are based on the preferences of other consumers like them.

It is therefore important to consider the conditions under which consumers are receptive to customized offers. In particular, we investigate differences in receptivity to customized offers due to cultural orientation, operationalized as interdependent versus independent self-views in our first study, and show that as expected, individuals with an interdependent self-construal respond less favorably to a customized offer than individuals with an independent self-construal. Furthermore, Study 2 replicates this effect by operationalizing cultural orientation as collectivism versus individualism. Specifically, we show that collectivistic individuals are less receptive to a customized offer than individualistic individuals. However, Study 2 also finds a boundary condition of the effect, showing that collectivists only respond more favorably to those offers that are not based on their own preferences when these are consumed in public. The difference in receptivity to the customized offer due to cultural orientation is eliminated for products that are consumed in private. Additionally, we show that the effect of cultural orientation on receptivity to customized versus segmented product offers is independent of consumers' need for uniqueness and is not due to differential levels of a need for control.

The results of this research have important implications for marketers, showing that there is a distinct segment of consumers that evaluates customized offers less favorably than offers provided to them based on a segmentation approach. These consumers may be lost if they are forced to customize or personalize a product to their own specifications.

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Revisiting the Cultural Identity Model: Sojourners' Negotiations of Identity and Consumption Experiences

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This research explores the relationship between cultural identity and the readjustment process by revisiting the cultural identity model and its applications in the context of returning sojourners (Sussman 2000, 2002). The cultural adjustment to the foreign host culture and the phenomenon of "culture shock" has been well-researched (Adler 1975; Oberg 1960), but there has been relatively less literature on repatriation, readjustment to the home culture and the phenomenon of "reverse culture shock" (Adler 1981). While some studies have examined the identity projects of cosmopolitans (e.g., Thompson and Tambyah 1999), consumer researchers have focused on the longer-term acculturative processes for immigrant groups (e.g., Mehta and Belk 1991; Oswald 1999; Penaloza 1994; Stayman and Deshpande 1989; Wallendorf and Reilly 1983).

Cultural identity is defined as the psychological counterpoint to national identity. Where national identity is defined as one's place of birth or country of origin, cultural identity is more aligned with who an individual perceives him/herself to be and the more specific cultural influences in his/her life (Costa and Bamossy 1995; Hall 1992). Based on the cultural identity model, there are four types of identity shifts: affirmative, subtractive, additive, and global, each with a different repatriation outcome. Sojourners with an affirmative identity shift possess positive feelings towards their home country identity, and evaluate themselves as having a strong common bond with their compatriots. The cultural identity model predicts that sojourners with an affirmative identity shift would have low adaptation to the host country and low repatriation distress as they are the "grateful repatriates" who view the return home as positive. Subtractive identifiers would experience high adaptation to the host country and high repatriation distress upon return to the home culture. The high repatriation distress is due to identity loss with feelings of alienation from the home culture. They feel less positive about their home country and feel less in common with their compatriots. Similarly, additive identifiers would also experience high adaptation to the host country and high repatriation distress upon return to the home culture. However, high repatriation distress is due to embracing too many aspects of the host culture such as their values, customs, beliefs and social rituals. This additive shift is an identity gain whereby cultural identities have been sufficiently changed such that repatriation becomes a negative experience. Global identifiers experience high adaptation to the host country and moderate or low repatriation distress. They are often sojourners who have had multiple international experiences, and movements in and out of cultures only heighten the sense of belonging to a global community. On the whole, repatriation becomes a positive experience for them.

Data was collected via in-depth phenomenological interviews with fourteen Singaporean returning sojourners, ranging in age from 24 to 38 years who have spent at least two years overseas. Informants were asked about their sojourning experiences, cultural adjustment to their host countries, repatriation experiences, consumption experiences throughout their sojourn and repatriation, the meanings of home and what it means to be Singaporean. Verbatim transcripts were analyzed using the hermeneutic tradition. Generally, all of the informants expected some form of difficulty in returning home. Those whose actual experiences of coming home were more difficult than originally anticipated experienced a higher

degree of repatriation distress. A positive motivation to come home overrides the initial discomfort and enables the sojourner to readily readjust back to life at home. Social support from the home culture can play an important role in helping these sojourners overcome reverse culture shock as well as provide the emotional attachment to Singapore.

The findings provided evidence for the four types of identity shifts as suggested by Sussman (2000, 2002). Sojourners with affirmative identity shifts exhibited a greater appreciation of their local culture (e.g., Singaporean cuisine, Asian values), while those with subtractive identity shifts expressed dissatisfaction with their quality of life after returning home. Sojourners with additive identity shifts shared examples of how they have appropriated various elements of their host cultures in terms of media consumption, adoption of new lifestyles, changes in value systems, etc. Others with a global identity shift attempted to re-create their own unique consumption experiences (e.g., American Thanksgiving with a Singaporean twist).

In addition to Sussman's model, we propose two more identity shifts. A resistive identity shift was identified when the sojourners displayed resistance to changes in the cultural environment. A marginal identity shift emerged when sojourners demonstrated no affinity to either the host or home cultures. Sojourners with a weak sense of cultural identity may experience more negative identity shifts upon repatriation. The resistive and marginal identity shifts are differentiated from the subtractive identity shift by their more negative and subversive undertones. The resistive identity shift may be less problematic because over time, the sojourner may better manage his/her initial adaptation difficulties and ease back into life in the home culture. Like the additive and subtractive identifiers, someone who has experienced a marginal identity shift was a very adaptable person in the host country but who experienced a high level of repatriation distress. However, unlike those who have managed to find a mooring in identifying more with the host or home culture, a marginal sojourner has no affinity to either culture. This rootlessness may take a longer time to be resolved.

This research highlights the dynamic construction of cultural identity as sojourners negotiate both host and home cultures, underscoring the transformative effect that comes with a sojourn to a foreign culture. Although this research proposed two more identity shifts (i.e., the resistive and the marginal identity shifts), there could be other identity shifts as cultural identities become more malleable. Some informants may also display traits of different cultural identities. As the readjustment process varies for different individuals, a longitudinal study can be carried out to better trace the readjustment process and movements in cultural identity. It would be interesting to explore if sojourners may experience multiple cultural identity shifts over time as they readjust to their home cultures.

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The Effects of Cultural Individualism on Consumer Self-Confidence for Marketplace Interfaces

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Businesses that encourage voicing by dissatisfied consumers have an opportunity to learn of problems arising during consumption and, in turn, to take corrective action. Past research suggests firms that provide consumers with an opportunity to voice have higher customer retention rates, help diminish negative word-of-mouth, and improve bottom line performance (e.g. Fornell and Wernerfelt 1987, Bolting 1989, McCollough and Bharadwaj 1992, Kelley, Hoffman, and Davis 1993, Reicheld 1996). Moreover, proper handling of voicing can improve customers' perceptions of service quality and enhance customer relationship with and commitment to the firm (Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekar 1998).

This paper examines the effects of cultural individualism on the consumer self-confidence for marketplace interfaces (CSC-MI). This facet of consumer self-confidence focuses on consumers' ability to stand up for their rights and to express their opinions when dealing with marketing personnel (Bearden, Hardesty, and Rose 2001). Thus, CSC-MI is a construct indicative of consumer's propensity to engage in a consumer voicing behavior.

An important contribution of the present study is an attempt to relate an individual-level cultural characteristic to other individual-level psychological variables. Most studies in the cross-cultural domain thus far have failed to measure the cultural variable and drew conclusions about differences in dependent measures based on the assumption that cultural differences exist. In this research, we offer a unique approach to cross-cultural analysis. Rather than simply comparing means, which is not warranted in most cross-cultural studies due to lack of scalar measurement invariance, we link an individual difference cultural variable to two other individual difference psychological variables to show that such direct relationships are indeed present in differing cultural systems (Leung 1989).

Past research suggests that cultural individualism can influence the propensity to engage in voicing. In individualistic societies, where people's social circles are large and constantly changing, people favor methods of adjudication to facilitate an all-or-nothing outcome (Leung 1987). Further, respondents in an individualistic culture (U.S.) preferred dispute resolution using adversary procedures rather than non-adversary conflict resolution which were favored by collectivists respondents from Hong Kong (Leung and Lind 1986). In contrast, collectivistic respondents from Taiwan were found to prefer obliging and avoiding styles in conflict resolution more than their American counterparts (Trubinsky, Ting-Toomey, and Lin 1991). These findings suggest that less individualistic consumers avoid direct voicing behaviors because of the concern of violating relational harmony by confronting the person or company responsible for failure. Research by Huang (1994) also supports this perspective by showing that Americans are more likely than Taiwanese subjects (presumed to be less individualistic than Americans) to complain directly to the seller or take legal action in response to a dissatisfying purchase.

Based on these perspectives, we hypothesize that greater cultural individualism is associated with a greater the propensity to engage in voicing (measured by CSC-MI). We also hypothesize that the relationship between individualism and consumer propensity to voice will be mediated by general self-confidence, that is, the more individualistic consumers, the more self-confident they are,

and, in turn, the more likely they are to engage in voicing.

Our data set includes demographically matched convenience, non-student samples of 280 adults from the United States and 513 from South Korea. The data were collected using a mail survey methodology. We conduct the analyses using a multi-group structural equation model to assess whether the hypothesized relationships are present in the two differing cultural systems (i.e., United States and South Korea). First, we assess the measurement model and the measurement equivalence of constructs between the two samples. We find that the measures exhibit appropriate reliabilities and the constructs are characterized by configural and, at least, partial metric invariance between the two different cultural groups under study. Second, we use a multi-group, hybrid structural equation model to test the hypothesized relationships. This model exhibits an appropriate level of fit. In support of hypothesis 1, the results of the structural path model show that individualism, as an individual difference cultural characteristic, has a positive affect on CSC-MI in each of the cultural groups. This relationship is assessed using the analysis of total, direct, and indirect effects (Brown 1997). Additionally, our results support hypothesis 2, indicating that general self-confidence fully mediates the relationship between individualism and CSC-MI (Baron and Kenny 1986, Brown 1997). To determine whether the structural paths are invariant between the two samples, Chi² difference tests between the unconstrained default model and series of constrained models in which each path is constrained to be equal between the two samples are performed. Our multi-group analyses indicate that all structural paths are statistically invariant between the two cultural samples.

Our study makes a number of important contributions to the cross-cultural research domain in the context of understanding cultural influence on consumer behavior. First, we find that cultural individualism, measured as an individual difference variable (rather than pan country) has a direct and positive impact on consumers' propensity to voice. Additionally, our results indicate that general consumer self-confidence fully mediates the relationship between individualism and consumer propensity to voice.

Second, we contribute to the growing literature related to the measurement challenges in the cross-cultural research context. Consistent with previous studies incorporating the measurement invariance analyses (e.g., Mullen 1995, Singh 1995, Steenkamp and Baumgartner 1998), we find that scalar invariance is very difficult to establish in a cross-cultural research context, and thus testing for mean differences is not appropriate. However, we are able to establish configural and metric invariances for our measures.

Third, our study provides insights for companies doing business with consumers from multiple cultures. Specifically, companies operating in cultures or cultural groups characterized by low individualism might consider implementation of communication strategies to encourage consumers to voice their dissatisfaction. In view of our findings, communication strategies focusing on boosting general self-confidence could prove particularly useful because there is clear positive link between the level of individualism and general self-confidence. The results of this study may also have implications for governmental consumer protection policy. Realizing that certain cultural groups exhibit lower levels of general self-confidence, and thus, are less prone to voice problems they encoun-

ter in the marketplace, governmental organizations might consider a public policy to encourage consumers to share their negative experiences, including facilitating complaints.

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Netnographic Study of a Community of Beauty Product Enthusiasts in China: Consumer Reflexivity and Social Concerns

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

A virtual community is a cyberspace built by groups of people who utilize networked computers to form and sustain a community through ongoing communication (Bagozzi and Dholakia 2002). Its development paralleled technological advancements that rendered networked computers an inexpensive medium accessible to many people around the world. Since there are more and more people communicating via virtual communities, this approach to meet, communicate and relate to people is emerging as a major social phenomenon. It has attracted research attention from disciplines ranging from social psychology (Turkle 1995) to sociology (Wellman 1997) and marketing (Kozinets 1997, 1998, 1999, 2002b).

A virtual community cuts across geographic boundaries and unites people with a common interest. Specifically, virtual communities that are structured around consumption interests provide both opportunities and challenges to marketers and consumer researchers because of their potential effects on branding, advertising, pricing and customer loyalty program (Hagel and Armstrong 1997). On the one hand, a virtual community facilitates the communication between companies and consumers, allowing marketers to leverage consumers' ideas in designing and customizing products. On the other hand, a virtual community encourages consumer-to-consumer communication independent of companies and marketers (Catterall and Maclaran 2002). This form of communication can effectively influence fellow consumers and reject particular marketing activities through the members' collective stance (Catterall and Maclaran 2002).

A number of studies have examined the factors influencing consumer's navigation behaviors (Bagozzi and Dholakia 2002; Novak, Hoffman and Yung 2000; Joines, Scherer and Scheufele 2003). These studies tend to examine the issue from a psychological or social psychological perspective. Less attention has been extended to examining the context of the community, the voluntary sharing of consumption-related information among members as well as the implication of consumers' changing attitudes towards consumption and their relationships with the markets.

The purpose of our study is to examine how consumers make use of a virtual community to become proactive in the marketplace. Hagel and Armstrong (1997) suggested that the rise in computer-mediated communication significantly changes the relationship between marketers and consumers and it shifts some of the power from producers/marketers to customers by reducing the information advantage vendors enjoy. Our study would examine how Chinese consumers are becoming more reflexive upon their own consumption behaviors as well as becoming more critical about practices in the marketplace. We drew upon theories on social institutions and consumption reflexivity to understand the underlying rationale. Details of the institutions in China are discussed to support the framework. Findings of our study would reveal how consumers in China at this developmental stage are learning to be an active consumer.

We conducted netnographical research on a virtual community—a beauty forum affiliated with ONLYLADY (www.onlylady.com) that is popular among women in China. Netnography, as a naturalistic enquiry technique developed especially for the cyberspace environment, was considered an appropri-

ate methodology for this study. Our analysis focuses on two major themes identified in the postings that are related to consumption activities: (1) reflexivity on consumption behaviors (susceptibility to marketing influences, forum members as experts, and reflection upon consumption criteria) and (2) strategic response to unwanted actions and agents (stop excessive buying, stop pirated goods).

Results showed that similar to other consumption communities, the beauty forum offered an important source of information to community members, provided them with communal interaction and social benefits, enhanced their level of reflexivity, and empowered them to protect fellow consumers. These results confirmed, as we have postulated earlier, that consumers in China are becoming reflexive on their consumption behaviors and are somewhat critical of the marketing process. Results of our study also show that the function of a virtual community is complex. As an agent independent of commercial forces, a virtual community is regarded by consumers as an alternative (and potentially additional) source of information boosting the consumers' consumption aspiration. But at the same time, it has the potential to improve the bargaining power of consumers and guard against unwanted behavior in the marketplace.

Our findings also point to two directions in which the current research can be extended to. First, consumers exchange tailored-made information and adjust their purchase decision making based on other members' comments and suggestions. Understanding the underlying group information processing will provide important implications for research about eWOM in the cyberspaces and benefit practitioners' IMC planning. Besides, our study shows that Chinese consumers' attitudes toward consumption are evolving as they become more involved and connected to other consumers through cyberspace. Members' diversified backgrounds result in discussion on various consumption patterns and lifestyles that are desired and emulated throughout the community. Meanwhile, the consumer's value set such as her consumption aspirations and materialistic orientations also appear to be interactively enacted. These are important issues to understanding the motivations behind consumption decisions. Future research could illustrate these processes using either case studies or a more structured research design.

ROUNDTABLE

Beyond Individualism/Collectivism: New Theoretical Perspectives in Culture-Based Research

Sharon Shavitt, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Ana Valenzuela, Baruch College

This roundtable focused on the discussion of new frameworks that are transforming culture-based research beyond the emphasis on individualism/collectivism. Issues addressed included relevant instruments, tacit measures, and cognitive mechanisms that can enrich the study of culture. The session provided an opportunity to discuss these issues with cross-cultural researchers differing in their disciplinary backgrounds, areas of expertise, and methodological approaches. Our panel included marketing scholars as well as social psychologists whose work is shaping current thought about cross-cultural consumer psychology. Some of these scholars had approached culture through the lens of social cognition and applied similar paradigms to the study of culture. Others had approached cultural influences on consumers' judgments and choice through the lens of behavioral decision-making. Some had examined situational factors that affect salient self-construal, whereas others had focused more on dispositional aspects and/or chronic and stable cultural differences. The substantive focal areas represented by these participants also varied broadly, including causal reasoning, country of origin perceptions, persuasion, categorization, self-concept, regulatory focus, choice, affect, etc.

Among the issues and questions discussed at the session:

Can culture best be understood as a set of values and goals, as cognitive structure(s), or as a system of behaviors? What are the implications of these distinctions for theory and measurement?

A salient issue in current research on cross-cultural consumer psychology concerns methods of measurement or assessment of cultural orientation and values. Should the results of cultural orientation measures be expected to be isomorphic with national and group-level cultural designations? If not, how can observations across these levels of analyses be integrated?

What are the drawbacks and proper uses of direct self-rating measures of orientation in consumer psychology? What tacit measures show promise for capturing differences in culturally patterned behavior?

At the roundtable, Carolyn Yoon (University of Michigan) presented two databases of norms for cross-culturally tested stimuli developed through comprehensive study. For those with an interest in using these stimuli, the links are provided below.

CATEGORY NORMS: http://agingmind.cns.uiuc.edu/culture/Cat_Norms/

PICTURE NORMS: <http://www.psychonomic.org/archive/>
http://agingmind.cns.uiuc.edu/culture/Pict_Norms/

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Children's Obesity: Is Consumer Research Relevant?

Elizabeth S. Moore, University of Notre Dame

William L. Wilkie, University of Notre Dame

SESSION OVERVIEW

Children's obesity has become an increasingly serious health problem in the U.S.A. According to the Institute of Medicine, obesity among preschool children (ages 2-5 years) has more than doubled since the 1970s, and has more than tripled among children ages 6-11 (Institute of Medicine 2005). This public health issue has attracted attention from public policymakers, consumer interest groups, nutritionists, academics, and food marketers. Inputs are being sought from the consumer research community, with an opportunity to help direct the future of this debate. The goal for this session was to highlight critical research issues, report new empirical evidence, and suggest future research directions.

The Moore and Wilkie paper opened the session with a brief analysis of how consumer research was used in previous FTC efforts to regulate advertising to children. They then discussed emerging research issues, especially re: the changing landscape for marketing to children. To illustrate, the authors presented findings from a content analysis of children's "advergaming" websites. These findings point to a pressing need to further understand children's response capacities and defenses at different ages in new media. Needs for research on children's food consumption choices and behaviors over time were also discussed, and recommendations made as to how this might proceed.

The Desrochers and Holt paper shifted focus to the nature of consumer research evidence needed for public policy decisions. Here major policy proposals to restrict food advertising to children are analyzed. Highlighted were research projects underway and needed to investigate any link between television advertising and obesity. Coverage was then broadened to research needs on the consequences of (and possible alternatives to) an advertising ban, as well as alternative solutions to obesity such as guidelines regarding portion size, and/or comparisons across product classes and nutritional content.

In the third paper, Seiders, Miller, Kenny and Walsh reported findings from an empirical test of a model of children's preventive health behaviors, set within a health education intervention being implemented in nine urban, racially and ethnically diverse elementary schools. Outcome measures linked to children's food choices, decisions about nutrition, and physical activity were reported. Both individual level characteristics and environmental factors were assessed. These environmental factors have not previously been studied, and are a key issue given the extensive market distribution of certain foods. The authors' findings provide new insights into the determinants of children's health decisions, the impact of environmental influences, and the drivers of childhood obesity.

Jerome Williams, University of Texas, served as the discussion leader for the session. He is a member of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) committee charged by Congress to investigate the effects of food marketing on children's diets. In discussion he provided attendees with useful insights into dimensions of the policymaking process in this area.

"Consumer Research Inputs to Public Policy: The Case of Children's Obesity"

Elizabeth S. Moore, University of Notre Dame

William L. Wilkie, University of Notre Dame

The disturbing trend of a steady and alarming increase in obesity among the nation's youth has captured the attention of a broad set of citizens and institutions, with calls for action becoming increasingly powerful. Public policymakers are considering various alternatives. Marketing and advertising are being questioned, and inputs are sought from the consumer research community. This paper provides an analysis of key issues for those interested in contributing to this research. It first offers an historical analysis of previous public policy efforts to regulate advertising to children, followed by current assessment of consumer research needs, challenges, and opportunities.

Lessons Learned from FTC's Earlier Effort to Ban Advertising to Children

Concern with children as a vulnerable group has been longstanding, with many societal protections afforded by law. A number of issues involving marketing to children are as yet unresolved, however. The most notable previous undertaking occurred in the late 1970's when the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), in response to petitions from citizen groups, undertook Trade Regulation Rulemaking to investigate possible new rules for advertising to children. Emphasis was on sugared products, dental caries, and nutrition (not substantially distinct from today's concern with obesity). A range of rules were considered, ranging from required ad disclosures to an outright ban of all television advertising to younger children.

Given the legal setting, FTC and industry had considerable interest in receiving evidence and insights from consumer researchers. In this section of the paper some of the key children's research contributions are summarized, as are key research questions that emerged in retrospect (e.g., "Does children's exposure to TV commercials assist or suppress their use of a healthy/unhealthy dimension in food choices?" or "'What possible roles and approaches are there for effective consumer education for children?"). These are likely to prove useful in informing today's debates as well.

Finally, the public policy outcome (FTC terminated the proceeding) and reasons for it are briefly described. It is pointed out that this outcome left the debated issues in this area unresolved for the ensuing thirty years: many of these same issues are arising today on childhood obesity.

Current Research Needs, Challenges, and Opportunities

The second, longer section of the paper turns to the current concern with children's obesity. In a major public policy initiative, the U.S. Congress recently issued a mandate to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Science—to thoroughly investigate this problem and provide a set of recommendations for action. The first author of this paper served as an invited expert from marketing academia to present consumer research-based insights at the Institute's special workshop. This section extends that work in offering key considerations for consumer researchers.

A primary target for public policy today is, as earlier, television advertising to children. However, today's nature and scope of marketing to children is much broader than this. Consider, for example, other areas likely to be related to obesity, including easy product availability (distribution, display, and convenience), product innovation, and appeals to taste, price, and quantity. Also, integrated marketing communications programs now need to be incorporated into our analysis of advertising itself. Finally, children today are exposed to a fast-changing, interactive media and promotion landscape. For example, new technologies have brought "advergaming" to the fore. Sixty-four percent of children on the Internet play games there (U.S. Department of Education 2003), with many of these featuring brands in fun, involving manners (readers should consult, for example, *Candystand.com*, *Nabiscoworld.com*, *Postopia.com*). Further, 98% of children's websites now permit advertising (Neuborne 2001).

The paper then reports findings from an extensive content analysis of these websites, conducted in cooperation with the Kaiser Family Foundation. Consider how different these exposures are, and how extended they can be (the average Internet visitor spends 26 minutes on a site (Fattah and Paul 2002)). It is clear that our repository of children's research based on 30-second advertising exposures clearly needs to be extended, and that our age conceptualizations of children's response capacities and defenses also needs to be investigated within these new venues. Public policy needs insights here to assist in moving beyond the current preoccupation with television advertising, and consumer researchers can clearly contribute to such broadened understanding.

The paper then points to a need for more research on children's actual food consumption decisions. Here timing is a factor to be investigated, as obesity is obviously the result of numerous behaviors with possibly repetitive patterns (note that much experimental research studies single decision occasions). Consuming in a continuous fashion is important here, as is learning more about how prior product usage impacts subsequent behaviors. Finally, the roles of social factors relating to food consumption, exercise, and nutrition also offer promise. Given that obesity runs in families (as well as subcultures), intergenerational influence research holds considerable potential to contribute new insights and possible directions for ameliorating this growing problem (e.g., Moore, Wilkie, and Lutz 2002).

In summary, the alarming increase in childhood obesity is a powerful societal trend portending dire health consequences for millions of Americans in the years ahead. Consumer research is being called upon. This paper is intended to help to alert our field to the challenge, and to offer positive directions for future research undertakings.

"Researching the Link between Food Advertising & Childhood Obesity"

*Debra M. Desrochers, University of Notre Dame
Debra Holt, Federal Trade Commission¹*

The increasing prevalence of childhood obesity throughout the United States now ranks as a critical health threat (Institute of Medicine 2005). In an effort to combat this threat, several constituencies are calling for restrictions on food marketing, particularly television ads for less nutritious foods that are directed to children. This segment of the special session focused on the past, current, and needed research pertaining to the relationship between the advertising of fast food and childhood obesity.

The first section of the presentation briefly covered the public policy history of television advertising to children, and highlights some recent evidence and concerns that have revitalized the issue. The topic of television advertising to children emerged as an important public policy issue early in the 1970s (Kunkel and Gantz 1992). In response, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) conducted the Children's Advertising Rulemaking proceeding in 1978 to consider the possibility of restricting television advertising of highly sugared food to children. Several studies prepared at that time provide a baseline for future analysis. The first study was prepared by Howard Beales (1978) (who later became Director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection) based on local, or spot, advertising, the second by John Abel (1978) based on national advertising, and a third by Richard Adler (1978) based on all programming, supported by a National Science Foundation grant. The conclusions of the rulemaking session were presented (Beales 2004).

Since 1978 there have been significant changes in television viewing. For example, there are now several kid-specific networks competing around the clock (Brown 2004). Meanwhile, more than \$1 billion is spent on media advertising of food and beverages to children that reaches them primarily through television (Institute of Medicine 2005). Consequently, various groups, such as the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) and the Kaiser Family Foundation, are arguing for a re-examination of this issue by public policymakers.

In response, a recent article reviewed and assessed several research projects and hypotheses on the causes of obesity, children's exposure to food advertising, and the effects of food advertising on consumer choice (Zywicki, Holt, and Ohlhausen 2004). This article determined that, based on publicly available data, it did not appear that children's exposure to food advertising had increased since children's obesity rates began to rise around 1980. However, since there had been no rigorous studies on food advertising exposure since the late 1970s, the question of whether food ad exposure has increased since then remained an open question. Therefore, the FTC began an analysis of comprehensive current data on television advertising. Some of the preliminary findings of this study were presented and compared to findings of the 1977 studies. To complement the FTC study, ideas for future work addressing the link between food marketing and childhood obesity were proposed. Even if a causal link between television advertising and obesity is not established, some groups may argue that restricting food advertising on children's programs would do no harm and might help to protect children. Therefore, it is important to consider another policy related question: what would be the overall impact of marketing restrictions? Several areas of needed research were presented on this topic.

In closing the presentation, several areas of research were listed that would further inform the issue of food marketing and obesity. For example, regarding the issue of television advertising itself, some of these are: (1) the continued investigation of a potential causal link, (2) the impact and effectiveness of integrated marketing communications including television advertising, and (3) how we can use advertising to promote weight loss / healthy diets & lifestyles. In the area of advertising bans, we need more research on the benefits and harms of a ban, and on assessing whether the benefits more than offset the harms. Finally, research is needed to identify other solutions to the obesity problem, such as: (1) increasing the focus on the reduced activity component of obesity, (2) changes to labeling and portion size standards, and (3) healthy lifestyle initiatives.

¹The opinions expressed herein are the authors' alone and do not necessarily represent the views of the FTC or its Commissioners.

**“A Model of Children’s Preventive Health Behavior:
Understanding the Role of Individual, Contextual, and
Attitudinal Determinants”**

Kathleen Seiders, Boston College

Elizabeth G. Miller, Boston College

Maureen E. Kenny, Boston College

Mary E. Walsh, Boston College

In the last three decades, the obesity rate among children 6-11 years of age has tripled; obesity rates are particularly high for subpopulations of minority and economically disadvantaged children (AAP Policy Statement 2004). Obesity in the pediatric age group is associated with significant health problems, including Type 2 diabetes, and is a major risk factor for adult morbidity and mortality (Ogden et al. 2002).

A number of biological, psychological, cultural, and economic factors have been associated with increased childhood obesity. Although it is difficult to show a conclusive link between specific risk factors and population-wide obesity increases, many experts agree that the epidemic is based on availability of energy-dense foods and decreased physical activity (e.g., Andersen et al. 1998). Intervention efforts that aim to reduce childhood obesity typically focus on correcting the energy intake and expenditure imbalance. School-based nutrition and activity interventions are widely advocated because of the high percentage of time children spend in school (Institute of Medicine 2005; Ruiz et al. 2004). However, the effectiveness of school-based programs is debated: most school-based trials designed to promote more healthful lifestyles have produced disappointing results and have not effectively reduced pediatric overweight (Ebbeling, Pawlak, and Ludwig 2002).

A greater understanding of factors that influence children’s health-related decisions could advance the design and delivery of effective nutrition and activity interventions. Although researchers have proposed and tested a variety of models of behavior change related to preventive health measures, these models have rarely been applied to children. Further, knowledge concerning the individual and contextual determinants of childhood obesity, including those related to food marketing impacts, is very limited.

We address these gaps in the literature by examining determinants of children’s decisions about diet, nutrition, and exercise. Drawing on the expanded health belief and other prevention-specific models (Bush and Iannotti 1990; Moorman and Matulich 1993; Rosenstock 1990), we develop and test a model of individual, contextual, and attitudinal influences on children’s preventive health behavior. We examine the model in the context of a health education intervention where objectives include behavioral change with regard to healthful nutrition and beneficial physical activity.

Model Description and Research Approach

The multi-faceted, evidence-based health education curriculum was implemented across nine urban elementary schools. All of the schools are racially and ethnically diverse; the curriculum was delivered to all 4th and 5th grade students (approximately 435) in the nine schools.

Individual level characteristics include basic demographics (sex and age), body mass index (BMI), economic resources, and ethnicity. Environmental factors are geographically-based, related to the neighborhood and community in which the child lives. Relative to neighborhoods, factors include the density of fast food restaurants, the density of full-service supermarkets, and prevalence of parks and other recreational facilities. Early prevention models have not incorporated environmental predictors and individual-environmental interactions, and empirical studies examining the impact of environmental influences are limited (Drewnowski

and Specter 2004). This is an important issue for marketers to address; for example, some researchers believe that nutrition knowledge is less important than the pronounced availability of certain foods (e.g., fast food items and soft drinks) in the environment (Schwartz and Puhl 2003).

The core constructs of our model reflect earlier proposed prevention models, most notably the health belief model. Specifically, we measure locus of control, self-efficacy, health motivation, response efficacy, and perceived health status. Outcome variables include nutrition knowledge, food choices, and physical activity. Food choices include decreased fast food and increased fruits and vegetables consumption. Physical activity measures include increased physical education participation and reduced sedentary activity (e.g., television viewing). The outcome data is self-reported. Some of the multi-item measures have been adapted from studies with adults, but most have been validated in studies with children.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the literature on two major dimensions. First, it tests a model of children’s preventive health behaviors, taking much-needed steps to investigate the complex relationships that affect children’s health-related decisions. Second, it increases our ability to gauge health education’s potential to influence obesity-related preventive behaviors. From a policy perspective, this is important. If educational campaigns consistently show weak results, policy makers are likely to accept more restrictive remedies (e.g., restrictions on advertisements targeted to children; mandatory restaurant labeling; taxes on low-nutritional value foods) in their attempts to blunt the impact of obesity. From a consumer behavior perspective, the increasing purchase autonomy of children underscores the need to better understand their nutrition and activity decisions and choices.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Thinking about the Future: Positive and Negative Effects on Consumer Judgment and Well-Being

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SESSION OVERVIEW

Many consumer behavior models have implicitly assumed that consumers are forward-looking and anticipate future outcomes, events, behaviors or feelings before making a decision. The ability to think about future events had been examined extensively in psychology, but has been somewhat disregarded in consumer research. With the exception of literature on reference price and time discounting, consumer researchers are only beginning to recognize the role of forward-looking thoughts and behaviors, such as affective forecasting and construal level theory. This session attempts to bring together psychological and consumer research on future oriented thinking and will help to stimulate greater consumer research on different ways to think about the future and their effects on cognition and behavior.

Not all kinds of thinking about the future are equally beneficial when it comes to motivating people, helping them regulate their behavior or attain satisfaction with their outcomes. The objective of the session is to provide a closer look at different modes of thinking about the future and their impact on subsequent judgment and behavior. We present three papers that examine different forms of thinking about the future—fantasies about future events, anticipation of potential future outcomes, and motivated expectation setting. The first paper in the session will compare the differential effects of fantasies and expectations on effective self-regulation, the second paper will examine the positive effects of pre-decision consideration of potential future outcomes on self-regulation and decision making, and the last paper will talk about the negative effects of motivated expectation setting on satisfaction with an outcome. The three papers together will allow for a lively discussion on the issue of whether future-oriented thinking is always beneficial for judgments and behavior.

The topic of future-oriented thinking and its effects on self-regulation, goal pursuit, and satisfaction holds enormous relevance and significance for the issue of consumer happiness and well-being, and thus is particularly relevant to the conference theme of Transformative Consumer Research. Having two of the leading experts on this topic in the session provides an invaluable opportunity for an interesting and meaningful discussion.

Research on thinking about the future has made an important distinction between imagining different possibilities (e.g., fantasies, prefactual thinking, outcome simulations) and expecting them to occur (e.g., outcome expectancies, elaboration on potential outcomes). Some research on thinking about the future has recognized that different modes of future-oriented thinking differ in terms of their motivating function and the extent of persistence towards a goal, such as weight loss and smoking cessation (Oettingen and Wadden 1991; Oettingen 1996; and Oettingen and Mayer 2002). The first paper in the session, by Oettingen herself, provides the latest research on the differential impact of positive expectation (judging a desired future as likely) and positive fantasies (vicarious ruminations of desired future outcomes). Across domains of health, interpersonal, and achievement domains, she demonstrates that, while both are positively-valenced considerations of the future, they differ widely in their predictive ability of effort and performance. Positive expectations aid in self-regulation, but positive fantasies actually interfere with it.

The second paper by Yordanova, Inman, and Hulland examines the extent to which consumers are forward-looking when making decisions—more specifically the extent to which they think about the consequences of their behaviors. They develop a scale to measure individual's tendencies to elaborate on potential future outcomes and relate the construct to a variety of traits and behaviors. In a series of studies they show that elaboration on potential outcomes is beneficial for consumers' exercising of self-control, overcoming procrastination, compulsive buying, credit card debt, obesity, and promoting a healthy lifestyle. They also relate the trait to information processing and decision making by showing that it predicts the type of pre-decision elaboration consumers engage in and the decisions they make.

The third paper by Cho and Johar focuses on a particular form of forward-looking, strategic thinking in a consumption situation—motivated setting of expectations. Specifically, they focus on the phenomenon of lowering one's expectation so as to ensure satisfaction and to avoid disconfirmation. Under purchase or decision situations involving uncertain outcomes, consumers have been known to lower their expectations so as to avoid negative disconfirmation of their expectation. The satisfaction literature's empirical demonstration that people maintain multiple expectation levels such as "should" and "will" expectations is strongly suggestive of the idea that people lower their expectations in order to assure themselves some degree of satisfaction with the impending outcome. In three studies involving an unfamiliar product domain, the authors find that, contrary to what one intends and anticipates, setting expectation levels low has the unintended consequence of lowering—rather than increasing—one's satisfaction and happiness with the outcome. They further provide evidence that counterfactual thoughts are the process mechanism by which this occurs.

"Motivational Impact of Thinking about the Future: Expectations versus Fantasies"

Gabriele Oettingen, New York University/University of Hamburg

Psychological research in the past decades has conceived of thinking about the future as judgments on how likely it is that certain events or behaviors will occur or not occur in the future. Such expectancy judgments are held to reflect a person's performance history. As past behavior has always been a powerful predictor of future behavior, it comes as no surprise that to this date expectancy judgments have been one of the most important cognitive variables to predict motivation and behavior.

My talk had two parts. First, based on William James's distinction between beliefs and images, I differentiated two forms of thinking about the future, expectancy judgments versus fantasies, and presented a series of studies showing that these two forms of thinking about the future differentially predict motivation and performance (Oettingen & Mayer, 2002).

In these studies, we hypothesized that because high expectations of success are based on successful performances, they signal that future efforts will not be futile. To the contrary, positive fantasies tempt the person to mentally enjoy the desired futures in the present moment, concealing the necessity to still realize them in actuality. Moreover, fantasies about a trouble-free path to success

should hinder planning to prevent potential obstacles and to overcome hindrances. Feeling no necessity to realize the desired events and the lack of preparatory action should compromise motivation and successful performance. In sum, whereas positive expectations should predict high motivation and success, positive fantasies should predict low motivation and success.

A series of studies tested these ideas (Oettingen & Mayer, 2002). We measured expectations and fantasies long before we measured respective effort and success. While positive expectations were precursors of successful recovery, positive fantasies were a hindrance. This pattern of results held for different paradigms, cultures, and life domains, with participants of different ages, and for effort and success measured by subjective and objective criteria. All the studies attest to the problematic consequences of positive fantasies about the future.

However, positive fantasies develop motivationally fruitful consequences when they are turned into binding goals that lead to subsequent goal striving and goal attainment. To turn positive fantasies about the future into binding goals one needs to contrast them with negative reflections on impeding reality (Oettingen, 2000). This conjoint mental elaboration of future and reality makes both cognitively accessible in the sense that the reality stands in the way of the desired future. Thus a necessity to act emerges that activates expectations of success which now guide the forming of goal commitments. To the contrary, when people only indulge in the positive future or only dwell on the negative reality, no necessity to act will emerge and expectations will not guide the formation of goal commitment. It is solely sponsored by the pull effects (indulging) and the push effects (dwelling) of the imagined positive and negative events (summary by Oettingen & Hagenah, 2005).

A series of experimental studies supported these ideas (Oettingen, 2000; Oettingen, Pak, & Schnetter, 2001; Oettingen, Mayer, Thorpe, Janetzke, & Lorenz, in press; summary by Oettingen & Thorpe, in press). We measured expectations of successfully solving an important concern and then had participants mentally contrast their fantasies about solving the concern, indulge in positive fantasies, or dwell on the negative reality. The predicted effects on goal commitment emerged no matter whether we used cognitive, affective, and behavioral indicators, whether goal commitment was measured long-term or short-term, by self-report or objective indicators, whether the studies were conducted in the US or Germany, in the lab or in the field, and whether they pertained to the achievement, interpersonal, or health domains.

In the third part of my talk, I discussed applied implications of the findings. I showed intervention studies showing that mental contrasting make people discriminate in their investments between promising and unpromising projects. In addition, in an intervention that combines the goal setting strategy of mental contrasting and the goal realization strategy of "if-then" planning, 30-50 year old participants improved their health behavior (exercise and healthy diet) over a period of four months (Stadler, Oettingen, & Gollwitzer, 2005). Finally, I presented data showing that individual differences in mental contrasting mediate the classic relationship between responsive parenting style and high academic achievement (Grant, Oettingen, Gollwitzer, & Schneider, 2005).

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“Expectations About the Future: Examination of Consumers’ Tendency to Elaborate on Potential Future Outcomes”

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J. Jefferey Inman, University of Pittsburgh

John Hulland, University of Pittsburgh

It is widely accepted that the extent to which people consider the future consequences of their behaviors can have significant implications for their choices and for their future outcomes. Many psychological theories of motivation have advanced the idea that peoples’ actions are greatly affected by their beliefs about the probable outcomes of those actions. According to these theories, people motivate themselves and guide their actions anticipatorily by the outcomes they expect to result from given courses of behavior (e.g., Bandura 1997). This assumption of forward-looking individuals who evaluate the potential end results of their actions has not been assessed adequately in the literature. In our research we address the issue by examining the extent to which consumers are forward-looking when making decisions, and more specifically the extent to which they think about the consequences of their behaviors.

In the past peoples’ consideration of potential consequences has been studied by clinical psychologists, developmental psychologists, and criminologists. Interestingly, no studies on this topic exist in consumer research. This is surprising given the construct’s potential relationship with a variety of consumer behaviors.

In this research we look at individuals’ tendencies to elaborate on potential future outcomes and relate this tendency to a variety of consumer traits and behaviors. We conceptualize the process of consequences consideration as a construct that encompasses three related dimensions: (1) generation/evaluation dimension-the extent to which people generate potential outcomes and evaluate their importance and likelihood, (2) positive focus dimension-the extent to which they focus on the positive potential outcomes, and (3) negative focus dimension-the extent to which they focus on the negative potential outcomes. In a series of studies (total n=887) we

develop the Elaboration on Potential Outcomes (EPO) scale that assesses all three dimensions of the construct. After establishing the scale's reliability and validity, we conduct several studies that investigate its relationships with various consumer behaviors such as procrastination, compulsive buying, credit card debt, healthy eating, drinking, as well as the type of information processing consumers engage in when making an important consumer decision, and their likelihood to undertake a risky endeavor.

Since EPO is a new construct, we first examine its relationship to various existing traits such as impulsiveness, risk aversion, need for cognition, tendency to focus on long-term versus short-term consequences, optimism, chronic regulatory focus, and defensive pessimism. We conclude that EPO is related to these existing constructs in the expected direction, and is yet clearly discriminated from them.

We next compare the EPO tendencies of different naturally existing groups. We find that defensive pessimists tend to focus more on the negative outcomes and less on the positive outcomes than optimists do; that compulsive buyers consider potential positive and negative consequences to a lesser extent than non-compulsive buyers; and that obese people consider potential positive and negative consequences to a smaller extent than non-obese people.

In a subsequent study we examine the effects of people's tendency to elaborate on the outcomes of their decisions on their information processing and decision making. We find that people who have different tendencies to consider potential outcomes have different information processing patterns and make different decisions. Results revealed that: 1) consistent with their tendency to generate a greater number of consequences, people who score high on the generation/evaluation dimension of the EPO scale consider a greater number of potential outcomes before they make a decision than people who score low on this dimension, and people who score high on the positive (negative) focus dimension, think about more positive (negative) outcomes than people who score low on this dimension; and 2) the more people focus on the positive (negative) outcomes, the more (less) likely they are to engage in consumer behaviors that might result in significant risks and/or benefits.

Next we examine the effect of EPO on consumer self-regulation behaviors. Since self-regulation involves seeing the immediate situation in terms of future concerns, values and goals (Baumeister and Heatherton 1996; Carver and Scheier 1981), effective self-regulation often requires the individual to be able to transcend the immediate situation by considering future consequences and implications. When transcendence is weak and attention is bound to the here and now, the chances of self-regulation failure are increased. Therefore, one proximal cause of self-regulation failure is the failure of transcendence. Baumeister and his colleagues suggest that factors directing attention to future goals and implications will tend to improve the capacity for self-regulation (Baumeister and Heatherton 1996). These may include both situational and dispositional factors. We propose that one dispositional characteristic that is an important determinant of self-regulation is one's tendency to elaborate on potential outcomes.

To examine this issue we administered the EPO scale to 302 adults ranging in age from 20 to 67 years. Furthermore, following Baumeister et al.'s review (1994) of different spheres of self-regulation failure, we included a number of behavioral contexts that reflect behaviors which can result from lack of self-regulation: procrastination, credit card overuse, excessive drinking, unhealthy eating, and avoidance of exercise.

Results from a series of regressions reveal that consumers' tendencies to elaborate on a variety of potential outcomes, as measured by the generation/evaluation dimension of the EPO scale, are negatively and significantly related to the extent to which their

self-regulation fails and they procrastinate, engage in excessive drinking, incur excessive amounts of credit card debt, and fail to consume healthy food and exercise. Furthermore, EPO has predictive ability above and beyond other existing constructs such as trait self-control, impulsiveness, tendency to focus on the immediate versus the long-term consequences, and risk aversion.

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"Motivated Expectation Setting and Its Unintended Consequence on Satisfaction"

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This research posits that consumers actively seek to manage their expectations and examines the consequences of such motivated expectation setting on satisfaction. Faced with uncertain outcomes (e.g., product performance), consumers are motivated to protect themselves from potential disconfirmation of their expectations and the negative affect that accompanies such a disconfirmation. The basic premise of this research is that people try to strategically manage their future affective states through strategic expectation management but that they are not very good at such management. We predict that this is because counter to the initial intention, setting one's expectation low generates counterfactual thoughts of alternative outcomes or courses of action, such that, even upon confirmation of this expectation, one is dissatisfied. This prediction is inconsistent with the premise and the robust empirical findings of the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm which posits that confirmation of one's expectation (positively-valenced) should at least lead to a moderate amount of satisfaction (Oliver 1997).

Recent research has suggested that faced with an uncertain outcome, consumers deliberately lower their expectation so as to ensure future satisfaction with the outcome. Specifically, Kopalle and Lehmann (2001) find suggestive evidence that people lower their expectations strategically, in anticipation of potential product failure and the accompanying discomfort of having their expectancies disconfirmed. This is consistent with the notion that people maintain multiple expectation levels of a *should* (i.e., desired or deserved) and a *will* (i.e., predicted) expectation (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin and Zeithaml 1993). Kopalle and Lehmann's findings demonstrate that people who are disconfirmation-sensitive are motivated to set their expectations low, in anticipation of the potential for negative disconfirmation.

Given the intuitive appeal of motivated expectation setting, however, little research has looked at whether such forward-looking behavior does indeed lead to satisfaction as one intends and anticipates. Would having one's (lowered) expectation confirmed lead to satisfaction as anticipated? On a more theoretical level, would confirmation of deliberately low level of expectation lead to satisfaction, as predicted by the well-established paradigm of expectancy-disconfirmation theory? Three rounds of studies suggest the opposite—and unintended—consequence of lower satisfaction. This research proposes that lowering one's expectation

triggers counterfactual thoughts of how the outcome “could have been better,” or how one “could have chosen better,” hence creating a subjective gap between the outcome and an imagined alternative outcome. Counterfactual research provides that such counterfactual thoughts of comparing the outcome to a better imagined outcome lead to negative affect and decrease in satisfaction (Roese and Olson 1993, Roese 1997).

In study one, level of expectation and awareness were manipulated to examine the level of satisfaction upon confirmation of one’s expectation. The purchase scenario involved battery rechargers and it was used to manipulate expectation level (your goal is “at least 1,000” vs. “700” charges); respondents were told that battery rechargers in general could handle “up to 1200” recharges. High awareness level was induced by having the participants respond to a 9-point questionnaire regarding their expectation BEFORE the dependent measure, thus strengthening the awareness level, whereas the control group (low awareness group) responded to the expectation questionnaire AFTER the dependent measure. The outcome of product performance was held constant for all conditions (1000 recharges). Dependent measures were 9-point ratings of satisfaction and regret with the purchase decision and purchase process. Results show a cross-over Expectation x Awareness interaction for repurchase intent and likelihood of recommending to others. For those with high expectations, satisfaction was higher when one was highly aware of having set a high expectation, whereas for those with low expectation, satisfaction was significantly lower when one was made aware of having set a low expectation.

Study two provided stronger support for the idea that setting expectation low leads to lower satisfaction. Expectation (high vs. low) and search (high vs. low) were manipulated using a similar purchase scenario involving battery rechargers. Results indicate a main effect of expectation on satisfaction, namely, one’s likelihood of repurchasing the brand. There was also a main effect of search, where those with high search had a significantly lower happiness with the outcome for both high and low expectations, suggesting that people may be satisfied with the process of buying the brand as long as they feel they did not search too much for this.

In study three, expectation and search were manipulated in a similar manner, but using three levels of expectation (high vs. medium vs. low). The main effect of expectation was replicated for outcome satisfaction, repurchase intention and process satisfaction. Furthermore, the high expectation group had a significantly higher emotional satisfaction than medium and low expectation groups. A significant interaction between search process and the level of expectation suggests that the decision process is an additional factor in people’s judgments of satisfaction. Analysis of thought protocols indicate that respondents in the low expectation groups generated significantly greater number of counterfactuals about their initial expectation and the extent of search they undertook.

In summary, the three studies examined the role of expectations, and whether expectancy confirmation does indeed lead to satisfaction. Results show consistently that people’s levels of satisfaction were negatively impacted when they set low expectations. This result would not be consistent with the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm, which would predict that having one’s expectation confirmed would lead to some basic evaluative state of satisfaction. Furthermore, it is noted that assigning the participants to different expectation levels, rather than inducing them to set the expectation levels, is a more conservative test of the notion that counterfactual thoughts about how one “could have done better” is the underlying mechanism behind the negative impact of motivated expectation setting. Taken together, the three experiments offer encouraging support to the counterintuitive notion that setting one’s expectation low is likely to lead to dissatisfaction, even when

the outcome meets the expectation. This finding suggests that the effects of motivated expectations are not always positive, and contributes to the broader topic on consumer well being.

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Consumer Activism on the Internet: The Role of Anti-brand Communities

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ABSTRACT

As a backlash against capitalism, there is a growing resistance to transnational brands and corporate globalization. To cite a few trends, consumers are opposing global brands and expressing concerns about corporate practices related to environmental issues and human rights. The purpose of this study is to investigate the current anti-brand social movement by examining consumer activist groups on the Internet. We identified three anti-brand websites for in-depth analysis: anti-Wal-Mart, anti-McDonald's, and anti-Starbucks. Based on 36 interviews and a two-year examination of anti-brand communities, we provide an understanding of why online anti-brand communities form, we explore the behavioral manifestations of such movements, and we discuss technological influences. The concluding section discusses our findings in terms of implications for theory.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Brand names identify, label or symbolize abstract values such as quality, status, or reputation and are a means for differentiating one product, service, manufacture or retailer from another. According to Dobni and Zinkhan (1990) "people buy products or brands for something other than their physical attributes and functions" (p. 110). Fournier (1998b) indicates that people buy brands because they have established loyal, long-term, committed, affect-laden relationships with particular brands. Consumers not only form relationships with their brands, they form relationships with other consumers that have similar brand preferences. This network of consumer relationships is called a brand community or consumption community.

Brand communities are networks of consumer relationships that situate around a commonly used brand. These communities create a sense of belonging among consumers and the brand becomes the central purpose and meaning for group interaction. As "brands attach meaning to a good" (Muniz 1997, p. 308), brands also have potential to symbolize negative perceptions associated with corporations. The antithesis of a brand community is an anti-brand community. In the same way that brand communities are forming around commonly used brands, anti-brand communities are forming around common aversions toward brands.

Similar to descriptions of brand communities (McAlexander et al. 2002; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001), anti-brand communities typically focus on one dominant brand or corporation and are non-geographically bound communities based on a structured set of social relationships. Anti-brand communities could oppose specific brands (e.g., Jeep, Marlboro cigarettes), but could also oppose corporate brands (e.g., Wal-Mart, Procter & Gamble). In this paper, our focus is on the latter.

In anti-brand communities, consumers take on social activists roles by voicing their opposition to corporate domination. Anti-branding demonstrations are emerging as a new form of consumer activism and these activist strategies have received more recognition in recent years as consumer rebellion is viewed as a world-wide social movement (Bourdieu 1998; Dobscha 1998; Fournier 1998a; Holt 2002; Zavestoski 2002). The term social movement refers to "the coming together of relatively large numbers of people around a commonly held set of values or notion of rights (human and/or social) in order to bring about social change" (Dykstra and Law 1994, p. 122). Cohen defines social movements as "normatively

oriented interactions between adversaries with conflicting interpretations and opposed societal models of a shared cultural field" (Cohen 1985, p. 695).

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, consumer movements and marketplace rebellions are sometimes labeled as "consumerism." Ralph Nader (1968) defines consumerism as "a term given vogue recently by business spokesmen to describe what they believe is a concerted, disruptive ideology concocted by self-appointed bleeding hearts and politicians who find that it pays off to attack the corporations" (p. 27). More conventionally, consumerism emphasizes a consumer's right for protection against adulterated, deficient, or unsafe products and services. For Buskirk and Rothe (1970) "consumerism is attempting to tell industry something their research has not found, or that management has rejected or ignored" (p. 64). Kotler (1972) defines consumerism as "a social movement seeking to augment the rights and powers of buyers in relation to sellers" (p. 49). According to Kotler, consumerism is enduring and ultimately beneficial for both consumers and businesses. Consumerism mobilizes the energies of consumers, businessmen and government leaders to seek solutions and advance society, and ensures short-term and long-term values for consumers (1972).

Kotler (1972) identified three distinct waves of U.S. consumerism movements in the early 1900s, the mid-1930s, and the mid-1960s. According to Herrmann (1970), these three eras have important common characteristics. First, each movement occurred during economic and social unrest where rising consumer prices accompanied declining incomes. With limited financial power, consumers were forced to protest by joining efforts to voice their rights. Second, consumers began to fight for their own interests since they were hard-pressed by their declining purchasing power.

This paper explores a new, emerging social movement referred to by Holt (2002) as the "anti-brand movement." The anti-brand movement is similar to former social movements but it also has some unique aspects. First, the anti-brand movement represents a confluence of ideas. For example, the issues prominent in the anti-brand movement range from workplace equality and corporate domination to environmentalism and marketing propaganda. Historically, social movements emphasized one prevailing cause (e.g., women's rights, worker's rights, environmentalism) (Boggs 1986, Eyerman and Jamison 1991, Holst 2002). Second, the Internet has changed the way people participate in social action. The Internet has enabled anti-brand communities to proliferate online in unprecedented numbers. With World Wide Web capabilities, action strategies and coalition building are not restricted by space or time (Shepard and Hayduk 2002). These two unique characteristics represent a new kind of movement utilizing different resources and taking on broader goals.

The purpose of this study is to understand the nature of online, anti-brand communities as an emergent social movement. The investigation is guided by three research questions. First, why do online anti-brand communities form? Second, what behavioral manifestations are associated with anti-brand community involvement? Third, in what ways are emerging technologies influencing and interacting with consumer activist strategies? To begin, we offer a brief discussion of the anti-brand movement. Then, we present our findings based on 36 in-depth interviews and a two-year examination of anti-brand websites. In conclusion, we relate our

findings to the current consumer behavior literature and discuss implications for theory.

THE ANTI-BRAND MOVEMENT

Historically social movements have emerged in a geographical pattern, revolving around physical gathering spaces. Today social movements are transpiring in virtual space, which sets the stage for new forms of protest, organization, cooperation, and coalition-building. The Internet plays a major role in the anti-brand movement because it provides communication methods for people around the globe irrespective of geographical space and/or time zones.

In most cases, anti-brand communities originate and communicate solely in cyberspace. This virtual community is built around common social and political interests. Communities form online because people are able to come together, regardless of geographical proximity, and identify with a common need, goal, or identity. The community is situated around common detestations of corporate brand names. Various consumer groups form to support each other in their efforts to resist marketplace practices and globalized consumption patterns.

Traditionally, the interactions between marketer and consumer are viewed as an exchange-based relationship ascribing mutual benefits to one another (Kotler 1986). The brand serves as a conduit for marketers to provide consumers with identities that satisfy their needs, wants, and desires (Zinkhan and Martin 1987). The consumer purchases the branded good and is fulfilled. The collective actions of both consumers and marketers are thought to bring about balance in the marketplace by producing a dynamic dialectical relationship (Holt 2002). Although marketers may strive for a balanced relationship, there is a movement of consumers who engage in social action and argue against the imbalances of power in a profit-driven marketplace consisting of large, global corporations (Ozanne and Murray 1995). In the twenty-first century, many consumers view corporations as dominating and oppressive by means of imbalanced distribution systems or deceitful marketing tactics (Dobscha 1998). In an era marked by rapid globalization, corporations are perceived by some as using sophisticated promotional techniques to attach world-wide meanings to their brands. Consumers who internalize these meanings implicitly grant corporations the cultural authority to dictate their values, tastes, and preferences (Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Ozanne and Murray 1995). Anti-brand communities consist of consumer groups resisting imposed meanings or values that are prescribed by a brand. In this way, the brand name serves as a negative symbolization by representing corporation domination.

METHOD

This study resulted in a two-year examination of consumer activists who participate in online anti-brand communities and self-identify as social activists. An initial investigation identified 104 anti-brand web communities. Web community characteristics were compiled indicating the number of active anti-brand members, the shared values within the community, common goals, and action strategies. From this list, three community cases were chosen for in-depth analysis using three selection criteria. First, the researchers selected communities that oppose popular, transnational brand names. Second, we identified online communities that had been in existence for more than ten years. Lastly, active communities with the highest number of regular participating members (e.g., daily interactions) were studied which ensured information-rich cases. Using this criterion, three online anti-brand communities were identified for further analysis: anti-Starbucks, anti-Wal-Mart, and anti-McDonald's.

Data were collected through 36 in-depth interviews with an equal number of participants from each community. In addition, online documents (e.g., chat logs, web pages, email transcripts) from the three web communities were analyzed for the following: (1) the content of conversation, (2) the promoted and dissuaded products/services, (3) the number of people discussing topics synchronously and asynchronously, (4) activities/events being arranged or protested, (5) formal and informal patterns of communication, (6) website graphics and pictures, and (7) symbolic or connotative meanings of words posted on the site and/or used in conversations. Using a constant comparative method of data analysis, individual case and cross-case analyses were conducted. Descriptions of interactions among consumer activists as well as quotes, documents, and artifacts were examined to provide a holistic description of each case. This descriptive data was used to establish common traits or themes across the three cases.

FINDINGS

Data analysis revealed four distinct reasons why anti-brand communities form: 1) to provide a social community comprised of members with common moral obligations, 2) to provide a support network to achieve common goals, 3) to provide a way of coping with workplace difficulties, and 4) to provide a resource hub for taking action. Behavioral manifestations include: 1) publicizing marketplace inequalities (e.g., unethical marketing tactics, unethical corporate actions), 2) informing fellow members about the rewards associated with a restrictive lifestyle (e.g., voluntary simplicity), and 3) constructing a new collective identity (e.g., in opposition to prefabricated marketplace identities). Technological advances provided by the Internet such as speed, convenience, anonymity, and virtual formation are enhancing consumer activist strategies.

Why Anti-brand Communities Form

Common Moral Obligations. The most salient reason why anti-brand communities form is to provide a social community comprised of members with common moral obligations. Moral responsibility is a sense of obligation to the betterment of society (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). Community members collectively articulate matters of right and wrong with regard to corporate actions. Within each of the three anti-brand groups studied, a common entity (i.e., Starbucks, Wal-Mart, McDonald's) challenged community members' worldview of how a corporation should function. In response, moral systems are challenged and community members feel a common call to action. During interviews with anti-brand community members, words such as "oppressive," "exploiting," "destructive," "unethical" and "monopolizing" were used to describe the corporations they were fighting against. All 36 participants in this study talked about a personal commitment to fight against a corporation.

I cannot ignore what this corporation is doing to our environment, our children, and our future. I have to be an activist because I would feel guilty otherwise. (Betsy, anti-McDonald's)

It is up to us as citizens to join together to fight these bullies. (Mel, anti-Wal-Mart)

It is up to me to make a change. I know that my efforts are not in vain because every single thing I do will matter in the end. That is why we have to join together to become stronger. (John, anti-Starbucks)

I made the decision to give my time to this cause because I felt like it was important to me and my future. Joining with other people only makes it better. (Judy, anti-Wal-Mart)

At some point in time, our participants made a conscious decision to play an active role in their anti-brand campaign. Each participant decided that it was his or her responsibility to make a change. This moral consciousness compels them to bond with other community members in an effort to improve society.

Support Networks. Another prominent reason anti-brand communities form is to provide a support group to achieve common goals. It was evident, from the onset of this investigation, that a social support network existed within all three communities. Through nurturing social interactions via the Internet, each community resembled a support group, which also served to legitimize their fight for a common cause. These support networks have three common characteristics. They are based on a reciprocal exchange, they mimic a family structure, and they are purposive.

Anti-brand members are involved in a reciprocal exchange partnership with other community members because relationships are based on an exchange of ideas, advice, and support. Discussion boards, chat rooms, and blogs serve as a dynamic form of relationship building where the exchange of ideas mutually fulfills the social needs of community members. Relationships within the community are interdependent, meaning community members depend on each other to accomplish tasks for their common cause.

I connect with other anti-Starbucks people online. We rely on each other for support because as you know, most people I talk to on the street are infatuated with Starbucks. (Greg, anti-Starbucks)

We give advice and support to each other and that is the how we stay committed to our cause. (Freda, anti-McDonald's)

We rely on each other to get our message across. It is not just one person making a change, it is all of us working together to change our environment. (Betsy, anti-McDonald's)

I would not know what to do if it were not for this website. It helps me to know that I am not the only one fighting for my rights. (Casey, anti-McDonald's)

When asked to describe their anti-brand community, participants used similar terms such as "family," "friends," and "support" when telling stories about their website communities. Anti-brand communities provide the supportive, family-like environment necessary to achieve common goals. Community members teach, guide, and support one another in their common endeavors, developing relationships that resemble close friendships rather than mere acquaintances.

The relationships cultivated among community members are purposive in that they stimulate confidence through camaraderie. The confidence it provides individual members serves to be useful in accomplishing common goals; however, this camaraderie is not a result of planning. Camaraderie results from the group's coming together and uniting through their common needs, goals, and priorities.

This website gives me confidence to stand up for my beliefs. I know that I am supported by my online friends and that gives me the motivation I need to take a stand. (Michelle, anti-Starbucks)

I would not have the confidence to take on this multi-billion dollar company without the support from this website. They have become like part of my family. (Tom, anti-Wal-Mart).

Through continuous interactions, community members begin to develop a supportive and purposive social network that provides a framework for better understanding the world in which they live.

Workplace Challenges. Coping with difficulties at work is a major motivation for one-third of the participants in our study, who are current or previous employees of the company they oppose. Through pep-talks, sympathy, and personal counsel, community members strategize together about how to overcome challenging workplace issues such as demanding schedules, unfair pay, unsympathetic managers, or rude customers. In addition, the web community provides a social structure that is not provided at work, offering individual self-assurance and support. When corporations lack a supportive environment, findings suggest that employees search for and find solace from website communities.

Sometimes we need someone that is going to tell us the truth and someone that I can trust and that is what I find online. (Freda, anti-McDonald's)

Whenever I need something I just go to the website and ask somebody that has already been there and done that...there's always somebody that can give you advice for almost any situation that comes up. (Amy, anti-Starbucks)

Community members collectively create an environment where participants can be open and honest with one another. Employees search for answers in how to alleviate the stress of workplace challenges. Likewise, employees receive ad hoc solutions to problems at work. When employees do not receive support or guidance in the workplace, direction is sought from online community members. These negative workplace stories inherently influence other community members, adding reason to their cause.

Resource Hub. Sharing resources is an important means for creating and maintaining a community. For instance, the anti-Starbucks website was created to publicize Starbucks' unethical practices. Six months later, the website transformed into a central location for information sharing. With respect to Wal-Mart, the Internet served as a more efficient and effective means for reaching people and providing them with information (e.g., to resist expansion of new stores). Over time, the website became a locus for accumulating knowledge and building coalitions. The anti-McDonald's website was created to educate people about the McLibel court case (a trial that took place in Britain in response to a defamatory leaflet). By utilizing the Internet, the fight against McDonald's transformed from a localized campaign (e.g., one country) to a global campaign (e.g., 150 countries). In all three cases, the website was created to inform others by providing resources for getting involved or taking action.

Behavioral Manifestations

Publicizing Marketplace Inequities. Community members critique corporate actions and try to correct imbalances in the marketplace. Some community members believe that twenty-first century corporations adversely affect society, and they strive to create a new paradigm. For example, members of the anti-Wal-Mart community contend that mega stores use a type of "sprawl-math" to persuade small towns to entrust development to Wal-Mart. Community members remind one another that small towns do not prosper when large corporations dominate local communities, and they emphasize job losses and environmental degradation.

Companies like Wal-Mart and Home Depot utilize a form of “sprawl-math”, which only looks at gross impacts on a community—never of the net effect of their stores. Sprawl-Math is not taught in local school systems. It’s a form of developer’s calculator that had no minus pad to subtract out jobs lost, or revenues diverted. The real truth about Wal-Mart and Home Depot, and the rest of the sprawl-mathematicians, is that they represent a form of economic displacement, not economic development. (Al, anti-Wal-Mart)

Anti-brand communities create a virtual reality that fosters utopian thinking. These communities are visionary, creating ideal social and political schemes. The interactions among community members are based upon visionary ideals of urban planning, activist projects, and controlled consumption lifestyles.

We offer a place where people can come together and be valued for who they are and not what they own. I feel like our online community is a place of equality and true democracy. (Dave, anti-McDonald’s)

When we meet online, it almost feels like we are escaping our surrounding environment. So many people that I talk with think that Wal-Mart is great and I can’t understand why. They all want the lowest prices they can find. Yet they complain about outsourcing! I want to scream at them, ‘don’t you know that you are the cause of outsourcing!’ (Tom, anti-Wal-Mart)

We focus on developing ideal communities that are not cluttered with urban sprawl. (Marie, anti-Wal-Mart)

I hate my job and I am just sticking with it to finish school. Finding this online group helps me to tolerate my job and my nagging boss. I go online sometimes during my break and it helps me forget about the fact that I have to work four more hours. (Greg, anti-Starbucks)

The following is a quote from the anti-McDonald’s website illustrating one member’s critique of capitalism. The community member suggests that consumers are drawn into an endless and meaningless cycle of consumption. People are assigned roles and stereotypes that diminish independence.

From the day we’re born, until the day we die, we are expected to believe that money makes the world go round. We are meant to trust the authorities and experts who tell us that they have everything under control. Our lives are determined and exploited by the perceived need for money and status; dominated by the power and influence of companies, bureaucracies and laws to keep us in our place; marginalized by a traffic system based on cars and concrete; swamped by the mass media; and controlled and affected by all manner of remote institutions and decisions. In fact, people barely get a look in—they are just expected to go along with their set roles as obedient workers, dependant consumers and occasional passive voters. Such is the reality of capitalism and centralized government. At least we have each other. We provide our own escape from this subjugated world. (James, anti-McDonald’s)

Members believe that contemporary consumption practices distort reality, and consumers unconsciously participate in a consumer culture that automatically assigns roles and images that are subservient to corporations. In an effort to overcome cultural influences,

community members publicize that consumerism cannot always provide what it promises. In doing this, members create a utopian community.

Instructing Members in the Rewards of Voluntary Simplicity. Voluntary simplicity encourages freedom and expression based on individual choice. By choice, consumers design their own lifestyles (in opposition to lifestyles driven by consumption trends). Anti-brand websites provide an informal setting where community members teach each other how to engage in voluntary simplicity. Voluntary simplicity is “the degree to which an individual selects a lifestyle intended to maximize his/her direct control over daily activities” (Leonard-Barton 1981, p.244).

In this study, online discussions typically focused on common desires to limit consumption. Members instructed one another to avoid societal pressures, indulgences in materialism and unhealthy practices. Following is an excerpt from the anti-McDonald’s community conveying one member’s desire for simplicity.

McDonald’s promote their food as “nutritious”, but the reality is that it is junk food—high in fat, sugar, and salt, and low in fiber and vitamins. A diet of this type is linked with a greater risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes and other diseases. Their food also contains many chemical additives, some of which may cause ill-health, and hyperactivity in children. Don’t forget too that meat is the cause of the majority of food poisoning incidents. In 1991 McDonald’s was responsible for an outbreak of food poisoning in the UK, in which people suffered serious kidney failure. With modern intensive farming methods, other diseases—linked to chemical residues or unnatural practices—have become a danger for people too. We need to rid ourselves of these unhealthy substances. Life is simplified when we take the time to take care of ourselves. What ever happen to whole grains and vegetables? We need to go back to the simple things that will make our lives last longer. (Betsy, anti-McDonald’s)

The website acts as a gathering place for individuals to become and feel authentic. Through a process of advising and counseling one another, community members engage in a course of self-improvement and self-purification. In this next illustration, another anti-McDonald’s member joins the online discussion about eliminating unhealthy foods. She explains how she acquiesced to eating foods that were high in fat. She finally took control of her own life by decoding marketing messages.

I lost 20 pounds by giving up all fast food, soda and candy. It sounds so simple and it is! Do I regret it? Not one bit! The USA is the largest fat country in the world. Gee, I wonder why? McDonald’s food is not only fattening, but the burgers have no doubt been frozen in the back of the store for a long time, and the only thing they do to the fries is take them out of the freezer and oil them. Tempting right? Well, I believe if we had healthier options maybe America would be thinner. I mean I was just following the crowd and doing whatever the media told me to do. Every time I turned on the television or radio I was bombarded with another fast food commercial. When I got hungry, the first thing I would think about eating is some fast food burger that I saw on a commercial. I was in this never ending cycle of consuming food that was giving me heart disease, high cholesterol, and obesity. I was being controlled by the mass media and told what I should and should not eat. Finally, I decided that I was not going to be controlled anymore. We’re told everyday that fast food tastes better than

healthier foods, and in reality healthy foods taste better and make us feel better. If you are thinking about giving up unhealthy foods—just do it. It is a simple way to improve your life and the rewards will pay off! (Margy, anti-McDonald's)

Anti-brand communities provide a supportive, family-like environment where voluntary simplicity is encouraged. Community members teach, guide, and support one another in their common endeavors, developing relationships that resemble close friendships. The common quest for a purified or simplified lifestyle bonds community members together and provides the motivation for achieving personal goals.

Constructing a New Collective Identity. Community members join in a collective process of identification. Along with evaluating society as a whole and seeking for ways to improve it, participants unite in a renewal of the self. This self-improvement venture is a group-driven process where the community becomes a catalyst for individual transformation.

I used to view myself as a McDonald's junkie, but then I realized how bad it was for my health. I was overweight and depressed and I finally decided that I was not going to do this anymore. The people I have met on the website have helped me with my new perspective. I feel better and I am losing weight...and I usually turn off the TV or turn the radio when I hear fast-food commercials. (James, anti-McDonald's)

Since I met other people who believe in the same things I do, I feel more confident. I know that I am not the only one out there who cares about society and wants to make a difference. (Judy, anti-Wal-Mart)

Anti-brand communities provide new identities and provide resources for constructing a desired self-image. For instance, community members strive to increase individual autonomy and enhance confidence in marketplace decision-making. Community members believe that individual purchases provide a means for exercising power by supporting or condemning corporate actions.

I have gained a lot of confidence in my shopping decisions since I started participating online. I feel like I am in control of what I buy. Instead of just shopping for bargains, I shop to support certain companies and that makes me feel good. (Judy, anti-Wal-Mart)

I felt like crap when my manager would talk down to me. I always felt like such a loser. But this group has helped me to see that I am not defined by where I work. Just because I work somewhere doesn't mean that I agree with their work ethics. I can't wait to get a new job. For now I'm just gonna keep believing in myself because I know that I have higher values than the company I work for. (John, anti-Starbucks)

Collective identity plays a central role in consumer activism and the group's vision of consumer justice. Shared meanings are constructed by the group, and the effort to overcome corporate influences is a group process.

Role of the Internet

The Internet serves as an innovative means for building coalition. Communities that situate in virtual contexts are more flexible and durable than physically situated communities because there is an ongoing availability of resources and a continuous

process of multileveled communication. The virtual space allows for fusion of various conversations, the linking of conversations across Web sites, and the archiving of discussions and other types of information for future reference (Shumar and Renninger 2002). Online anti-brand communities are built upon virtual social interaction and even though they are not geographically united, these groups still manifest common characteristics of community such as reliance upon one another (Selznick 1992), joint decision making (Wellman 1979), social identification (Tonnie 1887), standardized procedures for socializing and communication (Boissevain 1974), and commitments to each other and the group (Bender 1978). Just as in other human endeavors, the Internet provides a means to enhance speed, convenience, anonymity, and formation of anti-brand communities.

Speed. The Internet is radically shaping action strategies by expediting consumer activism endeavors. Speed significantly advances the abilities of consumer activist groups in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. For example, the anti-Wal-Mart community once relied on communication via a community newsletter which was sent out monthly. Now, the Internet provides a more efficient and effective means for information sharing. When events occur, community members can be updated instantly. Community members no longer need to rely on traditional forms of media (i.e., newsletters, newspaper, television) to communicate to large numbers of people. Instead, members are able to log on to the community website any time of day to get the most current updates. The online medium maximizes the potential for consumer activism because it is conducive to the world in which people live.

Convenience. The Internet enhances consumer activist strategies by making participation, information-sharing, and identification of social groups more convenient. Anti-brand members in this study participated in community activities on the job, on vacation, at home, or on the road. One member in the anti-McDonald's community participated in online discussions while commuting back and forth to work on the train. This was the only free-time available to participate in community discussions. The activities of everyday life in the twenty-first century are inherently dependent upon technology and accordingly, consumer activism is becoming more virtual. For most participants in this study, communication between members took place solely online. In other words, there is rarely an exchange of phone numbers or street addresses. Online social action communities are outgrowths of a society intertwined with technology. These new forms of social action are capable of influencing large numbers of people, developing skills to bring about social change, and making changes fast.

Community Formation. The Internet enhances the diversity of consumer activist groups. Historically, social movements formed around visible commonalities (e.g., age, race, nationality, sexual orientation); however, the anti-brand movement emphasizes inconspicuous commonalities. Members are evaluated on the basis of their contribution to the community.

I don't really care who participates in our group discussions. The only thing that I care about is their contribution. I believe it is important to value differences because we usually all have valid points. (Betsy, anti-McDonald's)

I have more culturally diverse friends online than I do in person. I feel like the Internet breaks down the barriers to building friendships because you value people for who they really are and not for how much money they have, what they look like, or where they come from. (Mel, anti-Wal-Mart)

Common interests and values are the bonding criteria for virtual activist groups. Diversity is an advantage to modern social movements because it stimulates “thinking outside the box,” and diverse viewpoints facilitate creative and unique action strategies.

Anonymity. The Web offers many ways for masking identities. For several of the participants in this study, anonymous involvement influenced their decision to become “active members.” For some social activists, the extent of anonymity determines the extent of participation. One result may be that individuals are more willing to participate in immoral or unethical actions.

Because no one really knows who I am, I feel like I can be a little more risky in my actions. Virtual social action is great because I can do things I normally wouldn't do in-person. (Tom, anti-Wal-Mart)

I could not participate in protests in-person because I'm an employee. But, I can participate as much as I want online because no one will ever know. I've donated over 100 dollars this year to the campaign. (Lucy, anti-Starbucks)

I like the fact that no one knows who I am. I feel like I can say whatever I want. I don't hold anything back. (Dave, anti-McDonald's)

Through masking identities, consumers are able to oppose major corporations with minimal threat of peer disapproval, employee termination, or legal ramifications. Technology is fundamentally enhancing social action strategies and coalition efforts.

DISCUSSION

This study underscores both negative and positive aspects of anti-brand communities in relation to the opposed firm. From a negative viewpoint, participation in anti-brand communities does not require much time or energy. As a result, these communities serve as a powerful consumer agency and information resource. Consumers have instant access to an empathizing audience and to historical accounts of accusations against the firm. These communities also provide social benefits as the Internet enables one consumer to connect with a group of other likeminded consumers. Their common negative stance against the firm unifies members, and as a community, the group has more marketplace power. The Internet enhances marketplace power by providing members with a speedy, convenient, and anonymous means of communication. With easy access and widespread communication, anti-brand communities have the ability to damage a firm's brand name.

Positive aspects of anti-brand communities for firms include the notion that these communities serve as a means for rejuvenating business functions. As has been argued in other anti-branding contexts (Holt 2002), this study makes a strong case for using these communities as “grist for the branding mill that is ever in search of new cultural materials” (p. 88). The Internet provides an open forum for discussion about branding activities and it also serves as a free marketing research tool. Communities of this nature can incite firms to recognize innovative branding opportunities and Wal-Mart is a company that is putting this idea into practice. For example, Wal-Mart counteracts resistance by demonstrating its dedication to local communities during store-opening ceremonies. As a creative means for building customer relationships, Wal-Mart invites the community to a grand opening that centers around personal testimonies from employees and retirees, greetings from local officials, and the giving away of prizes.

The opening festival is a preemptive defense against opposition. To name a few tactics, devotion to the country is represented

by the flag and by singing the national anthem. The county is represented by county commissioners. Religious interests are signified by an invocation at the opening of the ceremony. Schools are represented by members of the school board and grants are given to local community organizations during the ceremony. This community-building strategy is aimed at winning the trust of local consumers and reversing the claims of anti-Wal-Mart groups. Consumer activism has traditionally been viewed as a natural occurrence in society which provides opportunities to improve business functions (Buskirk and Rothe 1970; Herrmann 1970; Kotler 1972), and this is a prime example.

CONCLUSION

This study provides important insights about anti-brand communities and advances prior research in two primary ways: (1) it sheds light on the role of community when interpreting anti-brand motivations and behaviors; and (2) it focuses on anti-brand communities as a social movement with Internet capabilities. Web-communities provide a place for anti-brand consumers to gather and discuss marketplace practices and these groups inevitably influence consumption. The community reinforces negativity toward the brand and influences a member's attitude and/or decision to take action against a corporation. This research establishes the relevancy of the role online communities play in present social action endeavors and, with Internet capabilities, these communities are more powerful (e.g., number of participants) and progressive (e.g., technology-driven action strategies) than earlier social movements.

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Brand Community Under Fire: The Role of Social Environments for the HUMMER Brand Community

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ABSTRACT

This research was undertaken as part of a larger consumer behavior research project investigating brands and brand communities as social systems. The paper is concerned with the particular role of social environments for brand communities previously neglected in literature. Grounded in a social-constructivist interpretive framework, a multi-perspective study was conducted to explore how the HUMMER brand community and its social environments discursively construct, situate, and legitimate one another. Findings reveal brand communities as powerful, socially embedded phenomena that continuously negotiate a set of core distinctions with and against their social environments.

INTRODUCTION

Brand communities have become powerful socio-economic phenomena and are as such of great interest for the study of marketplace cultures in consumer culture theory (Arnould and Thompson 2005). A brand community is a “specialized, non-geographically bound community, [that is] based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand” (Muñiz and O’Guinn 2001, p. 412). Prior studies portray these specialized communities and akin subcultures of consumption as true social phenomena that share values, cultivate communal rituals and traditions, and care for community members (Arnould and Price 1993; Caldwell and Henry 2004; Kozinets 1997; McAlexander, Schouten and Koenig 2002; Muñiz and O’Guinn 2001; Schouten and McAlexander 1995).

Yet even though numerous leading brands have become the focal point for passionate disputes among admirers and opponents (Buechler 1995; Giesler and Pohlmann 2003; Handelman 1999; Klein 1999; Kozinets and Handelman 2004), consumer culture theory has remained surprisingly silent about the impacts and potentials of committed social environments for brand communities. By conceptualizing, for instance, oppositional brand loyalty as the single internal process that explicitly involves an (economic) environment, Muñiz and O’Guinn (2001), among other authors, largely underestimate the importance of pro- and antagonistic societal counterparts for the successful perpetuation of brand communities. To better understand the empirical relevance of reactive social environments for the emergence, proliferation, and dissolution of brand communities, consumer researchers need to move beyond the theoretical constraints of single-sided brand community investigations.

Drawing from a multi-perspective interpretive study of the HUMMER brand community (HBC)¹ and its relevant social context, this paper explores how a brand community and its environments discursively construct, situate, and legitimate one another. The HBC offers an ideal context of study as the presence of the massive, military-style sport utility vehicles provokes extreme, even violent pro- and antagonistic responses.

The study begins with a review of existing brand community theory. Then, a conceptual framework is introduced that allows for observing brand communities as distinctive, dependent, and ephem-

eral social systems. Subsequently, attention is focused on the community’s particular means of distinction, reproduction, and reflection. The paper concludes with discussing the implications of the findings for brand community and consumer culture theory.

THEORY

This study builds upon two ongoing scholarly discourses: Market Cultures Theory on brand communities and European Social-Constructivist Systems Theory, the tenets of which shall be briefly reviewed.

Prior Research

A “brand community” as introduced by Muñiz and O’Guinn (2001) is understood as a “specialized, non-geographically bound community, [that is] based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand” (p. 412). Consumer researchers have investigated the idiosyncrasies of these specialized communities and akin subcultures of consumption in the contexts of vehicles (McAlexander et al. 2002), motorcycles (Schouten and McAlexander 1995), computers (Muñiz and Schau 2005), celebrities (Caldwell and Henry 2004), sports teams (Holt 1995), television shows (Kozinets 1997), or temporal servicescapes (Arnould and Price 1993; Peñaloza 2001). Findings reveal that communities around products and services entail various advantages for individual identity projects (Belk 1988; Elliott and Wattanasuwan 1998; Holt 2002), such as social distinctiveness (Schouten and McAlexander 1995), room for social refuge (Kozinets 2001), meaning and spiritualism (Muñiz and Schau 2005; Schouten and McAlexander 1995), and opportunities for strengthening family ties (Arnould and Price 1993). Muñiz and O’Guinn (2001) offer three markers for structuring the analysis of these particular social relations. Consciousness of kind (Gusfield 1975) embraces intrinsic connections felt among members (Tönnies 1957; Weber 1922) and a “collective sense of difference from others not in the community” (Muñiz and O’Guinn 2001, p. 413). The notion comprises oppositional brand loyalty (Muñiz and O’Guinn 2001), which elicits the value of threatening economic competition for community coherence. Rituals and traditions “perpetuate the community’s shared history, culture, and consciousness” (p. 413) through celebrations of the brand’s history, sharing of stories, and symbolic behaviors (McCracken 1986). Both consciousness of kind and sense of belonging inspire among members the third marker, introduced as “sense of duty or obligation to the community as a whole, and to its individual members” (Muñiz and O’Guinn 2001, p. 413).

The importance for understanding internal brand community processes not-withstanding, the “core community communalities” (p. 413) provide a single-sided and thus incomplete picture of the brand community. Considering the efforts of certain brand communities to differentiate and the empirical presence against them, it is surprising that the particularities of these structural interdependencies between brand communities and their social environments have received so little attention.

Conceptual Framework

In line with the social-constructivist epistemological tradition in consumer research (cf. Belk 1988; Bonsu, Belk, Mick et al. 2003;

¹HUMMER, HUMMER H1, and HUMMER H2 are registered trademarks of the General Motors Corporation (GM).

Brown 1993; Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Giesler and Venkatesh 2005; Hellmann 2003), systems theoreticians accept that there is no way of creating knowledge other than drawing distinctions (cf. von Foerster 1979). Knowledge is consequently understood as a result of social construction rather than of positive discovery (Varela 1979). Within this epistemology, brands are conceived of as social systems that reproduce their underlying economic, aesthetic, political, and social distinctions through continuous communications (Giesler 2003). Framing not only brands but also brand communities as ongoing communications, or discourses in the sense of Foucault (1972), which establish and maintain the social distinctiveness of admirers of a brand, entails a departure from the core community communalities in three key aspects. First, the discovery of communalities is replaced by the identification of bivalent distinctions (Baecker 2001). The prism of distinctions encourages investigations from multiple perspectives and thus allows for comparing inside and outside constructions of meaning. Second, the existence of shared meaning and brand identification as imperatives for community proliferation falls prey to the necessity of ongoing discourses. Thus, quantity and quality of communicative contributions rather than institutional membership or attitudes determine membership and the survival of the community (cf. Luhmann 1995). Third, the initial assumption of community stability (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Kates 2004) is replaced by presumed instability (Holt 1997). Due to human obliviousness (Glaserfeld 2003), social communities are considered to be dependent upon ongoing communicative reproduction rather than being generally persistent. This conceptual framework provides a preliminary understanding of brand communities as distinctive, dynamic, socially embedded phenomena and thus extends the communalities framework towards the social environments.

METHOD

This paper provides a multi-perspective account of the HUMMER brand community and its relevant social environments by using an effective combination of phenomenological interviews (Thompson 1997), netnographic data (Kozinets 2002), and historical artifacts. The HUMMER vehicles inspire unprecedented amounts of both admiration and opposition among the North American public. As a true “brand community under fire” the HBC does not only attract public interest and sympathy, but also frequent accusations, aggressions, and affronts.²

To obtain an overview over central discourses around, and key contributors to the HBC, the Internet was searched for relevant netnographic data such as HUMMER fan- and hate-pages, weblogs, owner clubs, online discussion forums, mailing lists, news reports, and corporate commercials. Salient sources were identified, archived, and continuously monitored over the course of the study. The key pro- and antagonists of the HBC were invited for interview participation — among them, AM General and General Motors marketing staff, HUMMER club celebrity Arnold Schwarzenegger, members of The HUMMER Club Inc.,³ leading web forum contributors, and the initiators of the most popular HUMMER hate page.

Phenomenological interviews of 50 to 150 minutes in length were conducted with five key informants, all of which were daily HUMMER drivers. Four of them were strongly, one remotely affiliated with the HBC. The interviews provided insights into motivations to own the vehicles, into personal consumption experiences, and into the particular ways the community communicates and organizes (Thompson 1997). Outside views on the HBC were studied at the 2005 North American Auto Show in Detroit. 23 interviews of 15 to 25 minutes in length were conducted with 48 informants of Asian-American, African-American, and Caucasian

origin. The sample included 31 male, 12 female, and 5 adolescent informants. Respondents were asked about their opinions, feelings, particular relationships and communicative contributions in favor of or against the HBC. About 50% of the respondents tended to generally dislike the vehicle and their drivers. Every person contacted had either seen or driven a HUMMER. Via email, additional netnographic interviews were conducted with prominent antagonists of the HBC that provided rich insights into the key motives of non-members for extensively contributing to the HUMMER discourse. Following Thompson (1997), the transcribed and archived data was continuously analyzed in multiple iterations of hermeneutic interpretation (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). In addition, the contribution of comments and stories was encouraged with postings on the leading web forums. Throughout the project, a research homepage offered a project overview, participant legal information, web links, guestbook, and contact information. This virtual home of the project proved useful for inviting stories and informing interviewees. Table 1 provides an account of the data used for this study.

FINDINGS

“At HUMMER our customers can’t be labeled by color, gender or creed. HUMMER is a mindset. A mindset of daring, self-assured, entrepreneurial people who see HUMMER as being a reflection of themselves—unique.” (Randall Foutch, GM)⁴

“The [HUMMER] H2 is the ultimate poseur vehicle. It has the chassis of a Chevy Tahoe and a body that looks like the original Hummer; i.e. it’s a Chevy Tahoe in disguise. The H2 is a gas guzzler. Because it has a gross vehicle weight rating over 8500 lbs, the US government does not require it to meet federal fuel efficiency regulations. Hummer isn’t even required to publish its fuel economy (owners indicate that they get around 10 mpg for normal use). So while our brothers and sisters are off in the Middle East risking their lives to secure America’s fossil fuel future, H2 drivers are pissing away our “spoils of victory” during each trip to the grocery store.” (Jason, none, forum)⁵

These key statements of GM employee Randall Foutch and HUMMER opponent Jason amply illustrate that the HUMMER brand community evolves around an extraordinarily distinct and controversial consumer product. The adapted war vehicle “HUMMER H1” (in the following: H1) and the redesigned sport utility vehicle HUMMER H2 (H2) are appreciated for their safety, capability, and physical appearance, whereas opponents criticize those same properties as dangerous, ecologically irresponsible, and in-

²See Belk (2004) for an account of the deep emotional bonds male consumers develop with their cars.

³At least twelve larger clubs have evolved around HUMMER vehicles in North America. The HUMMER Club Inc. with about 2000 members is the largest registered community and currently the only one that is formally acknowledged and supported by GM and AM General.

⁴Except for official corporate statements and news reports, the names and identities of all informants of this study have been concealed, accepting the loss of information. The ownership status of the informant (H1, H2, H1/H2, none, n/a) and the data source (web, forum, interview, email) are indicated.

⁵All informant quotes in this paper are cited in original idiom, including spelling and grammar. Where necessary, clarifications have been added in rectangular brackets.

TABLE 1
DATA SUMMARY

Data Source	Quantity
Long Interviews	4,5 hrs
Short Interviews	5 hrs
Email Interviews	15 pages
Webforums	40 pages
Homepages	30 pages
News Reports	112 pages
Videos/Ads	40 mins
Pictures	200 pictures
Books	2 books

timidating. Some supporters of the brand communicate their admiration of the “King of off-road” (Tim, n/a, forum) in various personal and mediated forms, whereas some critics voice their dislike in online forums, public demonstrations, driver affronts or even vandalism. In this study, the notion “HUMMER brand community” includes all those contributors who communicate about and socialize around their consumption of HUMMER products, whereas the notion of “social environments” embraces all other contributors, reaching from owners who do not socialize, to the uninvolved public, to passionate HUMMER opponents.

This extreme constellation of a brand community under fire holds the opportunity for analyzing how a brand community differentiates, why it attracts opposition, and if and how especially extensive protest influences the community. Using micro-level data within the conceptual framework introduced earlier, this section first delves into the functional, aesthetic, political, and social distinctions that the community uses for differentiation. Then it portrays the community’s ways of reproducing itself within its social environments. Finally, key strategies of reflection are unveiled.

Distinction

HUMMERS are advertised as being “like nothing else” (GM) and thus as providing maximum distinctiveness. All informants of this study readily support this statement, yet for diametrically opposite reasons. This section examines the functional, aesthetic, political, and social distinctions the HBC uses to set itself off from its social environments.

Functional distinctions are concerned with the functional utility of HUMMER products. For the HBC and its environments, the distinctions between safety and threat as well as capability and subordination are predominant. HUMMER drivers are convinced they possess the safest consumer vehicle on North American roads. This belief is equally inspired by size and weight as well as by the presumed capabilities of the vehicles. Although most HUMMER owners have never got “off Highway 101 and (...) over Mount Tam” (sfgate.com, 12/29/2002), trust in these characteristics is nevertheless frequently articulated. HUMMERS are, for example, considered to be a “family insurance policy” (ibid.) or even a must for any responsible head of the family. Consider the statement of HUMMER role model Arnold Schwarzenegger, who owns several H1 and H2 vehicles:

“I want a big SUV because I have four children and to protect the family” (A. Schwarzenegger, cited at CNN.com, 09/22/03)

For non-owners, however, this feeling of safety turns into a feeling of threat, as road-safety is perceived as relative. H2-owner Ray and Stephen, who drove an H1 for the Army, provide reasons for these feelings:

“I’d rather be the one that survives the impact with the small car than the poor schmuck treehugger that i run over. I’d rather pay the money for the gas than have to worry about some dumbass in a rice rocket blowing through a light and hitting me in the side.” (Ray, H2, forum).

“If you are driving a big truck and got this little Honda civic ahead of you, your first thought is: I am just gonna run him over.” (Stephen, none, interview)

The other central functional distinction separates capability from subordination. At the national events of The HUMMER Club Inc., the off-road capability of both H1 and H2 vehicles is frequently contested and celebrated. Among the HBC there is little doubt about the superior capability of HUMMERS. In the urban realm, capability and dominance materialize quite differently. Owners like Brian contribute tales of heroic potency that are readily confirmed and criticized by outside contributors like Jason:

“This weekend will be taking the H2 out to the sticks [...] to get some peace and quiet away from the city and all those tiny, wimpy vehicles that are always getting stuck in my grill and between the little groves in my tires” (Brian, H2, web).

“The H2 is a death machine. You’d better hope that you don’t collide with an H2 in your economy car. You can kiss your ass goodbye thanks to the H2’s massive weight and raised bumpers. Too bad you couldn’t afford an urban assault vehicle of your own.” (Jason, none, forum)

Aesthetic distinctions are concerned with positive appeals to human senses (cf. Postrel 2003). The central aesthetic differences cover the range from fascination to intimidation. Surprisingly, the data unveiled that although some informants generally reject HUM-

MERS, they are nonetheless intrigued by the vehicles' aesthetics. Marc, who has driven a HUMMER once, argues against the vehicle but still cannot conceal his fascination with the H2 over the course of the interview:

"I've driven one, I don't like it. It's too big. It is very intimidating for people in front of you if you come up very high on behind, they scatter. [Feels like you are saying] get the hell out of the way." (Marc, none, interview)

HUMMER owners agree that the public feedback they receive on the looks of their vehicles is "99% positive" (Peter, H2, interview). Jonathan reports on this as a positive experience, whereas Nathalie expresses her negative feelings of intimidation and fear:

"We get waved to by children like we are driving a fire truck. People are constantly asking us to sit in, look in & even feel it." (Jonathan, H2, email)

"It's a very intimidating looking vehicle. It's just the size and shape of the vehicle." (Nathalie, none, interview)

Political distinctions mark HUMMER-related communications that revolve around the prevailing distinction of freedom versus responsibility. Occasionally, the HBC also gets involved in various political discourses. When it comes to justifying purchases, the HBC frequently refers to ideals of freedom and the dictum of economic choice.

"The good thing about marketing economy is that you can vote with your dollars and if I choose to purchase a vehicle that is less efficient ... that is my choice." (Rick, none, interview)

Opponents vehemently attack owners like Rick for ignoring external effects of their consumption choices. In web forum discussions, participants often draw on cultural resources such as patriotism, national pride, political and local affiliations, job and literacy hierarchies, gender differences, or the Iraq Wars to support their arguments. Characteristic claims are: "Driving a Gas Guzzler is not patriotic," bumper stickers like "I drive a... WEAPON OF MASS CONSUMPTION," or a demonstration billboard saying "Soldiers die in their HUMMERS, so you can play Soldier too!" (Authors unknown, n/a, web).

Social distinctions, as they are observed and enjoyed by most HUMMER drivers, are deeply embedded in various social discourses, and continuously fueled by numerous contributors. Outside informants Rick and Nathalie summarize the two primary social effects of HUMMERS as "consumption symbols" (Belk 1988, p. 152):

"Like it or hate it, it gets you noticed." (Rick, none, interview)

"If you see a HUMMER, you automatically don't think of a lower class individual." (Nathalie, none, interview)

In addition to the symbolic effects of perceived functional superiority, aesthetic extravagance, and political affiliation, HUMMER vehicles are associated with cultural stereotypes of masculinity, athleticism, fame, and economic success.⁶ These associations are largely fueled by the military heritage, the number and presence of athletes and movie stars driving HUMMERS (ca. 60 celebrities were known in 2004 for driving HUMMERS) and the above-average prices of the products.⁷ Arnold Schwarzenegger, the best-known member of the HBC, personifies for most informants these

social distinctions of the brand. As Nathalie summarizes: "[I can] picture him being the Terminator coming out of the HUMMER. Totally see those two together" (none, interview).

The HBC uses these social distinctions extensively. Tom (H2, web), for example, impresses potential real estate customers with his H2; the tall blonde H1 driver Susan irritates men ("women will drive by and give me a thumbs up, and guys will mumble and say grrrr, it's a women driving a HUMMER!" (Susan, H1, interview)); Peter (H2, interview) enjoys the attention ("Every time we drive out on the streets we turn heads."); and Ronny simply likes to show off ("I like taking the kids and wife places and park up front so everyone can see!! That's the best part is when other kids look and hit there moms and dads and say look!! My kids like it tooo!!" (Ronny, H2, web)).

While especially the adolescent informants of this study largely support and enjoy the feeling of social superiority, critics confront the owners with rationalized arguments.

"According to Bradsher, internal industry market research concluded that S.U.V.s tend to be bought by people who are insecure, vain, self-centered, and self-absorbed, who are frequently nervous about their marriages, and who lack confidence in their driving skills." (Malcom Gladwell, www.gladwell.com)

Within the HBC, differences exist about the importance of social distinctiveness. Among the urban H2-fractions of the HBC (approx. 70,000 owners), design and social attention are more likely to be predominant motives for purchase. H1-owners (approx. 10,000) seem to be more attracted by the vehicle's off-road capability. However, these particularities of the HBC's social distinctiveness presuppose social environments that pay attention and feed back to the community. In this empirical context, social attention appears to be a given for both sides.

Reproduction

The interpretive framework of this study conceptualizes the aesthetic, political, and social distinctions of the HBC as socially constructed through ongoing discourses. This section details the HBC's particular communicative means for producing and reproducing these distinctions. Attention is focused on communication and interaction between community protagonists as well as communication and interaction with the social environments.

Among its members, the HBC employs personal forms of communication, such as club events, and mediated ones, such as club magazines, web pages, mailing lists, and online forums. Members of The HUMMER Club Inc., for example, meet for the "Chile Challenge" or the "Death Valley HUMMER Happening" to pursue and share their off-road passion with other members. This is where Muñiz and O'Guinn's (2001) core community communalities can be observed most readily. As social relationships are the core constituent of the HBC, these events play an important role for reproducing and updating shared meaning, for retaining old members, attracting new ones, and deepening social ties among owners, spouses, friends, children, club board members, representatives of the manufacturers, and guests (cf. McAlexander et al. 2002; Muñiz and O'Guinn 2001; Schouten and McAlexander 1995). In the online realm, sharing knowledge about parts, repairs, tuning, events and off-road tips are predominant communications. Glorious road-

⁶For an account of the underlying American ideology of manhood see Holt and Thompson (2002).

⁷HUMMER H1 vehicles start at \$112,000. H2s begin at \$55,000.

side stories that are shared over the Internet contribute to the reproduction of the perceived capability and superiority of the HUMMER vehicles.

Communicating distinctiveness to the social environments is equally central for the HBC. Aside from corporate advertising for the vehicles, HUMMERS have attracted extensive media attention. As of early 2005, HUMMER vehicles have been featured in at least 60 movies, 13 music videos, 40 TV-shows, 12 video games, 6 books and 12 non-GM commercials. Community protagonists also personally engage in reproducing a positive image of the HBC. Two varieties of individual contribution are predominant, compensation and exploitation. Protagonists that are concerned with signaling the HBC's social responsibility frequently use the distinctiveness of and fascination with HUMMER vehicles to support their community. The Rocky Mountain News reports:

"Volunteers wearing Santa hats with "H2" stitched on them smiled as they drove through Medved's Wheat Ridge service center to load trunks with toys [that were later given out to needy children]." (Jennifer Miller, Rocky Mountain News, 12/20/2004)

Similarly, GM and The HUMMER Club Inc. use the vehicles' distinctive features to promote initiatives like "stars after school," the environmental organization "Tread Lightly!" and the "Sierra Club."

Consumers like Ronny, on the other hand, are instead exclusively interested in supporting their individual identity projects by means of conspicuous consumption. Like Arnold Schwarzenegger, who is quoted saying "I needed a vehicle that matched the expressiveness of my personality" (Padgett 2004, p. 91), many HUMMER owners show off their vehicles to impose style and meaning of their possessions on their own identities (Belk 1988; Holt 2002). The HBC can leverage these efforts, for example, by offering gatherings in public places. Consider this invitation of the H2 Club Chapter New York:

"East Coast Dinner at NYTIMES SQUARE ... 43rd & 44th @ ABC Studios Bldg. Time: 6:30 pm, Trucks from all over are welcome. With the approval of the NYPD, we're going meet at NY Times Square at 6:30 sharp to meet, compare, and take pictures. About an hour later, the crew will depart to "Tao Asian Bistro" for dinner and fun ... Make sure you bring your cameras!" (H2 Club, Chapter New York, web)

The social opposition to the HBC reproduces itself as well. Informants agree that opposition usually forms spontaneously on the road but there are also planned events by social activist organizations like "Code Pink" or networks like the "Earth Liberation Front." In public spaces, HUMMER owners are frequently insulted, yelled at or cut off. Peter, for example, reports that his vehicle was keyed once and spat on several times.

"I have people yell obscenities and when we come to a four way stop they ... well ... 'you and your god-damn HUMMER, get out of my way' ... you know. (...) We get flipped off about once every two weeks." (Peter, H2, interview)

Organized protests materialize in street demonstrations such as the "Code Pink" anti-HUMMER demonstrations on Earth Day 2003, where participants produced placards with slogans like "How many lives per gallon?" or "BIG HUMMER little brain" in front of HUMMER dealerships. Testing the extreme, the Earth Liberation Front burned several HUMMERS being displayed at a California

dealership and spray-painted slogans such as "Fat, Lazy Americans" (Associated Press, 08/22/03) on the walls.

On the netnographic site, various web pages and online forums invite and communicate H2 protest. A popular hate-page presents more than 1.600 individually submitted and commented photographs of people making obscene gestures at H2 vehicles. The owners of the page recently started selling t-shirts and baseball caps with the web address and a popular picture on them.

In sum, inside and outside of the HBC the two opposing sides reproduce using personal and mediated, spontaneous and organized, online and offline forms of communication. In doing so, each contribution refers to and reproduces the opposite side as well.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity conceptualizes the particular means that social systems employ for making sense of and reacting to inside and outside communications. So far, findings unveil that the fundamental distinctions of off-road capability versus environmental irresponsibility, positive attention versus selfish vanity and social superiority versus excessive overconsumption are used and reproduced by the HBC and its social environments. Data also supports the existence of immediate interaction between the HBC and its social environments. This section explores if and how this interaction affects the HBC.

In spite of high gas expenditures and social protest, the environmental effects of HUMMER consumption are not an issue for the HBC. On the contrary, the HBC considers itself environmentally responsible.

"We [The HUMMER Club Inc.] have a large percentage of the population with discretionary income. They do what is environmentally correct: join the Nature Conservancy, or the Sierra Club, or Land Trust. (...) 'I am giving money to these groups, therefore, it's ok.'" (Susan, H1, interview)

By displaying environmental consciousness and showing responsible behavior on off-road tracks, the community frames itself as ecologically conscious. In a similar vein, gas-guzzler accusations against urban drivers are ignored or circumvented with reference to freedom of choice.

"Peoples' concerns are that it burns too much gas and it's bad for the environment. There are a lot of reasons... It's just a matter of opinion." (Peter, H2, interview)

Arnold Schwarzenegger, being harshly criticized during his campaign for backing environmental policies as Governor of California and driving HUMMERS at the same time, reacted in the same fashion. Instead of accepting the argument and parting with his HUMMERS, he chose to support a GM initiative for developing sustainable engines. Followed by the media, he occasionally drives an hydrogen-fueled H2 through California (Padgett 2004).

Partial acceptance of the stigma of selfish vanity inspired HUMMER owners and clubs to engage in charitable activities. Susan (H1, interview), for example, entertains physically challenged children by offering them rides in her H1. Jason (H1/H2, interview) holds guest lectures at a business school to inform prospective leaders about the benefits of the public private partnership of The HUMMER Club Inc., and a Colorado HUMMER dealer cooperates with the Department of Human Services and the Colorado State Foster Parents Association to deliver Christmas gifts to foster children.

Allegations of overconsumption are based on the fact that the HUMMER is a vehicle, which exceeds most customers' needs. The

HBC reacts to these charges in various ways. The program “HUMMER Owners Prepared for Emergency (HOPE),” for example, is a HBC-initiated cooperation which has emerged between The HUMMER Club Inc., GM, and the American Red Cross. HOPE membership legitimates HUMMER owners to provide transportation for Red Cross workers and their supplies to reach emergency sites that “are not accessible with normal vehicles” (Morris 2004). The program has three key impacts on the perceived meanings within the HBC. First, it responds to intimidation allegations by depicting HOPE members as (national) security supporters rather than as a menace. Second, it signals to the social environments that the vehicles are a useful and necessary enrichment to society rather than an excessive luxury. Third, the program enhances the original distinction of functional superiority by adding altruism and moral superiority to the set of relevant distinctions. HOPE membership constitutes further pride, as owners become entitled to assist the drivers of less capable vehicles in the case of an emergency.

When it comes to reasoning against oppositional communication, the arguments of the HBC are manifold. Usually, the HBC simply frames protests categorically as envy, as there is no other acceptable way of rationalizing certain threats. Consider the following contribution by Jack to an explicitly anti-H2 forum:

“The shame of all of the “people” who have so much negativity to say about the H2 either are just totally jealous, or can’t make enough money to afford one, two or more! Maybe these “people” should not have “Partied” so much in College, if they ever went to college? ... And by the way—Fuck you ALL!! That are Jealous of a Vehicle—Period!!!!” (Jack, H2, forum)

Another reflexive strategy that was frequently observed in interviews is accusing opponents of insufficient knowledge about the true capability, utility, and gas mileage of HUMMERS. Owners go into passionate defenses of their vehicles.

“Hey Peter let me just be the first to say (edit) your H2. I don’t need it to dog it. I drive an H1 almost everyday. Its called Army. Your hummer is a sissy truck. It is for rich girls that want to feel like they are special and older guys that can’t afford the insurance on a Porsche. I flip off everyone I see on the road.” (Cliff, n/a, forum)⁸

Discussions that emerge from contributions like Cliff’s draw on a host of cultural resources, including the Army, slavery, Al Qaeda, or political affiliations. They provide insights into the depths of passion that both sides share about the HUMMER, yet on diametrically opposite sides.

The existing tensions often result in informants feeling only more rather than less strongly about their HUMMERS. Jonathan summarizes this strengthening effect as follows:

“People actually try and cut us off on the freeway. We have been cussed at, yelled at, given the thumbs down for “killing children” (not sure what that was about). Six times in the last three months people have tried to steal a parking spot from us when we were waiting first. (...) This only makes me want to drive a Hummer more. Why be like everyone else, when you can make a statement and cause much hooplah everyday!” (Jonathan, H2, email)

In summary, the above findings illustrate how the HBC inspires, uses, and reproduces social discourses (cf. McCracken 1986). The community generally reacts with benevolence to positive feedback and often also with demonstrative behavior such as

communal show-offs or excessive car tuning. Vis-à-vis its critics, the community reacts in three ways. Arguments that threaten the validity of the HUMMER distinctions are simply ignored. If possible, they are rationalized as to fit the accepted meaning within the community. Some allegations may entail reactions of the HBC, such as participation in social and environmental missions or creation of a program for emergency support. Yet, these reactions do not result in parting with the vehicles but rather in seeking compensation elsewhere. By using a form of mental accounting (Thaler 1985) the HBC clears external costs on one side (driving a HUMMER) with payments on the other (supporting a Hydrogen initiative).

DISCUSSION

This study explored the role of committed social environments for the HUMMER brand community (HBC). Grounded in a social-constructivist interpretive framework, a multi-perspective study was conducted to explore how the HUMMER brand community and its social environments discursively construct, situate, and legitimate one another.

Adding to existing consumer culture theory on brand communities, findings reveal that a group of shared ideological *distinctions*—such as off-road capability versus environmental irresponsibility, positive attention versus selfish vanity, and social superiority versus excessive overconsumption—combined with knowledge about which side to favor forms the social foundation of the brand community. These core distinctions provide pro- and antagonists with topics for discussion, reasons to socialize, and meanings to identify with. These distinctions rather than intrinsic communalities initially inspire brand community as well as protest community building. As distinctions are bivalent, critics emerge, refining and making use of the opposite side for organizing protest and taking aim at the community’s foundations. By addressing, for instance, the “ultimate off-road vehicle” (GM) as an “ultimate poseur vehicle” (Jason, none, forum), the opposition of the HBC involves the community in an ongoing dispute about the predominant meaning of brand and community.

In its continuous discursive *reproduction*, a brand community considerably depends on, alludes to, draws on, and interacts with its social environments. Theoretically, a community is free to form around any brand (Muñiz and O’Guinn 2001), to accept or reject any meaning individuals, marketers, and cultures have to offer (cf. Holt 2002), and to proliferate or dissolve if distinctiveness is lost. Yet by accepting the design, functions, and advertised meanings of a brand, as well as by alluding to the cultural stereotypes of masculinity, athleticism, fame, and economic success, brand communities become dependent on their social environments. Even though the core functional and aesthetic distinctions are inevitably corporate products, a brand community can develop further aesthetic (e.g. tuning), social (e.g. altruism), or political distinctions and thus emancipate itself from marketing influence.⁹ In order to maintain these distinctions, a brand community is bound to continuous communicative reproduction within and against its relevant social environments. Internally, the HBC communicates at national events, during local road-trips, on online web forums, or in member magazines. Vis-à-vis the outside, it consciously triggers both positive feedback and inevitable protest through conspicuous consumption. The study reveals that brand community and social environ-

⁸This submission was edited by the forum administrator.

⁹See Muñiz and Schau (2005) for a description of a community that proliferates even though the marketer has long discontinued the product.

ments construct and strengthen each other and their fundamental distinctions through their ongoing reproductions.

A brand community that builds on strong distinctions cannot escape social attention if the brand is publicly consumed. A brand community employs at least *six discursive strategies* of responding to outside stimuli. Positive feedback is silently consumed, eagerly responded to, or actively reinforced. Oppositional arguments are ignored, rationalized, or recontextualized.

For some parts of the HBC, the extensive positive attention is a core motivation for purchasing a HUMMER and socializing around the product. Some owners, who fear that the product's distinctiveness is fading due to its increasing popularity, for example, regain the public momentum by extensively tuning their vehicles or driving in large HUMMER convoys.

In reacting to outside threats, such as affronts, aggressions, and accusations, a brand community may predominantly react in three ways. Outside allegations that are either not of interest for the community or endanger its legitimacy are entirely ignored. The HUMMER-owning mother of young children, for instance, overlooks the allegation of overconsumption. If arguments can be rationalized within the interpretive framework of the core distinctions, the brand community self-referentially reframes opposing arguments to fit the accepted meaning of the community. For example, the HBC often simply frames protests categorically as envy. The most subtle interpretive strategy of a brand community is the recontextualization of accusations. The HBC-initiated cooperation HOPE, for instance, can be theorized as such a recontextualized response. By establishing a cooperation between HUMMER owners and the American Red Cross, the HBC responds to intimidation allegations by depicting HOPE members as (national) security supporters rather than as a menace. It also signals to the social environments that the vehicles are a useful and necessary enrichment to society rather than an excessive luxury, and enhances the original distinction of functional superiority by adding altruism and moral superiority. Recontextualization strategies are favored when the brand community has no other means of reacting to a relevant outside argument than through remote compensation. Protagonists of the HBC do not give up their vehicles and community affiliation because of opposition, but they can donate to environmental organizations to clear their mental account (Thaler 1985). With these discursive strategies of selective blindness, the brand community reduces social complexity by banning certain interpretations and encouraging others (cf. Glasersfeld 2003; von Foerster 1979).

As part of a larger research project investigating brand communities as social systems, this research has begun to explore the complex relationships between a brand community and its social environments. Yet, more research needs to be done to fully understand the particular influences of distinct product characteristics, marketing efforts, media reports, or social activist groups on brand community success and failure.

In summary, social environments comprise curses and blessings for a brand community under fire. Blessings, as outside sympathies and threats co-create the distinctiveness the community is built upon; and curses, as the social environments also constantly question the validity and social acceptance of the community's foundations.

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When David Becomes Goliath

Ideological Discourse in New Online Consumer Movements

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ABSTRACT

This article seeks to contribute to the issue of consumer sovereignty by introducing the concept of adversary innovation. The functionality of ideological discourse for the sustainability of new consumer movements is discussed and investigated. Empirical investigation is based on a discourse analysis of online conversation of the free and open-source software movement. The findings reveal that the movement is constantly fueled with revolutionary energy by applying two dialectical categories of cultural codes in discourse—exclusion and integration. Processes of exclusion that become apparent in discourse comprise demonization, purifying, and remembering. Educationalism, pluralism and tolerance are processes, which seek integration.

INTRODUCTION

Since the advent of postmodernist thought in consumer behavior, there is a growing body of literature on tensions between consumers and markets (Murray & Ozanne, 1991; Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Thompson, 1997; 2004; Kozinets, 2002b; 2004; Holt, 2002). As consumers live in this tension, they are constantly confronted with contradictory signals on the market. Glamorous brands are diluting when used, multinational corporations turn out to be 'Potemkin villages' instead of responsible social actors. Consumers start musing and publicly reflecting on the things they value most. Activist consumers engage in boycotting, and revolting.

Consumer behavior literature, so far, has discussed this issue mainly in terms of brand authenticity, consumer resistance, and adversary consumption (Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Penalzoa & Price, 1993; Rumbo, 2002; Moiso & Aaskegaard, 2002; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004), but also in more positive terms as emancipatory, liberatory and creative consumption (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Kozinets, 2002b; Holt, 2002; Toumajian, 2003; Thompson, 2004). Recently, consumer research also revealed the resisting power of gift-exchange in consumer communities (Bergquist & Ljungberg, 2001; Hemetsberger, 2002; Giesler, 2003a; 2003b; Zeitlyn, 2003). Peer-to-peer exchange is subversive in that it successfully circumvents prevailing modes of transaction in capitalist economy.

Recently, resisting online consumer communities, who collaboratively work on innovative software solutions, have attracted the attention of practitioners and researchers (Wayner, 2000; Bergquist & Ljungberg, 2001; Hemetsberger, 2002; Zeitlyn, 2003). Adversary innovation challenges well established industries in a radical manner in that it attacks one of their core competencies, namely to innovate. Practitioners and researchers alike are struck by the fact that those subgroups of consumers have developed software of top quality, and, in some areas, have reached a world market share of approximately 70 percent. I am talking about the free and open-source (F/OSS) movement, which has successfully established an authentic online culture of free collaboration on innovative software solutions. This software is free for download, and the source code is open, so that people can improve it, if they are capable of doing that. The open-source movement has brought forward a powerful consumer culture with an authentic claim for freedom. Here, freedom occupies an emancipatory notion of liberation. The movement has created a world of free exchange of software, knowledge, and friendship. It has been lively and pulsating ever since; it is stimulating, inspiring, and provocative.

In its early days and ever since, the resisting character of the movement has been fueling this liberating consumer effort with more and more contributors, affiliates, and advocates. Today, distributions² are successfully marketing their software products. Company engagement and sponsoring is increasing, and expert software developers are now employed by those benevolent industry partners. By now, open-source software has become commercialized and incorporated into the capitalist system to a considerable extent. This seemingly obvious opposite of the movement's ideological foundation longs for explanation. Commercialization of free or open-source software sounds like an oxymoron. Would not indoctrinated developers cease contributing when the ideological basis starts crumbling away? Are those consumer movements to lose their resisting, emancipative, and liberatory appeal? Hence, are they to lose their members, will they shrink, or die away?

This article aims to contribute to a deepened understanding of producerly forms of consumer resistance. Emphasis will be put on the functional character of ideological discourse for the sustainability of online movements. The empirical investigation is based on a netnographic observation (Kozinets, 2002a), and discourse analysis (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) of online conversation of the free software (<http://www.fsf.org/>) and open-source movement (<http://www.opensource.org/>). I will conclude with a discussion of the findings.

THEORY

Consumers that cause trouble

Literature that addresses the issue of consumer resistance and collective action is fairly recent. The topic of resistance evolved out of a changing, postmodern, and more humanist understanding of consumers, who are on their way back from consumer society (Baudrillard, 1998) to reflective, and creative emancipatory action. Penalzoa and Price (1993) provided a first classification with the aim of emphasizing the many forms of consumer resistance. They argued that consumer resistance already begins with the daily minutia of differentiated product use and signification. Brand community research made visible another form of resistance—oppositional brand loyalty (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2000; Muniz, Lawrence & Hamer, 2001). However, oppositional brand loyalty reflects resistance only to the extent that it is a radical expression of consumer support for another brand. Yet another, more radical form of consumer resistance is documented in recent studies of consumers, who act against prevailing consumption practices and forms, as for instance documented in Kozinets' Burning Man study (Kozinets,

¹Acknowledgements: The author would like to thank the millions of volunteer programmers for their wonderful creations, and their stimulating public discourse. May their spirit continue to light up their lives and those of others.

²A Linux distribution is a Unix-like operating system plus application software comprising the Linux kernel, the GNU operating system, and assorted free software. Companies such as Red Hat, SUSE and MandrakeSoft, as well as community projects such as Debian and Gentoo Linux, assemble and test the software and provide it as a complete system, more or less ready to install and use.

2002b). However, those studies have disclosed that consumer engagement in resisting behavior does not release them from the market's social logic. It has been argued that ordinary so-called 'counter-cultures' are regularly incorporated into consumer culture and pose little threat on the market (Holt, 2002). Instead, it creates opportunities for companies which understand the emerging new cultures of consumption. More overt forms of consumer activism, as described by Kozinets and Handelman (2004), suffer from the stereotyping construction of their anti-consumerist ideology, and the radical exclusion of dissenting consumers. However, now that the networked society became reality we seem to enter a new era of consumer resistance, which seems to be less radical in nature, but much more powerful in its consequences. Consumer innovation (innovation by and for consumers) has become a new possibility to fight multinationals, monopolies, and the powerlessness of consumers.

Adversary innovation substantially differs from boycotting and consumer resistance in its active, positive approach towards social change. Contrary to anti-consumerism or anti-capitalist movements (see: Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Rumbo, 2002), the emphasis is not primarily on attacking or destroying products, ads, and established market structures, but to radically alter and introduce new elements to it. Whereas many other forms of resistance rely on propagation and revolutionary utterances, innovative consumer communities construct a culture of creativity and collaboration; they actively do something about the source of their grievances. Furthermore, the revolutionary consequences of online consumer movements might be far more effective due to the networking effect of the Internet. The Napster file-sharing community (Giesler & Pohlmann, 2003a; 2003b) and the open-source movement, for instance, owe much of their global expansion to Internet technology. However, Napster's decline leaves us wondering whether online movements will ever be able to uphold their resisting power. Will all of those movements be swallowed up by the capitalist system and cease revolting, or will there be still authentic, oppositional energy? Will they be able to leave a thumbprint on the world?

Leaving a Thumbprint on the World

Collective action is not simply a reaction to social and environmental constraints, or a strategy of appropriation in response to structures of domination, as suggested by Poster (1992). Innovative consumer movements are not only exhibiting rebellious acts against the prevailing capitalist practices and forms of consumption. There is an equally strong tendency to engage in active co-construction of alternative market structures. This said, it is not intended here to argue that consumer movements hold the destiny of the market in their hands. Online consumer movements may take too many unforeseeable routes, with many deviant consequences that might result from action. However, I promote the view that resisting cultures are intentionally constituted so as to reflect the antithesis of the social and/or economic situation they strive to alter.

Here, adversary innovation will be approached with a socio-cultural perspective of reflexive and creative resistance (see: Holt, 2002). This view reflects a clear emphasis on emancipatory discourse, on the one hand. On the other hand, it also encompasses the overt producerly form of adversary innovation. Hence, resistance manifests itself in reflective collective discourse, and overt action. Consumers emancipate themselves from the market firstly, by creating a distinct common space, which is protected from external control or oppression (Melucci, 1996). Secondly, within this 'Noo-sphere' (Raymond, 1999), market-imposed codes and rules are flip-flopped and juxtaposed with a culture of free exchange and gift-

giving. Recent consumer research provides clear evidence of how people are making use of emancipatory spaces for collective action, and how they establish counter-cultures that reflect these common goals (Kozinets, 2002b; Hemetsberger, 2002; Giesler & Pohlman, 2003a; 2003b).

Ideology is one of the cornerstones that fuel and strengthen collective action (Melucci, 1996; Moisiso & Askegaard, 2002; Touraine, 1985). In an attempt to escape the ideological influences that sustain a capitalist economy (Thompson, 2004), and in order to regain control over one's own consumption behavior, counter-ideologies are established with the aim of opposing dominant market forces. Because cultural challenges occur primarily through ideological discourses, the interlinked study of discourse and ideology is critical within this field (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004). The advantage of examining social phenomena through the lens of discourse analysis is the ability to capture the meanings of texts and their relation to ideological interests, along with ways in which such meanings are either reproduced or contradicted in the discursive actions of individuals (Toumajian, 2003). Melucci (1996) holds that movements establish their ideological foundation through the elaboration of cultural codes and language. In order to reproduce culture, these codes are regularly re-assured and re-vitalized in discourse. This article advances the perspective that consumer movements are using cultural codes in online discourse in order to promote, challenge, and re-create ideology. Hence, the aim of the study is to understand in what way discursive processes are functional for resistance and sustainability of a movement.

METHODOLOGY

This research revolves around the adversary discourse and innovative action of the free source and open-source movement. It is part of an extensive netnographic research (Kozinets, 2002a). I started out with an exploration of several free and open-source related Websites in order to apprehend the history, the culture, the structure, and the organizational entities of the F/OSS network. For the purpose of this article, community discourse was observed, retrieved from the archives, and analyzed. In order to overcome the drawbacks of self-report data, an agency-oriented approach to discourse analysis was chosen. This approach aims to uncover the hidden ideological symbolism and action behind social conversation, that what is intentionally said in discourse (Geertz, 1973 [2000]).

The research site

"The free and open-source movement is comprised of individuals, each one free to do whatever he wants with the software. No more shackles, no more corporate hegemony. It is the latest episode in the battle between the programmers and the corporate suits. The revolution is also about defining wealth in cyberspace. ... just discovering how much can be accomplished when information can be duplicated for next to nothing." (Wayner, 2000).

The seeds of the F/OSS movements have been planted long time ago. At that time, a group of MIT's most passionate programmers had developed a common ideology of free sharing. They started calling themselves hackers. Hackers are people who program enthusiastically and who believe that information-sharing is a powerful, positive good, and that it is the ethical duty of hackers to share their expertise by writing free software (Himanen, 2001). It took them almost 30 years to watch an online movement growing, which consists of computer-literate software consumers from all over the world, who share similar grievances and strivings.

The term movement is partly a self-description, and reflects the community's emphasis on its creative, resisting character to the outside world. Its resisting character rests on millions of programmers and advocates who are operating on a global basis, and collaborate on the Net. They are working on the improvement of free and open-source code in their spare time, and release their software including the source for free. It is not a violent, nor a radical revolution. But still, it is acting subversively and rebellious. The resisting actions are based on the liberal culture of the Internet, and a strong belief in the power of factuality. Meanwhile, its revolutionary consequences affected the software business in a sustainable manner. Free and open-source software, like Linux, KDE, Gnome, and the Apache Webserver, has achieved a considerable popularity and is distributed all over the Globe. It is such a great success that they found support from corporations, which are leaders from a cross-section of the computer industries.

Research method and analysis

The online data used for this study were gathered during a period from 1998 up to 2004. Observation of the F/OSS movement revealed the outstanding importance of news and discussion forums for ideological discourse. This has led to an informed choice of Web sites, which have been selected for discourse analysis. Massive ideological discourse primarily takes place on: <http://slashdot.org/>. The sites: <http://linuxtoday.com/> and <http://freshmeat.org> were used to reflect discourse which is more media-related, and technical in nature, respectively. Discourse on these news and discussion forums has been tracked and retrieved from the archives. A Perl³ script was written for automatic and pre-structured download of the archived topics. Five years of discourse from the beginning of 1998 to 2002 were tracked and downloaded. Discourse in the years 2003 and 2004 were used as 'probing' samples for evaluating whether the analysis is accurate and exhaustive. For analysis, only threads above a critical threshold of 600 to 1000 replies were used. The threshold depended on the overall intensity of discourse in the respective year. In total, 140 postings and their respective replies were analyzed. The threads have been read, and re-read several times until the cultural codes became apparent. A textual agency approach to discourse analysis was chosen (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Cooren, 2004; Hardy, 2004). This approach adopts a performative view of language, that is, one that highlights that talk and writings are media for action. The findings were regularly discussed with community members and other researchers. Related literature was used to refine, rework, and narrow the results.

FINDINGS

Two fundamental categories of cultural codes, which are dialectical in nature, have been extracted from discourse. One is directed towards the conservation of a pure ideological core and constant re-direction towards the historical roots of the movement. Hence, it excludes. Its counterpart emphasizes integration, pragmatism, and progression. Due to their dialectical character, the ideological codes of the movement provide oppositional energy that is fueling a constant stream of discourse and action. In the following, it will be demonstrated how different cultural codes are used in language for various sustaining purposes.

David against Goliath—the excluding nature of traditional codes

Traditional codes are confronting and they draw a picture of the world as given. They presume that the revolution is necessary and the community members are not to blame for any hostilities, because they are fighting the good fight. Resistance seems natural,

as the history of the movement has shown that it is necessary. David has to fight Goliath. Hence, the message is distributed in a very ambitious and evangelizing manner with an orthodox undertone. Discourse is lively, provocative, and full of flamewars.

Fighting monopoly. It has been argued, that for the success of its distinction, a protest system depends on everything it excludes (Giesler, 2003). Hence, it is vital to emphasize the distinctions from "the evil empire" and to fight "the holy war". Similar to the Napster community, the F/OSS movement opposes commodification, corporations and copyright (Giesler and Pohlmann, 2003b). The community aims at breaking the old paradigms of corporate thinking, however, in a reflective way. The power of a monopoly serves as a symbol for the exploitation of consumers by multinational corporations.

Nothing (Score:0)

by Anonymous Coward [*anonymous cowards are those who post anonymously to the Newsforum*] on Friday November 05, @06:31PM (#1558319)

"Nothing should be done about Microsoft. There is nothing illegal about being a monopoly. If Microsoft's competitors don't like their market position, they should learn to compete, not buy off the administration."

Re:Nothing (Score:1)

by XXX (626) on Friday November 05, @06:49PM (#1558623)

"No, you're right. There's nothing illegal about being a monopoly. However, there IS something illegal about using that monopoly position to squash possible competition (say, by creating hidden API calls into your operating system that only your application programmers know about, thereby putting the competition's applications at a disadvantage, to name but one practice), or to use that market dominance to try to control the market in the future.

....

Don't worry, there's LOTS of ways to illegally use a monopoly. I suspect we'll find out that Microsoft used most of them."

(posted at: slashdot.org)

Monopolies, here, are accused not because of being a monopoly, but because of the initiatives they take. This discourse reflects a very subtle variant of fighting the adversary. They are not to blame for what they are, however it is impossible for them to be converted, because they are and will ever be fundamentally different in what they do. Drawing clear distinctions for now and for the future, for members and non-members of the community is the function of this traditional code. Better beware of the enemy, as he will never change.

Beware the Gates of Hell.

XXX: Beware the Microsoft shell game

May 2, 2001, 23 :30 UTC (79 Talkback[s]) (72336 reads)

"A few hours ago, a friendly journalist tipped me that Craig Mundie of Microsoft is going to make a major speech in New York tomorrow attacking open-source software—specifically, attacking the GNU General Public License. This speech is probably intended to define Microsoft's party line on open source, and to shift the terms of the debate over it to one that Microsoft thinks it can win.

I haven't seen the speech; the friendly journalist told me it was embargoed. But I'm expecting it to be a masterpiece of

³Perl is an open-source, interpreted programming language.

FUD [=fear, uncertainty, and doubt; the term refers to any kind of disinformation as a competitive weapon]. You watch; it's going to be a studied and ingenious attempt to create fear, uncertainty, and doubt in the minds of software users and the public—and to obscure Microsoft's underlying motives by cloaking them in affected concern for the public welfare.”

(posted at: linuxtoday.com)

In this verbatim account, the adversary is symbolically articulated by the use of accusations, presumptions, and exaggerations. The opponent is blamed for everything that negatively affects the software industry. He is blamed for exerting monopolist power and makes the perfect scapegoat for the movement to prove their morale superiority. Moreover, negative scenarios are built that are affecting not only the software industry, but mankind as a whole. Discourse about licensing issues, for instance, regularly exhibits such accusations. These unjustified attributions are the ingredients of demonization. Demonization is a cultural code, which is stronger than ingroup-outgroup thinking, but serves a similar function. Without it, group identity and ideology would be in danger. Hence, demonization is a constituent element of oppositional discourse.

Thou shalt not. The revolutionary character of the movement is determined by its oppositional character, as well as by the uncompromising pursuit of emancipatory action. Preserving freedom and everything related to it is the evangelists' highest value. Violations of that core value are regularly subjected to purification. A return to a situation of original purity allows collective action to combine its ancestral components into a new solidarity. Most religions provide a means whereby cleansing may take place. So does the F/OSS movement with the help of its evangelist proponents.

XXX on Qt, the GPL, KDE, and GNOME

(Sep 5th, 12:33:18)

By XXX

“....

The design of KDE was based on a fundamental mistake: use of the Qt library, which at the time was non-free software. Despite the good intentions of the KDE developers, and despite the fact that the code of KDE itself was free software, KDE could never be part of a completely free operating system as long as it needed a non-free program to function.

..... But the KDE developers were not concerned about this problem, and recruited helpers who shared their views.

.....Also, where code was copied from other GPL-covered programs, their copyright holders need to be asked for forgiveness. To lead the way, the FSF hereby grants this forgiveness for all code that is copyright FSF.....

.....GNOME and KDE will remain two rival desktops, unless some day they can be merged in some way. Until then, the GNU Project is going to support its own team vigorously. Go get 'em, gnomes!

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(posted at : slashdot.org)

Telling people that they shall ask for forgiveness probably demonstrates best the religious undertones of that cultural code. According to this code, community members who are violating traditional rules and norms are to be subjected to a purification

ritual. Of course, such statements are discussed controversially, and also heavily flamed in online discourse. However, they are important and functional as they constantly recharge the ideological core and educate aspirant members.

Remembering. As Melucci (1996) stated, a movement always views its own action as a rebirth—as a regeneration of the present through the mythic reaffirmation of the past. Recharging the ideological core also means to constantly remind the members of the movement's original intention. As membership in a networked movement is fluctuating it necessitates regular 'updates' of its historical roots and claims.

Re:XXX needs to grow up. (Score:5)

by XXX (icebalm@[NOSPAM]bigfoot.com) on Tuesday September 05, @07:29PM (#802854)

Would you like Linus as your boss? Larry Wall as your supervisor? Brian Behendorf as your team leader? Now, would you like XXX as your co-worker?

“Yes, Yes, Yes and... Yes.

XXX is a hard liner, there is no doubt about it. What people seem to forget, however, is that it took a hard liner like XXX to get the ball rolling. XXX was necessary in the grand scheme of things, without XXX or another hard liner who stuck to his guns and just plain simply refused to give an inch we'd not have all the wonderful choices we have today, we'd all be running Windows 95 (because there'd be no reason for MS [Microsoft] to improve its OS [operating system], no competition), shelling out hundreds, thousands of dollars for unreliable proprietary software, and being locked into vendors.

People around here don't give XXX enough credit, and condemn him for doing the very thing that started this whole movement.”

(posted at: slashdot.org)

Codes of remembering often exhibit a struggle among 'religious zealots' and the progressive mass. Those internal fights between the generations of F/OSS programmers are nevertheless important for the continuity of the movement. They keep its members close to the path and help re-vitalize the myth of the movement's genesis. Remembering is not about memories of the good old days but rather emphasizes the ideological core and 'the grand scheme of things', as has been pointed out in the above quote. Hence, the movement ensures collective identity through the re-creation of shared history.

David is becoming Goliath-the integrating nature of universalistic codes

When societies develop universalistic codes, their strivings are primarily oriented towards a societal change through emancipation, progression, and reasoning. Social betterment is achieved through secularization and transcendence, but not by fighting the holy war. The relief of tensions by transforming the profane into the sacred constitutes the basic idea of universalistic coding (Giesen, 1999).

The idea of *salvation* from the evil empire by giving represents a very powerful cultural code in the community. By generously giving their products and its source code away for free, F/OSS developers create an abundance of economic, cultural, educational, and symbolic capital (Raymond, 1999), which liberates consumers from being indebted and constrained. By embracing all four kinds of capital, the F/OSS movement gained substance and power.

Hence, the free flow of those assets lies at the core of the community's liberation from the stranglehold of the market. By giving gifts the movement engages in a peaceful crusade in the name of progression and emancipation. Salvation from the 'evil empire' is the reward they are hoping for.

Educationalism. Universalistic codes foster a culture of integration. Non-members are regarded as potential members. However, they are yet to be converted and enlightened. Education is the way to enlightenment. Educationalist postings avoid accusations of the adversary. Instead, they emphasize the importance of doing the right thing—the good deed.

Cynical much? (Score:1)
by Tony (765) on Thursday May 11, @ 12:07PM (#1078502)
Last Journal: Thursday October 31, @ 10:12PM)
Urrrrmm....

Personally, I would support *any* corporation who has the balls to stand up for what is Right instead of what is Profitable. If it were MS [*Microsoft*] itself fighting the good fight, I would support them to the best of my ability. (Though with MS it would be moral support, and not financial.)

If /. [*meaning slashdot, the site in question*] does not stand up for Free Speech now, it will never get the chance again.
.....

(posted at slashdot.org)

The above posting shows how members are trying to achieve their pedagogical aims. Famous personalities are cited in order to underscore the propagated issue. Similarly, including the opponent in the line of arguments is a way to highlight the importance of this issue. Pointing out that s/he would even fight with the opponent side by side if they would "stand up for what is Right" emphasizes that s/he is fighting the good fight. Contrary to codes of purification, educationalism seeks *not* to brand people with 'deviant' behavior as sinners. In contrast to purification rituals which clearly accuse and condemn, educationalist codes are rather seeking to integrate those who are doing good.

Let The Children Come To Me And Do Not Hinder Them. The importance of integration is regularly pointed out in articles and discourse, in order to convince community members that this is the way to successfully sustain communal goals:

By XXX
Created 2000-01-13 00:00
"..... This kind of social organization, based on exclusion and secret social codes, is found in childish youth cultures and is the same "I'm part of the group; you're not part of the group" mentality that leads to race wars and genocide.
Still, isn't exclusion one of the main things the free software movement fights against? Isn't one of the strengths of our community that we accept people regardless of any considerations other than they want to be part of Linux? Eric Raymond has libertarian values, Richard Stallman has socialist values, and Linus just charms everyone. Look at the community at large: we don't even speak the same language, share the same religion, or view the world in the same way. Where else would you find cooperation among such diverse people?
Linux has embraced everyone, from the fanatical free-software enthusiasts to the greedy cats looking for some cheap way to make a buck, from the genius to the well-intentioned

beginner, from all fields of computing and with diverse interests, so why are we now becoming exclusive?"

The speech act of convincing is wrapped in soft, suggestive, and rhetoric questioning. By turning integration into a strength of the community, integrating becomes naturalized in discourse (Thompson, 1997). Social discourse surrounding the integration theme is not exclusively related to the F/OSS movement. Other, more subtle variants of integration discourse are brought up by posts which tap into more general political or societal issues, as for example the Hellmouth case in 1999. The massacre that took place in a school in Colorado had been discussed as an example for the devastating consequences of exclusion. Additionally, integration is fostered by regularly emphasizing the common goal of the movement. As everybody within the community is 'bitten by the same bug', differences are somehow evened out. However, tolerance is still demanded.

Pluralism and tolerance. Contrary to consumer activists as described by Kozinets and Handelman (2004), the open-source movement is also characterized by tolerance, at least according to their own words. Regularly, when extreme traditional codes are sent out and get flamed the discussions are entered by wise men, who balance out the oppositional stances. Those messages are sent out to the public as a propagation of tolerance and humanist principles to remind the members of the community of their strong ethic of free and self-determined human beings.

".....Followers of a severe person will develop a kind of fanaticism based on mimicry, without really understanding where their leader is coming from or giving much thought to the meaning of freedom themselves. If the goal is freedom, one can never achieve it by denying freedom to others.

I agree with a previous poster that those who really want their software to be free should place it in the public domain—they should not use GPL [*is an open-source licensing scheme*].

But they should also have the right to build on the work of others to create proprietary software, claiming ownership for a reasonable amount of time to what THEY have added to the common pool of knowledge. XXX is right that software patents are abhorrent, but so is a licensing scheme which denies freedom and respect for individual humans in the name of freedom. Extremists are unable to see the need for balance, because they are unable to see other people as individuals when fueled with fanaticism and intolerance. Laws and licensing schemes do not a great civilization make. The degree of human-ness of those who participate is more important."
(posted at : linuxtoday.com)

Tolerance and pluralism are codes that are established to balance out fanaticism. Pluralism, of course, is at war with conformism. It encourages people to think and act differently. Yet, pluralistic thoughts are also regularly used for flaming religious zealots. Flames, however, draw distinctions and exclude others. Hence, the community needs regulatory elements in discourse, which relieve the insulting notion of flames, but also the oppositional discussions that regularly occur.

Playfulness and humor. Therefore, the free and open-source community fosters a humorous and playful culture. Dry humor, irony, puns, and a mildly flippant attitude are highly valued—but an underlying seriousness and intelligence are essential in discourse.

Humor, most of the time, is directed towards pointing at inconsistencies in the arguments and actions of the movement's opponents. Yet, it helps covering up harsh accusations or disillusioning facts. Furthermore, humor helps pinpoint scapegoats, enemies, and gets to the heart of the disputed points.

News Flash from Russia! (Score:4)
by XXX (218745) on Friday October 27, @07:38AM
(#671297)

St. Petersburg (!AP)—St. Petersburg police have found the bodies of three young computer experts. The three were found in one of the their apartments, lying on the floor in front of their 486 running SuSE Linux.

“Our police experts stated that they were those who broke into Microsoft's servers and stole large amounts of code”, says a police agent via translator. “Experts were able to tell from lengthy headers, pointless libraries, and pointers to nowhere-in-particular that this must be actual code for Windows 2000' successor.”

After a preliminary exam, forensic pathologists state that their deaths were all caused by ruptured lungs.

“If I didn't know better, I would think that they would have died laughing”, said the pathologist.

One of the police experts who determined that the code was in fact Microsoft's also began laughing uncontrollably, and was rushed to a nearby hospital. He remains in serious condition and on heavy sedatives.

(posted at: slashdot.org)

Humor in community discourse derives much of its power from provocative elements that juxtapose wrong and right, the good and the bad, and strengthen the authenticity of their claims.

DISCUSSION

This research has tried to advance a theory of new online consumer movements by introducing a more positive, and active form of adversary action into consumer behavior literature—the innovating consumer. The article sought to correct the tendency in literature to implicitly view resisting consumers as being entangled in contradictory forms of consumption, engaged in constant controversy with the market, with only temporary escapism. It re-introduces the idea of consumer sovereignty by consumers engaging in online collaboration and innovation. In search of empirical evidence, an online consumer movement was investigated that succeeded in establishing an alternative, emancipatory business model.

Baudrillard (1993) and Melucci (1996) argued that contemporary consumer movements' actions are geared towards offering, or gift-giving. The above findings underscore this argument in that they show how consumers liberate themselves from the economic cost-calculation rational, and offer a different model at a cultural and symbolic level. New online movements develop forms of action aimed at the autonomous production of cultures which are based on an abundance of symbolic and material wealth. As they give away their products for free, they extricate themselves from the asymmetric power and dominance in the market. However, as ‘David is becoming an experienced warrior himself’ the movement is prone to losing its revolutionary character.

The findings show that innovative consumer movements develop a differentiated language and oppositional cultural codes in order to guarantee a constant flux of revolutionary energy. This is in line with Melucci's (1996) theory of collective action. However, oppositional codes are not exclusively directed towards the outside

adversary. There is a considerable amount of oppositional discourse also among members of the movement. Whereas theories of collective action and new social movement theory discuss internal ambivalence and conflicts as a major challenge, the F/OSS case has shown how two quasi-opposing categories of cultural codes *within* the movement help foster rejuvenation and reconsolidation of the collective effort. The F/OSS movement is characterized by an idealist-pragmatist dualism. Its success is partly based on the dialectics, which constantly forces reflection and discourse. However, it is important to notice that the two ideological lines of thought within the movement are not equivalent to the processes of exclusion and integration. Although they tend to approximate, they should at least be thought separately.

Textual discourse has revealed diverse forms of resistance. Distinguishing the good and the bad is an important prerequisite for the resisting character of a movement. Hence, one form of functional discourse revolves around remembering, advocacy, and even religious zealotry of the movement's ideological core. Its function is to reproduce what is experienced as the natural order of things (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). Another one is to produce texts with subversive meaning, incorporating provocative elements, drawing attention to inconsistencies (Hardy, 2004), or problematizing interpretations of culturally prevailing meanings (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). Emotional struggles are drained off by being displaced onto symbolic enemies (Geertz, 1973 [2000]). These codes are important for depicting the scapegoat and upholding the adverse character of the opponent.

Discourse is also directed to foster collective reflection and to fuel revolutionary energy. Codes of exclusion fulfill the tasks of securing the ideological core, preserving the historical roots, depicting the adversary, drawing distinctions to market forces, and safeguarding the morale. Hence, codes of exclusion tend to be conservative and traditional with respect to a movement's core ideology. Successful movements, however, develop counterbalancing cultural codes, which enable them to grow. Hence, codes of integration are functional for sustainability. They foster pragmatic action, provide future perspectives, and invite the mass. Albeit the importance of both, exclusion and integration, for sustainability of the movement, they also produce discursive struggles and flames. Extremely controversial issues necessitate codes that relieve those tensions in order to avoid paralysis. The cultivation of humor and playfulness helps mitigating such insurmountable conflicts.

The findings presented above give reason to assume that the F/OSS movement succeeded in establishing an innovative consumer community and has achieved a sense of independence, self-determination, and liberation from *within* the market. It is not the market itself they are opposing, but the disrupting and destructive escalations of the capitalist market system. An anti-monopoly persuasion still exists, however anti-monopoly movements are to be distinguished from anti-capitalist movements. Monopolies are representing an egocentric, profit-oriented world economy, one in which consumers are caught in the straitjacket of impersonal corporations, and have no choice. This, of course, is against capitalist *and* Marxist principles; against liberal *and* communist political attitudes. Innovative activists provide hope. They invite us to engage in discourse, collective action, and free sharing. Moreover, they provide products of high quality. A new class of consumers draws our attention to their existence. Consumers who have fun *and* take responsibility—those caring Outlaws might become the new Heroes of the market. They seem to know how to play the market game however, they set different rules. We shall see whether the F/OSS movement will “undercut the high-tech titans” (Wayner, 2000), or the high-tech titans will succeed in “The Taming of the Shrew”.

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Uncovering Rhetorical Methods of Word-of-Mouth Talk in an Online Community

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Word-of-mouth (WOM)—the “person-to-person communication between a receiver and a communicator whom the receiver perceives as noncommercial, regarding a brand, a product or a service” (Arndt, 1967: 5)—is a diverse and complex phenomenon. WOM communications can have different number of participants, with different degrees of acquaintance between them, can be achieved through several communication modes, and can follow varying interaction patterns. Yet, the development of WOM theory has adhered to an “individualistic paradigm which isolates people from their social context” (Bristor, 1990: 52). While a few studies have incorporated relational properties (e.g., Gilly, Graham, Wolfinbarger & Yale, 1998; Brown & Reingen, 1987), none have studied WOM as part of group interactions. The traditional view asserts that WOM interactions are performed by individuals who occupy either the role of WOM seeker or WOM source. Past studies have considered WOM roles as constant throughout the interaction, and with a limited potential repertoire (e.g., WOM receiver requests information and/or evaluation, and WOM source provides information and/or evaluation). Further, since WOM information is exchanged in private conversations, direct observation of the WOM dialog has traditionally been limited (Godes & Mayzlin, 2002). Therefore, researchers have treated WOM rhetorics as a black box, relying instead on consumer recall or inferences from aggregated data.

Nowadays, online communities make it possible to unobtrusively observe consumers-to-consumers conversations (Godes & Mayzlin, 2002). Leveraging this opportunity, this research proposes a more comprehensive perspective of WOM behavior as it is manifested in daily life, suggests extensions of existing theories, and provides new insights that address previously ignored issues. Overall, this project seeks to fill two main lacunae in our understanding of WOM.

First, WOM communication is essentially a conversation. Thus, this research advocates that there are WOM-bound-activities that center around a problem talk, and include rhetorics that are designed and used in terms of the activities being negotiated (e.g., describing the problem, requesting advice, providing a recommendation, and so on). Accordingly, WOM rhetorical methods are defined as the forms of advice seeking and recommendation giving practices that are enacted habitually by members of a community. This argument stresses that WOM rhetorical methods are the building blocks that people use in constructing versions of advice seeking and giving and that members of a group may have a repertoire of WOM rhetorical methods that are used in appropriate contexts. Second, this research extends the study of WOM beyond the traditional dyadic approach, and recognizes that WOM commonly occurs in a group setting. Therefore, since “WOM is a social phenomenon, properties of social relations are likely to play a critical role in WOM behavior at micro as well as macro levels of inquiry” (Brown & Reingen, 1987: 351).

In this research, we analyzed text data from the discourse of bulletin boards hosted at BabyCenter.com. This is a website for new and expectant parents. Our unit of analysis was the verbatim thread transcript, which was operationalized as a post (seed) with all of the replies. The complete text of all messages of one bulletin board was captured for a nine month period. Over the nine months, 12,162

threads were captured and reviewed, and 1,076 threads were archived for further analysis. All of the archived threads were concerned with WOM talk (661 threads) or interpersonal relationships within the community (used for contextual grounding of the data). WOM episodes were defined broadly, and could include any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual or former customers, about a product, service, idea, or company (see Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh & Gremler, 2004). The messages were read during the initial downloading to confirm that some WOM processes (e.g., providing a recommendation, asking for advice, etc.) were evident. Throughout the analysis, these messages were read and re-read several times, along with messages providing context for the WOM exchange.

The analysis followed an ethnomethodology program (Garfinkel, 1996). Analyses of WOM actions (i.e., WOM initiations, WOM responses) revealed a number of ways in which WOM seekers and WOM responders sensibly organize their messages via the use of categorization devices. In a nutshell, participants’ meaningful selection of categories determines the sense of WOM actions. Correspondingly, the invoked categories provide for different message readings due to the particular category selection and arrangement of items within the message. Tables 1 and 2 provide a summary of the major components and rhetorical methods of WOM initiations and responses.

A major contribution of this study is its ability to capture the richness and subtlety of everyday WOM interactions. Building on Miller’s work (1984), this research demonstrates that a rhetorically sound definition of WOM method must be centered not on the substance or the form of discourse per se, but on the action it serves to accomplish. Thus, although many of the WOM methods identified in conversation may seem mundane or even sometimes intuitive (e.g., self-referential advice versus other-referential advice; seeking pros and cons of a product versus seeking a phenomenological experiential narrative), it is precisely their commonplace role in the structure of everyday thought that may help us to capture the richness and subtlety of everyday conceptions of WOM behavior.

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TABLE 1
WOM Initiation Repertoire

<i>Components</i>	<i>Rhetorical Methods</i>
Seeker's Self Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categorization as individual • Categorization as part of a group
Subject Matter Formulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full diagnosis • Problem only • Solution only
Responder's Entitlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience based • Group membership based
Requested Response Framing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paradigmatic • Narrative

TABLE 2
WOM Response Repertoire

<i>Components</i>	<i>Rhetorical Methods</i>
Foundation of Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal knowledge • Formal sources • Behavior • Own (or others) experience
Advice Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paradigmatic • Narrative
Advice Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Object versus Person-oriented • Self versus Other-referential
Advice Upshot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information • Recommendation • Evaluation • Warning • Instructions • Avoidance

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Enhancing Self-consciousness: Implications for the Effectiveness of Ad Appeals

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ABSTRACT

This paper explored the influence of self-consciousness on responses to ad appeals. Study one established the positive relationship between self-monitoring and self-consciousness. Study two tested whether level of self-consciousness could influence ad responses. Findings showed that magazine articles written in the second-person, as opposed to the third-person, directed attention to the self and enhanced self-consciousness. Enhancing self-consciousness caused participants high in self-monitoring to generate more favorable ad responses, but it had no effect on those low in self-monitoring. In addition, enhancing self-consciousness significantly improved the effectiveness of image appeal ads, but had no effect on utilitarian appeal ads.

INTRODUCTION

Attention can be directed either internally to the self or externally to the environment (Duval & Wicklund, 1972). Directing attention to the self enhances self-consciousness, which in turn influences individuals' evaluations of the self (e.g., Duval & Wicklund, 1972), attributional styles (e.g., Fejfar & Hoyle, 1990; Wicklund, 1975), responses to emotion (e.g., Scheier & Carver, 1977) and product preferences (e.g., Bushman, 1993). Extending this line of research, I argue that enhancing self-consciousness also can affect responses to advertising messages.

Contextual priming in advertising literature refers to the effect the context in which an ad is presented can have on individuals' responses to the ad. For example, in a competitive ad viewing context, Yi (1990a) demonstrated that evaluation of the target product was influenced by the attributes a previous competing ad promoted. In addition, editorial contexts have also been shown to prime accessibility of different concepts and invite multiple product interpretations. In a similar vein, I propose that reading magazine articles that raise self-consciousness could influence readers' responses to the ad messages embedded in those articles.

The list of the top 25 magazines includes news magazines as well as general and special interest magazines (Adweek, 2004). The latter two magazine types feature articles on a variety of personal topics, including self-improvement, parenting, dating, cooking, fashion, and fishing. Whereas news magazine articles are written mostly in the third-person, articles in interest magazines sometimes try to enhance a sense of intimacy by using the second-person perspective. Articles written in the second-person may be more likely to enhance self-consciousness.

Researchers usually distinguish between two positively correlated sub-dimensions of self-consciousness: private and public (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975). Self-monitoring, a construct widely explored in consumer research, refers to the degree to which individuals monitor or regulate their own behaviors. Its relationship with private and public self-consciousness is examined in this paper. In addition, I hypothesize that those high in self-monitoring will favor magazine articles that direct attention to the self, and therefore will respond more positively to ads embedded in those articles. I also predict that the articles participants read will moderate the effectiveness of image and utilitarian appeal ads. The effectiveness of image appeal ads should improve when participants read a story directing attention to the self, but the effectiveness of utilitarian appeal ads should not vary as a function of story type. Two studies tested these proposed hypotheses.

CONTEXTUAL PRIMING

Cognitive psychologists have suggested that contextual priming can increase the mental accessibility of primed constructs and influence how stimuli are categorized and judged (Higgins & Chaires, 1980; Higgins & King, 1980; Wyer & Srull, 1980). The underlying assumption of this literature is that message perceivers do not search all available information to formulate a judgment but rather rely on the most accessible information. Therefore, recently activated constructs are more likely to be used as judgment inputs or processing frames than un-activated constructs. As a result, what is primed and thus more accessible in the context will exert influence on a message perceiver's judgments.

Past research has established that aspects of the self can be primed and made accessible by contextual cues (Aaker & Lee, 2001; Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991; Ybarra & Trafimow, 1998). Enhancing accessibility to certain characteristics of the self leads individuals to respond differently to information. For example, memory of information (Aaker & Lee, 2001), attributional styles (Hong et al., 2000), and risk taking behaviors (Mandel, 2003) are affected when specific aspects of the self are primed. Accessibility of self-concepts also can influence what information people take into account when formulating behavioral intentions (Ybarra & Trafimow, 1998).

Consumer research has shown that making aspects of the self more salient can affect individuals' responses to product information as well (Aaker, 1999; Aaker & Lee, 2001). Priming effects also have been explored in advertising research, but not with a focus on the accessibility of consumers' self-concepts. For example, Strahan, Spencer, and Zanna (2002) demonstrated that priming goal-related conditions increases the persuasiveness of advertising appeals that feature these goals. Schmitt (1994) showed that advertisements are more positively evaluated when primed with positive as opposed to negative terms. Similarly, in political advertising, priming certain aspects of existing attitudes can alter how citizens formulate voting decisions (Valentino, Hutchings, & White, 2002).

The advertising literature also has explored contextual priming. In a competitive ad viewing context, Yi (1990a) demonstrated that a computer with multiple functions could be interpreted either positively (the computer is versatile) or negatively (the computer is not user-friendly), and this interpretation depended on the attributes a preceding ad promoted. In addition to the typical ad-embedded context, editorial contexts have also been shown to prime the accessibility of different categories and invite multiple interpretations of a product. For example, Yi's (1990b, 1993) research revealed that reading an article about air travel safety increased participants' positive evaluations of an ambiguous product attribute (i.e., the large size of a car), whereas reading about an oil entrepreneur reduced positive evaluations of the same attribute. Yi reasoned that, in the former case, thoughts about car safety were more accessible leading to more positive product evaluations, whereas, in the latter case, the fuel economy of the car was more accessible causing more negative evaluations.

Yi's research on contextual priming illustrates that judgments and evaluations of a product can vary as a function of the context in which product information is presented. Unfortunately, Yi's investigation is limited to the priming of consumer product information and to the interpretation of ambiguous product attributes. Similar to Yi's work, the present study builds upon cognitive psychology and

suggests that editorial contexts can alter consumer responses to ad messages. However, the focus of this paper shifts from editorial articles that feature consumer information to general interest articles that can enhance self-consciousness.

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

Attention can be directed to the self or the external environment (Duval & Wicklund, 1972). Directing attention to the self enhances self-consciousness. According to Argyle (1969), self-consciousness is “the extent to which the self-system is readily activated, so that an interactor becomes concerned with the reactions of others to himself” (p. 378). Duval and Wicklund argued that consciousness can be focused on any aspect of the self and is not limited to a concern with others’ responses to oneself. Self-consciousness may direct an individual’s attention to “his conscious state, his personal history, his body, or any other personal aspects of himself” (Duval & Wicklund, p. 2).

Self-consciousness can refer to a state or trait. Fenigstein et al. (1975; see also Fenigstein, 1979) proposed that the trait of self-consciousness has two dimensions: private and public. The former concerns attention to one’s thoughts, motives, and emotions, whereas the latter pertains to awareness of others’ responses to oneself. Nasby (1989) argued that private and public self-consciousness are not polar anchors of a continuum. Indeed, past research has demonstrated that these two types of self-consciousness are positively correlated (e.g., Abe, Bagozzi, & Sadarangani, 1996).

Even though self-consciousness can be an inherited personal tendency (Fenigstein, 1979), it also can vary as a function of situational factors (Duval & Wicklund, 1972). For example, self-consciousness has been enhanced experimentally by having participants look into a small mirror (Carver & Scheier, 1978; Duval & Wicklund, 1973); listen to their own voices (Ickes, Wicklund & Ferris, 1978); write a story about themselves using first-person terms (Fenigstein & Levine, 1984); and focus their thoughts on themselves (Ellis & Holmes, 1982). This line of research does not specifically distinguish public from private self-consciousness. Given these dimensions positively correlate, Wicklund and Gollwitzer (1987) argued that distinguishing between them does not seem necessary when studying self-consciousness as a state. It is likely that directing attention toward the self will cause activation of both the private and public forms of self-consciousness.

Empirical evidence in social psychology has indicated that enhancing a self-consciousness state encourages self-examination and evaluation (e.g., Duval & Wicklund, 1972), self-attribution (e.g., Fejfar & Hoyle, 1990; Wicklund, 1975), and intense emotional experiences (Scheier & Carver, 1977). However, consumer research has been concerned mainly with the influence of the public self-consciousness trait on consumption behaviors. Studies have shown that individuals high in public self-consciousness wear more makeup (Miller & Cox, 1982), express more interests in clothing (Solomon, & Schopler, 1982), attribute more control to service managers for waiting in line (Marguis & Filiatrault, 2003), and prefer national brands to bargain brands (Bushman, 1993). This paper will extend consumer research by exploring the influence of the self-consciousness state on ad processing.

As mentioned earlier, instructing participants to think about themselves can enhance self-consciousness (Ellis & Holmes, 1982). I propose that certain magazine articles may be able to direct individuals’ attention to themselves. Past literature has shown that using the second-person perspective, as opposed to third-person, increases self-referencing and self-related thinking (Burnkrant & Unnava, 1989). Moreover, instructing participants to construct a story using first-person terms directs their attention to themselves

(Fenigstein & Levine, 1984). Davis and Brock (1975) also showed that participants placed in self-consciousness enhancing situations used more first-person pronouns when determining pronouns in articles written in ambiguous foreign languages. These findings suggest that first-person or second-person perspectives in writing can direct attention to the self. Therefore, I reason that magazine articles written in the second-person will direct readers’ attention to themselves, thereby enhancing self-consciousness.

Assuming a positive correlation between private and public self-consciousness, this paper will explore the effect of enhancing self-consciousness in general, not distinguishing between the two types. The focus of this investigation will be on comparing the effect of reading magazine articles that direct attention to the self, as opposed to articles that do not direct attention to the self, on participants’ responses to advertising messages.

SELF-MONITORING

How likely individuals are to tailor their self-presentation to accommodate situational needs can be measured by their “degree of self-monitoring” (e.g., Snyder, 1974, 1979). According to Snyder’s (1979) discussion,

[T]he prototypic high self-monitoring individual is one who, out of a concern for the situational and interpersonal appropriateness of his or her social behavior, is particularly sensitive to the expression and self-presentation of relevant others in social situations and uses these cues as guidelines for monitoring (that is, regulating and controlling) his or her own behaviors. (p. 89)

In contrast, “the prototypic low self-monitoring individual is not so vigilant to social information about situational appropriateness self-presentation” (p. 89). Snyder developed a self-monitoring scale to measure individual differences on this construct (e.g., Snyder, 1974, 1979). Different from public and private self-consciousness, which are positively correlated, high self-monitoring and low self-monitoring polar anchors of a continuum.

Since consumption to a certain extent is related to self-presentation, self-monitoring has been well explored in consumer literature. Past research has found that high self-monitoring individuals favor products advertised with an emphasis on user image (Snyder & DeBono, 1985). This seems to indicate that those high in self-monitoring direct more of their attention to the self, in general, and self-image, in particular, compared with those low in self-monitoring. Therefore, I hypothesize that individuals higher in self-monitoring will also be higher in self-consciousness, both private and public forms.

Hypothesis 1: Individuals’ self-monitoring is positively correlated with their public and private self-consciousness.

Aaker (1999) demonstrated that situationally primed self-concepts are more important to high self-monitoring decision makers than chronically accessible self-concepts, which are, conversely, more important to low self-monitoring decision makers. She concluded that high self-monitors are more susceptible to the influence of situational factors. Therefore, it is argued that people high in self-monitoring will be more affected by stories containing self-related cues. Specifically, they will be more favorable of magazine articles written in the second-person, which direct attention to the self. This preference will carry over to improve their responses to the ads and brands embedded within these articles. As a result, they will rate the ads as more diagnostic and likable, rate

the brands as more favorable, and express greater purchase intention. On the contrary, individuals low in self-monitoring will not respond differently to magazine articles that direct attention to the self versus others.

Hypothesis 2: When reading magazine articles that direct attention to the self versus others, those high in self-monitoring will rate ads as more diagnostic (2a) and likable (2b), evaluate brands as more favorable (2c), and report higher levels of purchase intention (2d). In contrast, those low in self-monitoring will not respond differently on these measures when reading articles that direct attention to the self versus others.

IMAGE VS. UTILITARIAN APPEALS

The two most widely used types of advertising appeals are image and utilitarian appeals (Johar & Sirgy, 1991; Snyder & DeBono, 1985). The image appeal, also known as the value-expressive or symbolic appeal, "holds a creative objective to create an image of the generalized user of the advertised product (or brand)" (Johar & Sirgy, 1991, p. 23). In contrast, the utilitarian appeal is "a creative strategy that highlights the functional features of the product (or brand)" (Johar & Sirgy, 1991, p. 23). Utilitarian appeal ads focus on product attributes or performance. This type of appeal is also referred to as the functional appeal (Johar & Sirgy, 1991) or the quality-oriented appeal (Snyder & DeBono, 1985).

Snyder and DeBono (1985) found that high self-monitoring individuals are influenced more by image advertising appeals, whereas low self-monitors are influenced more by utilitarian appeals. When image appeals are used, high self-monitoring individuals judge the advertised product to be of better quality (DeBono & Snyer, 1989), rate it as more personally relevant (DeBono & Packer, 1991), and are willing to pay more for the product (Snyder & DeBono, 1985). In contrast, low self-monitoring individuals judge the product to be of better quality (DeBono & Snyer, 1989), rate it as more personally relevant (DeBono & Packer, 1991), and show greater willingness to pay (Snyder & DeBono, 1985) when utilitarian appeals are employed.

As discussed earlier, people high in self-monitoring may evaluate image appeals more favorably because they pay more attention to themselves and their self-images. In line with this argument, I hypothesize that directing attention to the self will cause individuals to perceive the image of the product users as relevant to their judgments. Consequently, the effectiveness of image appeal ads will increase, resulting in more favorable attitudes toward the ad and the brand, which will further lead to greater purchase intentions. In contrast, directing attention to the self will not influence the effectiveness of utilitarian appeal ads.

Hypothesis 3: When reading magazine articles that direct attention to the self versus others, participants exposed to image appeal ads will rate ads as more diagnostic (3a) and likable (3b), evaluate brands as more favorable (3c), and report higher levels of purchase intention (3d). In contrast, participants exposed to utilitarian appeal ads will not respond differently on these measures when reading articles that direct attention to the self versus others.

Study one tests hypothesis 1, and study two tests hypotheses 2 and 3.

STUDY ONE

Methods

Participants (N=97) were recruited from a university in a metropolitan area. They were told a professor in the Psychology department was interested in understanding personality traits in college students. They completed a self-administered survey for which they rated themselves using a 7-point scale on a long list of personality trait measures, including a self-consciousness scale (Fenigstein et al., 1975) and a self-monitoring scale (Snyder, 1974).

Results

Means for public self-consciousness, private self-consciousness, and self-monitoring were 5.60 (SD=0.99), 5.43 (SD=0.85), and 4.34 (SD=0.61), respectively. The difference between participants' ratings of public and private self-consciousness was not significant, $t(96)=1.69$, $p=.09$, indicating that participants were paying attention to their internal selves as well as others' responses to their self-presentation. Also, consistent with past research, public and private self-consciousness were positively correlated (Pearson's $r(95)=.42$, $p<.01$). Most importantly, ratings of self-monitoring were positively correlated with ratings of private self-consciousness (Pearson's $r=.23$, $p<.01$) and public self-consciousness (Pearson's $r=.26$, $p<.01$). Thus, hypothesis 1 was supported.

STUDY TWO

Methods

Participants

Participants (N=131) were recruited from the campus of a metropolitan area university and were paid for their participation. Fifty-two percent were male.

Design

This experiment was a 2 x 2 x 2 between-subjects factorial design. The factors were: article type (self-directed vs. non-self-directed), ad appeal (image vs. utilitarian), and self-monitoring (high vs. low).

Materials

Magazines articles. Magazine articles served as the contextual priming material for directing attention and enhancing self-consciousness. The article directing attention to the self was written in the second-person perspective, whereas the article that did not direct attention to the self used the third-person. Participants were told that the magazine was going to be launched in the area and targeted at college students. The featured article was about college life.

Ad stimuli. Professional copy writers and designers at advertising agencies wrote the ad messages used in this experiment. The featured products were shoes. The utilitarian appeal ad featured product attribute information that was selected based on a pretest in which 20 participants listed the attributes they considered most important when purchasing shoes. The image appeal ad described product users but did not address specific product attributes.

Procedures

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four manipulated conditions. To discourage participants from guessing the true aim of the study, at the beginning of the experiment the research coordinator falsely informed them that they would be participating in three independent studies. The first study was a survey of college students' values and traits. The second study was designed to understand how people respond to layout and formats in magazine articles. The third study examined the effects of different ad layouts

on reader responses. Participants first rated themselves on a number of scales including the self-monitoring scale (Snyder, 1974) and other filler scales. Next, participants read a magazine article and rated how comprehensible the article was and how much they liked the format. They then completed the private and public subscales of the self-consciousness scale (Fenigstein et al., 1975). Finally, they read the target ad, rated its diagnosticity, and reported their attitudes toward the ad and the featured product.

Independent Variables

Article type. Following presentation of the magazine articles, the private and public self-consciousness subscales (Fenigstein et al., 1975) were administered as a manipulation check. Responses to the subscale items were averaged together. As expected, articles written in the second-person perspective generated significantly higher self-consciousness ratings, $F(1, 129)=6.90, p<.01, M_{\text{self}}=5.81, SD=0.83, M_{\text{non-self}}=5.45, SD=0.72$.

Ad appeal. Responses to four statements measured on 7-point Likert-type scales were used for the manipulation check. The statements included: "The ad features product attributes," "The ad focuses on product functions," "The ad describes product users," and "The ad features a profile of consumers." The last two items were reverse scored, and then all items were averaged. The manipulation was successful, as ratings for utilitarian appeals were significantly higher than ratings for image appeals, $F(1, 129)=33.32, p<.01, M_{\text{utilitarian}}=4.50, SD=0.67, M_{\text{image}}=3.67, SD=0.95$.

Self-monitoring. Using a 7-point Likert scale, participants completed Snyder's (1974) self-monitoring scale (Cronbach's $\alpha=.69$). Participants were categorized as high or low self-monitoring based on a median split of their ratings. The two groups' average ratings differed significantly, $F(1, 129)=223.45, p<.01, M_{\text{high}}=4.72, SD=0.37, M_{\text{low}}=3.77, SD=0.34$.

Dependent Variables

Ad diagnosticity. A 3-item, 7-point Likert scale was adopted from Chang (2003) to measure ad diagnosticity. The items were: "The ad made me confident in making judgments of the product," "The ad made me able to evaluate the advertised product," and "The ad made me confident to make a purchase decision." Cronbach's α for the scale was .89, indicating good internal reliability.

Ad attitudes. Attitudes toward the ads were measured using a 5-item, 7-point Likert scale adopted from MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch (1986) and Madden, Allen, and Twible (1988). The items were "interesting," "good," "likable," "favorable," and "pleasant." The scale had high internal reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha=.89$).

Brand attitudes. Brand attitudes were measured with a 5-item, 7-point Likert scale adopted from Mitchell and Olson (1981) and Holbrook and Batra (1987). The items were "good," "likable," "pleasant," "positive," and "high quality." Cronbach's α was .92, indicating good reliability.

Purchase intentions. A semantic differential scale was adopted from Zhang (1996) to measure purchase intentions. It contained three items: "improbable-probable," "unlikely-likely," and "impossible-possible." Reliability for this scale was high (Cronbach's $\alpha=.93$).

Results

Between-subjects analyses of variance followed by simple effects tests were conducted on the four dependent variables to test hypotheses 2 and 3. As expected, the interaction between self-monitoring and article type on ad diagnosticity was significant, $F(1, 123)=4.79, p=.03$. For participants high in self-monitoring, the influence of article type was marginally significant, $F(1, 69)=3.57, p=.06$, with means in the expected direction, $M_{\text{self}}=3.58, SD=1.26; M_{\text{non-self}}=3.07, SD=1.48$. However, as expected, for participants low in self-monitoring, the influence of article type was not signifi-

cant, $F(1, 54)=1.56, p=.22, M_{\text{self}}=3.10, SD=1.48; M_{\text{non-self}}=3.46, SD=1.24$. Therefore, hypothesis 2a was moderately supported.

There was also a significant interaction between self-monitoring and article type on ad attitudes, $F(1, 123)=5.05, p=.03$. For participants high in self-monitoring, reading self-directed magazine articles resulted in more favorable attitudes toward the ad, $F(1, 69)=7.61, p=.01, M_{\text{self}}=4.44, SD=1.14; M_{\text{non-self}}=3.71, SD=1.20$. As expected, the influence of article type was not significant for participants low in self-monitoring, $F(1, 54)=.28, p=.61, M_{\text{self}}=4.17, SD=1.17; M_{\text{non-self}}=4.27, SD=1.02$. Therefore, hypothesis 2b was fully supported.

The self-monitoring by article type interaction was also significant for brand attitudes, $F(1, 123)=5.74, p=.02$. For participants high in self-monitoring, reading self-directed magazines articles led to more favorable brand attitudes, $F(1, 69)=4.24, p=.04, M_{\text{self}}=4.30, SD=1.30; M_{\text{non-self}}=3.74, SD=1.28$. Consistent with expectations, for participants low in self-monitoring, the influence of article type was not significant, $F(1, 54)=1.91, p=.17, M_{\text{self}}=4.06, SD=1.19; M_{\text{non-self}}=4.41, SD=1.03$. Therefore, hypothesis 2c was fully supported.

For the analysis of purchase intentions, the interaction between self-monitoring and article type only approached significance, $F(1, 123)=3.38, p=.07$. The influence of article type was neither significant for participants high in self-monitoring, $F(1, 69)=2.33, p=.13, M_{\text{self}}=2.59, SD=1.36; M_{\text{non-self}}=2.12, SD=1.34$, nor for participants low in self-monitoring, $F(1, 54)=1.22, p=.27, M_{\text{self}}=2.37, SD=1.46; M_{\text{non-self}}=2.83, SD=1.07$. Hypothesis 2d, therefore, was not supported.

Results showed a significant interaction between ad appeal and article type on ad diagnosticity, $F(1, 123)=4.44, p=.04$. Self-directed articles led to higher diagnosticity ratings for image appeal ads, $F(1, 63)=4.78, p=.03, M_{\text{self}}=3.18, SD=1.26; M_{\text{non-self}}=2.54, SD=1.09$. Consistent with expectations, the influence of article type was not significant for utilitarian appeal ads, $F(1, 62)=1.44, p=.23, M_{\text{self}}=3.56, SD=1.47; M_{\text{non-self}}=3.96, SD=1.28$. Therefore, hypothesis 3a was fully supported.

The interaction between ad appeal and article type on ad attitudes was not significant, $F(1, 123)=1.56, p=.22$. Given that a hypothesis regarding lower level differences was established a priori, lower level comparisons were justified (Winer, Brown, & Michels, 1991). The results of simple effects tests were consistent with expectations. For image appeal ads, self-directed articles led to significantly more favorable attitude ratings, $F(1, 63)=5.18, p=.03, M_{\text{self}}=4.26, SD=1.18; M_{\text{non-self}}=3.61, SD=1.12$. For utilitarian appeal ads, the effect of article type was not significant, $F(1, 62)=.03, p=.87, M_{\text{self}}=4.39, SD=1.14; M_{\text{non-self}}=4.32, SD=1.08$. Hypothesis 3b, therefore, was supported only by the results of simple effects tests.

Contrary to expectations, the interaction between ad appeal and article type on brand attitudes was not significant, $F(1, 123)=.58, p=.45$. Simple effects tests showed no significant influence of article type for image appeal ads, $F(1, 63)=1.32, p=.25, M_{\text{self}}=4.03, SD=1.24; M_{\text{non-self}}=3.69, SD=1.14$, or for utilitarian appeal ads, $F(1, 62)=.04, p=.84, M_{\text{self}}=4.36, SD=1.26; M_{\text{non-self}}=4.40, SD=1.19$. Therefore, hypothesis 3c was not supported.

Finally, there was a significant interaction between ad appeal and article type on purchase intentions, $F(1, 123)=10.86, p=.01$. For image appeal ads, self-directed articles led to greater purchase intentions, $F(1, 69)=6.64, p=.01, M_{\text{self}}=2.77, SD=1.47; M_{\text{non-self}}=1.97, SD=.98$. Whereas, for utilitarian appeal ads, self-directed articles generated lower purchase intentions, $F(1, 54)=4.51, p=.04, M_{\text{self}}=2.23, SD=1.29; M_{\text{non-self}}=2.92, SD=1.35$. Therefore, the results for image appeal ads were consistent with hypothesis 3d.

Discussion

The relationship between self-monitoring and responses to ad appeals has been widely explored in the consumer literature (e.g., DeBono & Packer, 1991; DeBono & Snyder, 1989; Snyder & DeBono, 1985). However, the possible influence of self-consciousness on the effectiveness of different ad appeals has never drawn research attention. Findings reported in this paper suggest that self-consciousness moderates the effectiveness of image and utilitarian appeals, the two most common advertising appeals. Image appeal ads were more favorably perceived when self-consciousness was enhanced, paralleling the research on high self-monitoring. However, contrary to research findings on low self-monitoring, utilitarian appeal ads were not preferred more when self-consciousness was not enhanced. Past research found that less than six percent of the variance in each of the self-consciousness subscales is shared with variance in self-monitoring (Turner, Scheier, Carver, & Ickes, 1978), indicating that self-consciousness deserves its own research attention. Future research can explore how self-consciousness interacts with other advertising appeals.

As previously reviewed, more research attention in the consumer literature has focused on individual differences in self-consciousness as a stable personality trait. In this paper self-consciousness was explored as a state, which was manipulated by reading magazine articles. However, Aaker (1999) pointed out that individuals' traits can moderate the influence of situational primes. It seems likely that individuals who are more self-reflective may be more susceptible to a self-consciousness manipulation than less self-reflective individuals. Future studies can explore the interaction of situation-primed self-attention and existing difference in attention orientation on individuals' responses to advertising messages or product information.

Study two focused on a state of general self-consciousness, not specifically distinguishing between private and public self-consciousness. In this experiment self-consciousness was enhanced by reading a magazine article, which generally provides a personal context. However, public self-consciousness is more likely triggered by the context of the social environment (Buss, 1980). Therefore, public self-consciousness may have been less enhanced in this experiment. Given that private and public self-consciousness are positively correlated, however, it is likely that activating one type of self-consciousness may automatically increase activation of the other type. As the definition suggests, when public self-consciousness increases, an individual pays more attention to others' responses to the self. Attending to others' responses to the self may cause attention to be directed toward one's own view of the self as well, thereby enhancing private self-consciousness. Yet, the same spreading activation effect may not occur in the other direction. Future research can explore this possible difference. In addition, how variance in consumers' responses to advertising is explained by each type of self-consciousness and how important it is to distinguish these two constructs in advertising research should be further explored.

This study extended contextual priming literature by showing that magazine articles can direct attention to the self and enhance the effectiveness of image appeals. This finding has important implications for practitioners. For instance, fashion products marketed with a focus on boosting the consumer's image could purchase more space in magazines featuring articles that direct attention to the self. There are many ways to direct consumers' attention to themselves; featuring stories in second-person perspectives is simply one of them. A future direction for research in this area could be to establish the specific characteristics of magazines or articles that are capable of enhancing self-consciousness in consumers and thereby influencing their product judgments.

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The Role of Self-Affirmation in Consumer Persuasion

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumers are often motivated to resist changing. Resistance to persuasion is influenced by many individual and situational factors related to both the ability and the motivation of consumers. For example, although much is known about characteristics of attitudes that make them resistant to change (e.g., Petty and Krosnick 1995), less is known about factors that influence individuals' motivation to resist persuasion (e.g., Briñol, Rucker, Tormala and Petty 2004; Wheeler, Briñol and Hermann 2004).

Contemporary research on self-affirmation processes has provided one perspective to understand how consumers' attitude-defensive repertoires can be undermined. In general, self-affirmation involves the reinforcement of the self on an important personal aspect, such as a person's values (e.g., honesty, Steele 1988). Because our attitudes are part of the self, a persuasive message can be a potential threat against the self. By expressing a personally important value, the threat may be diminished, reducing the need to resist the new information and, as a consequence, increasing attitude change by reducing resistance (e.g., Cohen, Aronson and Steele 2000).

Consistent with this logic, recent research has found evidence for self-affirmation inducing an "open minded" mind set in which people are less resistant to persuasion when they are self-affirmed (e.g., Sherman, Nelson and Steele, 2000; Cohen et al. 2000, Reed and Aspinwall 1998, Steele and Liu 1983). Although the dominant explanation for this phenomenon is that affirming oneself decreases the need to defend one's attitudes, leading to increased vulnerability to persuasion, alternative mechanisms are possible. For example, self-affirmation could increase persuasion by producing positive mood or by trivializing the importance of the attitude object as a source of personal identity (see, e.g., Correll, Spencer and Zanna 2004).

The present research suggests a new explanation based on the idea that self-affirmation lead to confidence, and this confidence can increase or decrease persuasion depending on the circumstances. Specifically, we predict that self-affirmation, and the confidence it induces, can reduce information-processing activity when people are affirmed prior to a message, but it can increase the perceived validity of cognitive responses to a message when people are affirmed after message-exposure.

Experiment 1

Sixty-eight university undergraduates participated in partial fulfillment of a course requirement. Participants were randomly assigned to the self-affirmation condition (in which they had to write about previous episodes in which they behaved consistent with an important personal value, Zuwerink and O'Brien 2004) or to a control group. Following this induction, participants received a strong or weak version of an advertisement promoting a new cell phone. Argument quality was varied to examine the extent of information processing (see Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). After reading the ad, participants listed their thoughts and reported their attitudes toward the product.

We predicted and found a significant interaction between self-affirmation and argument strength revealing that self-affirmation

influenced advertising effectiveness by affecting the amount of thought devoted to the ad. Specifically, self-affirmation reduced message processing. As a result, self-affirmation increased consumer attitude change only when the arguments contained in the ad were weak. In contrast, self-affirmation reduced persuasion for compelling arguments. Thus, self-affirmation induced prior to the ad can increase or decrease persuasion depending on the quality of the arguments contained in the ad.

Experiment 2 addresses what happens when self-affirmation is induced after a message has already been processed. In this case, self-affirmation could not affect how much processing was done, but we expected it to influence confidence in the thoughts produced. If this occurs, self-affirmation should produce the opposite interaction with argument quality as was found in Study 1.

Experiment 2

Seventy-one undergraduate students were first exposed to a persuasive message in favor of a new program of magnetic cards containing either strong or weak arguments. Argument quality was varied in this study to manipulate the dominant thought in which participants would have high or low confidence (see Petty, Briñol and Tormala 2002). After participants read the message and wrote their thoughts about the proposal, they were asked to write about a personally important value (self-affirmation condition) or not (control group). Following the self-affirmation manipulation, all participants reported their attitudes toward the message proposal.

We expected and found self-affirmation to interact with argument strength in predicting participant's attitudes. Specifically, when the arguments elicited mostly favorable thoughts toward the proposal (strong message condition), self-affirmed participants reported more positive attitudes than control individuals. In contrast, when participants generated mostly negative thoughts (weak message condition), there was more resistance in the self-affirmation than in the control group. Thus, when self-affirmation follows rather than precedes the message, it influences consumer persuasion by affecting the confidence that people have in the validity of their thoughts.

Discussion

The present research provided initial evidence in support of a new explanation for the persuasive effect of self-affirmation based on the idea that self-affirmation leads to confidence. Confidence can play different roles in consumer persuasion, affecting attitude change by different psychological mechanisms. In study 1, when people were self-affirmed before receiving an ad, self-affirmation influenced advertising effectiveness by affecting the amount of information processing consistent with prior work inducing confidence prior to a message (e.g., Tiedens and Linton 2001). Alternatively, in study 2, when people were self-affirmed after processing the message, self-affirmation affected persuasion by influencing thought-confidence, consistent with prior work inducing confidence after a message (e.g., Briñol, Petty and Tormala 2004; Petty et al. 2002; see also, Briñol, Petty and Falces 2002).

While this research offers compelling initial support for our predictions, there are a number of conceptual issues that need to be

addressed with future research. First, the timing of the self-affirmation manipulation should be manipulated within the same experiment and using the same arguments. Furthermore, future research should collect more process data demonstrating the link between self-affirmation and confidence. Third, it would be desirable to replicate the obtained findings with different manipulations of self-affirmation and other more comparable, control groups. Finally, since the present research has used relatively personally irrelevant messages, it would be interesting to explore the postulated mechanisms for more threatening, personally relevant messages (Correll et al. 2004; Sherman et al. 2000).

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Mothers, Food, Love and Career—The Four Major Guilt Groups? The Differential Effects of Guilt Appeals

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Marketers have become increasingly interested in the use of emotions in advertising appeals, particularly negative emotions. Several of the negative emotions that are of interest include fear, guilt, embarrassment, regret, remorse, annoyance, and irritation (Burke and Edell 1983). From a marketing perspective, it is important to understand how the use of these different negative emotions affects consumers' reactions to persuasion attempts. Guilt is a complex emotion, with correspondingly complex effects on persuasion. For example, in response to guilt appeals, Englis (1990) found that consumers experienced high levels of anger, disdain, disgust and embarrassment. Coulter and Pinto (1995) found that while guilt appeals may be successful at inducing behavioral compliance, they also produce unintended reactions such as anger that can ultimately negatively impact perceptions of the advertiser. In this paper we examine several aspects of guilt and determine the effects of different types of guilt appeals on attitudes and behavior.

Guilt: Definition and Characteristics

Guilt can be seen as a combination of negative emotions such as regret, remorse and self-blame that are usually experienced upon either contemplating or actually committing a transgression (Lascu 1991). Generally that takes the form of some sort of comparison between one's actual and one's optimal behavior according to a socially-defined standard, rule or moral imperative (Lewis 1993, Ortony et al. 1988, Giner-Sorolla 2001). Guilt can be broken down into three distinct types: existential, anticipatory, and reactive. Each of these types is currently employed by advertisers (Huhmann and Brotherton 1997, Cotte et al. in press, Coulter et al. 1999). *Existential* guilt is most often found in social marketing advertisements which compare one's own well-being to the well-being of others (Izard 1977) and encourage action to bring the two closer together. *Anticipatory* guilt is stimulated when an individual contemplates the *potential future* violation of some internalized standard of acceptable behavior, whereas *reactive guilt* occurs in response to a *past, overt* act of having violated those standards (Coulter et al. 1999, Cotte et al. in press).

Anticipatory and reactive guilt in particular are of interest as a recent content analysis by Huhmann and Brotherton (1997) showed them to be common appeals in popular print advertising. Of more than 2,000 advertisements processed, the content analysis found that 5.8% employed guilt appeals, of which 61.9% could be classified as anticipatory and 29.4% as reactive. In addition, research indicates that there is a differential effect in then intensity with which these two types of guilt are experienced. Giner-Sorolla (2001) found that, in the case of a short-term benefit/delayed-cost activity (e.g. going off one's diet for an immediate sugar fix), anticipatory guilt is felt less intensely and less negatively than the reactive guilt that is experienced after actually engaging in the guilt-inducing behavior. The opportunity to avoid the behavior that would cause reactive guilt also increases feelings of self-efficacy and self-control in the anticipatory condition. In contrast, in the reactive condition, having one's failure to resist temptation pointed out increases feelings of helplessness and worthlessness and overall contributes to negative affect.

Implications for Persuasion

Although guilt appeals may influence behavior, they may also elicit negative emotions. Anticipatory guilt could be construed as the most positive of the three types, since it focuses on the future and the hopeful potential of avoiding a negative emotion through some individual effort or exercise of self-control. Reactive guilt, on the other hand, can be construed as more negative, since it focuses on past transgressions and feelings of guilt in order to spur action towards avoiding that emotion again. These differences in the nature of the emotion elicited by anticipatory and reactive appeals has several implications for the persuasiveness of these appeals. The first of these concerns how consumers perceive the ad itself as well as the brand that is depicted in the ad. Since prior research has demonstrated that emotional responses to ads affects attitude towards the ad (A_{ad}) and attitude towards the brand (A_{br}) (Batra and Ray 1986, Edell and Burke 1987, MacKenzie and Lutz 1989), we would expect that consumers would respond more positively when ads used anticipatory appeals as compared to reactive appeals.

Additionally, research in the area of information processing indicates that affect plays a role in determining whether a message is processed heuristically or systematically (Schwarz and Clore 1996). In particular, the "feelings-as-information" view holds that our affective response to a target is a useful source of information when evaluating the target, and whether we experience positive or negative emotions will determine our information processing strategy. In general, individuals in a sad mood or experiencing negative emotions are both more willing to invest cognitive effort than happy individuals, as well as more likely to process information at a lower level of abstraction. This is because the negative affect cues us to a potential discrepancy between our current and our desired situation (or a "better watch out" message), and stimulates a desire for accuracy, which is in turn manifested in the systematic processing of the message (Schwarz and Clore 1996). As such, we would expect that reactive advertising appeals would elicit more systematic processing of the content of the ad than anticipatory appeals.

In order to test these propositions we conducted three experimental studies. The first examined the differential effects of anticipatory and reactive advertising appeals on various positive and negative emotions. The second study examines differences in the types of processing that consumers engage in when exposed to anticipatory and reactive advertising appeals. The third study examined differences in experienced emotions and depth of processing according to sex and need for cognition.

All the studies examined the implications that these differential effects on emotions and processing have on consumers' attitudes and behavior intentions. Our results provide evidence that anticipatory and reactive guilt appeals differ in several ways that have important implications for these types of persuasive attempts.

When Choosing Is Not Deciding: The Effect of Perceived Responsibility on Choice Outcome Satisfaction

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Prior research has demonstrated that when presented with all desirable options consumers are more satisfied with self-chosen alternatives than with alternatives that have been externally dictated, but that the opposite is true when the options are all undesirable. This reversal in satisfaction has been explained through an affective account: Choosers' greater engagement in the decision task causes their affective experience with the choice outcome to be more extreme than that of non-choosers (Botti and Iyengar 2004). In the present research we hypothesize that the amplification effect of choice on satisfaction is moderated by choosers' ability to differentiate among the choice options: If options are less, as compared to more differentiated decision makers would be just as happy with an externally-made as with a self-chosen option.

This prediction is based on a potential confound between the effect of choice and that of responsibility in prior findings. Research has shown that when people feel responsible for an outcome the affective experience with that outcome is magnified by either self-credit for a pleasant or self-blame for an unpleasant experience (Gilovich, Medvec, and Chen 1995; Kahneman and Tversky 1982; Landman 1987; Ritov and Baron 1992; Weiner 1981). Hence, we hypothesize that if perception of responsibility were weakened, choosers would have less of a basis on which to congratulate or blame themselves, resulting in a smaller difference between their satisfaction and that of non-choosers.

Building on prior research suggesting that choice commitment is lower in the absence of a dominating option (Dhar 1997; Shafir, Simonson and Tversky 1993), we manipulate personal responsibility by varying the extent to which decision makers can distinguish among the options and identify the more preferred one: When non-diagnostic information prevents them from identifying each option's relative quality, choosing contributes less to the ultimate experience than when differences among the alternatives are readily appreciated, influencing choosers' sense of responsibility for the outcome and reducing the gap between choosers and non-choosers' satisfaction. However, consistent with prior research showing that preference for choosing is not sensitive to the same factors that influence satisfaction (Botti and Iyengar 2004) we hypothesize that the desire to choose will not vary as a function of option differentiability.

Study 1 and 2 used a 2 (choice condition: choice vs. no-choice) x 2 (option differentiability: high vs. low) between-subjects factorial design to test these hypotheses in, respectively, a positively-valenced (coffee) and negatively-valenced (foul odors) context. High-, relative to low-differentiability participants were provided with descriptions that were more diagnostic of the relative quality of the options so that they could more easily identify the most desirable—or least undesirable—one. Choice participants selected an option, whereas no-choice participants were assigned an option at random by the experimenter. In reality, a yoked design was used so to ensure that non-choosers were assigned the same selection of their counterpart choosers; in addition, in spite of the different descriptions, all participants drank the same blend and smelled the same odor. As predicted, in the high-differentiability condition choosers were more satisfied with a pleasant and more dissatisfied with an unpleasant outcome than non-choosers, while in the low-

differentiability condition there was no difference in satisfaction. Choosers also experienced greater responsibility and credited or blamed themselves more in the high- than in the low-differentiability condition, while levels of responsibility, self-credit, and self-blame did not vary across the two no-choice conditions. Also as expected, choosers liked their choice condition better and were also less willing to switch to the other choice condition than non-choosers, suggesting that preference for choice is not sensitive to the level of differentiability of the options.

Study 3 tested for the alternative account that choosers in the low-differentiability condition in reality selected an option at random, which would explain the lack of difference in satisfaction between low-differentiability choosers and non-choosers obtained in the previous two studies. In this 2 (choice condition: choice vs. no-choice) x 2 (option differentiability: random vs. low) study involving positively-valenced options (chocolate), choosers and non-choosers in the low- differentiability choice condition were given the usual non-diagnostic information, while those in the random choice condition were given no information at all. We predicted a difference in satisfaction in the random, but not in the low-differentiability condition, a result that would confirm that these two conditions are not equivalent. In addition, we anticipated that random choosers would be less satisfied than random non-choosers. This prediction is based on prior research suggesting that choosers' responses are usually a mix of self-credit and self-blame (Brenner, Rottenstreich, and Sood 1999; Carmon, Wertenbroch, and Zeelenberg 2003; Hsee and Leclerc 1998; Kahneman and Tversky 1982; Luce 1998). Hence, we expected random choosers to not only grant themselves little credit for a positive outcome, given the lack of information on which they could base a choice, but to also harbor misgivings that however tasty their chosen chocolate, they may have inadvertently rejected a superior alternative. As a result, random choosers' self-blame may overcome self-credit, lowering their satisfaction with the chosen option relative to non-choosers. Confirming these predictions, a difference in satisfaction was observed between choosers and non-choosers in the random condition, with choosers being less satisfied with the tasted chocolate than non-choosers, but not in the low-differentiability condition. In addition, the ratio of self-blame to self-credit was found to fully mediate satisfaction with the chocolate.

As opportunities for personal choosing have been growing in modern societies, marketers seem to share with consumers the belief that choice necessarily leads to greater happiness (Schwartz 2004). However, if meaningful differences among the choice options are difficult to discern because of competitive parity in mature markets, heightened product complexity, or consumers' inability to research the alternatives, the positive effect of choice on satisfaction is nullified.

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Effect of Response Time on Perceptions of Bargaining Outcomes

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Although consumers in the U. S. are predominantly exposed to fixed, non-negotiable prices, many consumer purchases including those that require substantial resources such as buying a house or an automobile involve negotiations. Despite the significance of these purchase decisions, consumer research on bargaining is relatively sparse (cf. Buchan, Croson, and Johnson 2004; Corfman and Lehmann 1993). Additionally, the few studies in the marketing literature have studied bargaining in the context of industrial purchases (e.g., Srivastava, Chakravarti, and Rapoport 2000). There is thus a need for research on bargaining from a consumer perspective.

In bargaining with incomplete information, bargainers may use features of the bargaining process as referents to infer their own and/or opponents' payoffs in at least two ways based on opponents' active or passive behavior. Bargainers may infer some information about payoffs when opponents actively respond to an existing offer positively (i.e., accept) or negatively (i.e., reject and make a counteroffer). Another important cue that may emerge from within the bargaining context, and the focus of this research, is opponent's passive behavior or the time taken by an opponent to respond to an existing offer (positively or negatively). While a few studies have examined bargainers' inferences based on active behavior (e.g., Srivastava 2001), relatively little research has focused on how opponents' passive behavior affects perceptions of bargaining outcomes.

Broadly, this research takes a consumer-focused approach to examine the effect of time taken by an opponent to respond to an offer on perceptions of bargaining outcomes, independent of actual outcomes. The focus is to identify behavioral regularities and thereby highlight the malleability of bargaining perceptions and behavior. Identification of systematic biases and their underlying reasons represent the first step towards helping consumers make wiser decisions by making them more vigilant of tactics that may be used by some to manage perceptions and behavior. It is in this spirit that this research examines the extent to which bargaining outcomes are judged comparatively as they are evaluated relative to the inferences about a bargaining opponent based on the time taken to respond to an offer.

This research argues that perceptions of bargaining outcomes may be influenced by cues that emerge from the bargaining environment, such as the time taken by an opponent to respond to an offer. Based on the idea that individuals evaluate outcomes by comparing their outcomes with those of people around them, particularly when objective referents are unavailable (Festinger 1954), the time taken by an opponent to respond to an offer may be used to infer the quality of his/her outcome, which in turn, is used in evaluating one's own bargaining outcomes. In examining the conditions under which cues that emerge from the bargaining context affect inferences about opponents and thereby perceptions of one's own bargaining outcomes, this article traces the mediating role of social comparison judgments in how cues, that are not necessarily social in nature, affect perceptions of bargaining outcomes.

Study 1 tests the hypotheses that bargainers will be less satisfied with their outcomes when their offer is accepted immediately than after a delay. We manipulate the response time using a three factor (no delay, some delay, and negotiated delay) between-

subjects design. Results of study 1 demonstrates that experiencing delay in real time, bargaining outcomes were perceived to be better when an offer was accepted after a delay than when it was accepted immediately, even though the actual outcomes were monetarily equivalent. Also, the intensity of "I could have done better" thoughts mediates this effect.

Study 2 tests the hypothesis that the influence of time taken to respond to an offer on perceptions of bargaining outcomes will be mediated by inferences of conflict within the opponent. We explicitly manipulate response time and level of opponent conflict associated with response time in a four factor (no delay, delay, no delay-associated with conflict, and delay-associated with little or no conflict) between-subjects design and show that perceived level of opponent's conflictedness mediate the effect of response time on perceptions of own bargaining outcomes for the no delay and delay conditions. However, the pattern or results is reversed for the no delay-associated with conflict and delay-associated with little or no conflict, such that the perceptions of own bargaining outcomes are superior in the no delay-associated with conflict condition as compared to delay-associated with little or no conflict condition. Consistent with hypothesis 2, these data showed that the inferred level of conflict within the opponent underlie the effect of response time.

Study 3 explores the boundary conditions for the effect of response time on perceptions of bargaining outcomes and tests the hypothesis that the time taken by an opponent to respond to an offer is likely to have a stronger effect on perceptions of bargaining outcomes in the absence (vs. presence) of an objective (or diagnostic) referent. We manipulated response time and referent presence using a 2 (response time: no delay and delay) x 2 (objective referent: present and absent) between-subjects design. The results corroborate and extend the earlier findings by showing that effect of time taken to respond to an offer is moderated by the presence of an objective referents. Individuals are thus more susceptible to cues that emerge from the bargaining environment in the absence of objective or diagnostic referents.

Together, these three studies demonstrate that the bargaining outcomes were perceived to be superior when an offer was accepted after a delay than when it was accepted immediately. The findings highlight the role of attributions for an opponent's behavior in influencing bargaining perceptions. The results are consistent with the idea that the time taken by an opponent to respond is used to infer the level of conflict within the opponent in making a decision. Specifically, the findings are consistent with the notion that immediacy is linked with little or no conflict whereas a delay in responding to an offer is linked with conflict. The level of inferred conflict, in turn, is used in assessing one's own outcomes. The finding that time taken to respond affected perceptions of bargaining outcomes in the absence versus presence of an objective referent suggests that uncertainty prompts causal analysis and individuals are more susceptible to cues when the need to seek a causal explanation for others' behavior is high.

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Bidders' Regret in Auctions

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This research investigates regret miscalibration that occurs during the bidding process: anticipated regret being greater than experienced regret, and the effects of anticipated regret on bidding decisions.

In auctions, there are two types of unfavorable outcomes that are likely to trigger regret: winning but overpaying for the auctioned item and losing the chance to get a bargain. Since regret is most commonly associated with negative outcomes, we look at regret for these two outcomes. Research on affective forecasting (Frederick & Lowenstein 1999; Wilson & Gilbert 2003) suggests that bidders are likely to overestimate their future regret. Since individuals will anticipate and act to minimize future regret (Mellers, Schwartz & Ritov 1999; Simonson 1992), we propose that anticipated regret over winning but overpaying will lead to more conservative bidding (i.e., less likelihood to bid, lower bid amount) while anticipated regret over losing the chance to get a bargain will lead to more aggressive bidding (i.e., more likelihood to bid, higher bid amount).

We also investigate the moderating role of perceived scarcity in the effects of anticipated regret on bidding decisions. We hypothesize that when the auctioned item is scarce, regret over losing the chance to get a bargain is likely to have a dominant effect on bidding, whereas when the auction item is not scarce, regret over winning but overpaying is likely to have a dominant effect on bidding.

We conducted three studies to test our hypotheses. Study 1 (n=91) looks at the effects of anticipated regret on bidding. Participants read a scenario that their university bookstore is testing a customer reward week concept where consumers can bid for various rewards using chips earned through past purchases. Participants bid on the first reward item, "dinner for two at Bertucci's," and rated their anticipated regret for winning and overpaying as well as anticipated regret for losing the chance to get a bargain. We counterbalanced the measures of bid amount and anticipated regrets; order has no effect on bid amount, suggesting that anticipated regrets occur naturally during the bidding process. Regression analysis shows that regret for winning and overpaying decreased bid amount while regret for losing the chance to get a bargain increased bid amount, thus providing support for our hypotheses.

Study 2 (n=240) examines both regret miscalibration and the effects of anticipated regret on bidding. We present a scenario where students can bid for more highly rated professors for their core courses in the next year. Each student has a total of 200 tokens to bid for four core courses and is provided with a reference price of 40-70 tokens for each course. After bidding on the first course and completing the anticipated regret measures (counterbalanced), participants spent several minutes on a filler task. Afterwards, participants are told the results of the auction: they either win but overpay for the course or they miss a spot in the course by a narrow margin, after which their regret is measured. Consistent with our hypotheses, we find that anticipated regret is consistently greater than experienced regret for both types of outcomes. Further, replicating the findings from study 1, regret for winning and overpaying decreases bid amount, while regret for losing the chance to get a bargain increases bid amount.

Study 3 (n=64) examines the moderating role of perceived scarcity in the effects of anticipated regret on bidding. We manipulate scarcity at two levels (high, low) in a 2-group, between-subjects design and measure participants' anticipated regret and bidding decisions (i.e., place a final bid or not and bid amount). Consistent with our expectation, our results show that when perceived scarcity of the auctioned item is high, anticipated regret for losing the chance to get a bargain has a dominant effect and leads to increased bidding likelihood; when perceived scarcity is low, anticipated regret over winning but overpaying plays a dominant role and leads to decreased bidding likelihood.

In sum, our findings demonstrate regret miscalibration in the bidding process and the effects of anticipated regret on bidding. Bidders overestimate their future regret; further, their anticipated regrets for the two potential unfavorable outcomes have opposing effects on bidding, that is, anticipated regret for winning and overpaying leads to more conservative bidding, while anticipated regret for losing the chance to get a bargain leads to more aggressive bidding. We also demonstrate the moderating role of perceived scarcity. When the auctioned item is scarce, regret for losing the auction has a dominant effect on bidding and leads to more aggressive bidding; when the auctioned item is not scarce, regret for winning but overpaying has a dominant effect on bidding and leads to more conservative bidding. Our research contributes to the literature on affective forecasting and regret. We document regret miscalibration and the effects of regret in the dynamic bidding decision making process. Our research also contributes to the auction literature, explaining why consumers often overpay in internet auctions (Ariely and Simonson 2003).

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The Mediating Role of Arousal in Brand Commitment

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

A well-documented finding in the commitment literature is that high brand commitment consumers show greater resistance to attitude change by generating greater number of counterarguments against negative brand information (e.g., Ahluwalia et al. 2000). This article helps us understand the motivational reasons that make committed consumers counterargue negative information and resist attitude change. Arousal is implicated as the motivating factor. This article also extends the motivational argument to suggest that arousal is affected by the ability or inability to successfully counterargue the negative message.

It was argued that high brand commitment consumers experience greater arousal compared to low brand commitment consumers when presented with negative brand information. Further, it is argued that the high arousal would decrease to more normal levels for high commitment consumers when the opportunity to counterargue the negative message was present. Study 1 tested whether arousal differed between the high and the low commitment consumers and identified the role played by arousal in affecting counterarguments and resistance to change. Study 2 and 3 tested arousal reduction when counterarguments were successful in preventing attitude change.

In study 1, participants read a counterattitudinal news article about their committed brand. The results of this study showed that arousal (self-report scale) was significantly greater in the high commitment participants than for low commitment participants. Analysis of the cognitive responses revealed that participants who were more committed counterargued to a greater extent than participants who were less committed to the target brand. A mediation analysis indicated a partial mediation by arousal of commitment effects on counterarguments. Finally, the brand attitude data showed that high commitment subjects were able to resist attitude change more successfully than less committed subjects.

Study 2 was conducted to identify the role of counterarguments in reducing the felt arousal. It is argued that successfully counterarguing negative information seems to achieve the goal of resisting attitude change. Therefore, if high commitment subjects were given sufficient opportunity to generate counterarguments and defend their attitude, arousal should decrease as the threat to the attitude is handled. On the other hand, if they were not given sufficient opportunity to generate counterarguments, the goal of defending the attitude would be incomplete and the arousal should continue to remain at the elevated level. In contrast, low commitment subjects experience lower arousal and are willing to change their attitude more readily after seeing a negative message. Thus, their arousal is mitigated without the need to resort to substantial counterargumentation. For this reason, whether they have or do not have enough opportunity to counterargue should make little difference to these subjects.

High and low commitment subjects were randomly assigned to a sufficient opportunity or insufficient opportunity condition and provided a negative news article about the target brand. Physiological measurement (skin resistance) was used as an indicator of arousal in this study. As expected, within high commitment subjects, insufficient opportunity subjects had a greater level of arousal than sufficient opportunity subjects. On the other hand, low commitment subjects did not reveal any significant differences between the time conditions. Further, high commitment subjects in the

insufficient opportunity condition had a significantly higher level of arousal than low commitment subjects, while high commitment subjects in the sufficient opportunity condition did not differ in their level of arousal compared to low commitment subjects.

The brand attitude data revealed an unexpected result where high commitment subjects in the truncated time condition showed a lack of attitude change even though they did not have sufficient time to counterargue the negative message. This result seems to indicate that counterarguments act as the primary route to resist attitude change only when provided the opportunity to process the message, but when opportunity to process the message was limited, high commitment subjects seemed to be using source derogation as the mechanism to avoid attitude change. Therefore, it seems that committed consumers use a variety of tools to protect their attitude. However, simply dismissing a source does not seem to reduce their arousal as much as being able to argue against a message.

The main purpose of study 3 was to gain a better understanding of the process by which attitude change was resisted even when high commitment subjects did not have sufficient opportunity to counterargue the negative message. The design was changed to include only the two high commitment conditions (sufficient and insufficient) and as a control group, the sufficient condition for low commitment. In addition, cognitive responses and source credibility were measured. The arousal and brand attitude results were identical to those found in study 2. Analysis of the source credibility data revealed that high commitment insufficient opportunity participants used source derogation as a means to maintain their brand attitude when not provided the opportunity to elaborate on the negative message. The cognitive responses further supported this finding.

There are three fundamental theoretical contributions of this research to the commitment literature. First, this research addresses the question of why committed consumers behave in a certain way when faced with counterattitudinal communication. By providing a motivational explanation for the earlier research findings, our research nicely complements existing research on brand commitment.

Second, the finding that high commitment subjects experience reduced arousal after counterargumentation is a relatively unique finding in this literature. The evidence that arousal reduces with increased opportunity to elaborate on the negative message implies a motivational basis for commitment effects and adds confidence in implicating arousal as a mediating variable between commitment and counterarguments and attitude change.

Finally, a third important finding in this article is that high commitment subjects resist attitude change even when not given the opportunity to process the message sufficiently. They appear to find other ways of discrediting the message (e.g., source derogation). Interestingly, while source derogation preserves one's attitude, it is not effective in reducing the arousal experienced by a committed individual. This finding implies that high commitment consumers may have multiple goals when faced with negative brand information. The primary goal seems to be to protect the attitude from change. The secondary goal seems to be removing the source of the threat and reduce arousal. It is likely that by counterarguing, both goals are met, but when opportunity to counterargue is limited, source derogations seem at best to protect the attitude without removing the source of the threat.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY
**Does Knowledge of the Marketplace Really Help Consumers?
The Case for (or against) Persuasion Knowledge**
Christina L. Brown, University of Michigan

PAPERS PRESENTED

“Vigilance Against Perceived Manipulation: The Effect of Regulatory Focus on the Use of Persuasion Knowledge”

*Amna Kirmani, Southern Methodist
Rui Zhu, University of British Columbia*

“Fortification or Trojan Horse? The Impact of Warnings on the Effectiveness of Product Placements”

*Margaret C. Campbell, University of Colorado
Peeter W.J. Verlegh, Erasmus
Gina E. Slejko, University of Colorado*

“The Logic of The Marketplace: How Consumers Use Metacognitive Skills to Process Brand Claims”

Christina L. Brown, University of Michigan

Discussant:

Ian Skurnik, University of Toronto

SESSION OVERVIEW

In their seminal article, “The Persuasion Knowledge Model: How People Cope with Persuasion Attempts” (1994), Marian Friestad and Peter Wright proposed that consumers’ knowledge of the marketplace acts as a defense against unwarranted persuasive attempts. This persuasion knowledge includes not only declarative knowledge of the marketplace, but also lay theories of how marketplace persuasion itself occurs; i.e. consumer metacognition. From an ecological perspective, it is hard to see how such knowledge might develop if it is not beneficial to the consumer; however, the notion that declarative and/or metacognitive elements of persuasion knowledge are effective in helping consumers “cope” has not been definitively tested. The purpose of this special session was, therefore, to determine whether and how consumers’ persuasion knowledge does indeed make them less vulnerable to persuasion. This purpose underscored the general theme of the conference, “transformative consumer research,” in its consumer perspective and its concern over improving consumer outcomes as well as those of managers.

The session addressed three fundamental questions: first, how can we assess whether persuasion knowledge has improved consumer outcomes? One standard for consumer decision-making might be reduced vulnerability to persuasion. However, when marketers offer consumers something with genuinely high value, consumers on principle resistant to persuasion will not benefit. Thus, one possibility is that persuasion knowledge improves outcomes when it makes consumers more sensitive to message quality. This possibility was explicitly explored in the first paper, “*Vigilance Against Perceived Manipulation: The Effect of Regulatory Focus on the Use of Persuasion Knowledge*,” by Amna Kirmani and Rui Zhu. In studies 1 and 2 of their paper, these authors showed that prevention-focused individuals are more alert to manipulative intent and respond by reducing brand attitudes. However, in study 3 they showed that sensitivity to manipulative intent can actually increase persuasion. Study 3 was about reading “the fine print:” manipulative intent was expressed as an asterisk at the end of an ad headline. When the supporting footnoted text cited a study by the

advertiser, brand attitudes for prevention-focused individuals were reduced. But, when the text cited a reassuring study by Consumer Reports, brand attitudes were enhanced. Thus, manipulative intent made prevention-focused consumers more vigilant and thus more sensitive to how well brand claims were supported.

Second, what is the underlying cognitive process by which persuasion knowledge may (or may not) improve outcomes? Margaret C. Campbell, Peeter W.J. Verlegh, and Gina E. Slejko addressed this question in their paper, “*Fortification or Trojan Horse? The Impact of Warnings on the Effectiveness of Product Placements*,” which studied of product placement in television shows. Using a professionally edited videotape of a TV show, the authors manipulated the presence and timing of a forewarning of product placement. Consistent with Kirmani and Zhu, they showed that concern over manipulative intent heightens attention to the product. Study 1’s results showed that pre-warnings increase the likelihood that viewers notice and remember brand placements, but the placements are less likely to be seen as manipulative. Study 2 demonstrated that improvement in brand attitudes is mediated by whether manipulative intent is attributed to the advertiser or the TV network itself.

Third and finally, in “*The Logic of The Marketplace: How Consumers Use Metacognitive Skills to Process Brand Claims*,” Christina L. Brown showed that in some cases persuasion knowledge can actually undermine decision quality by encouraging faulty logical reasoning. The author adapted the Wason four-card selection task to provide an objective measure of how advertising affects the quality of consumers’ decision-making skills. She showed that brand claims taking a conditional form (“If it’s Angelo’s, it’s got to be authentic Italian food”) are more likely to result in accurate reasoning when participants understand the claims to be advertising slogans than when the claims are heard “on the street.” This result was driven not by a general increase in consumer information search but a more domain-specific “cheater detection” algorithm (Gigerenzer and Hug 1992). She also showed that consumer persuasion knowledge improves consumer learning only when advertising claims take a familiar form; when claims are reversed (“If it’s authentic Italian food, it’s got to be Angelo’s”), decision quality was actually reduced when these claims were presented as ad slogans.

Ian Skurnik was the discussant.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Transformative Consumer Culture Theory?

Julie L. Ozanne, Virginia Tech
Susan Dobscha, Bentley College

SESSION OVERVIEW

Eric Arnould and Craig Thompson (2005) offer a synthesizing overview of the past twenty years of consumer research addressing the socio-cultural, experiential, symbolic, and ideological aspects of consumption. By entitling their article *Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research*, they emphasize the theoretical and conceptual contributions of interpretive research. This project is important for three reasons. First, an overview explicitly acknowledges and celebrates the many contributions of interpretive researchers. Second, this review provides a conceptual map of what has become a very complex field. This map may help newcomers better position their research for publication and funding. Finally, this paper provides an opportunity for our community to reflect upon our past and envision our future. The purpose of this session is to imagine a more transformative CCT and to chart possible courses toward this destination.

While we applaud that the CCT framework highlighted consumer resistance and ideology as one significant stream of research, the unintended consequence was an emphasis on a narrow view of critical research programs. From a critical perspective, an emancipatory interest underlies all research activities. Critical theory is more than just a critique of ideology; it is a sensibility that can be brought to a wide range of topics. Moreover, all observation presupposes interpretation, which also presupposes the freedom needed to interpret and use knowledge. Thus, empirical-analytic, hermeneutic-historical, and critical-emancipatory interests (Habermas 1971) guide the construction of all consumer culture theory over the last twenty years. Arnould and Thompson (2005) implicitly acknowledge that the empirical-analytic and hermeneutic-historical interests cut across all four categories. Yet, this same assumption is not made for the critical-emancipatory interest, which becomes encapsulated in a fourth category and bled of its transformative potential.

The three following papers are united in their transformative goal; they seek to critique consumer and social practices toward improving society and the lives of consumers. These papers draw on insights from a range of critical approaches such as, community studies, reflexive interpretive methods and action research, and feminist and critical theory research (Bristor and Fischer 1993; Hirschman 1993; Murray and Ozanne 1991; Peñaloza 1994; Stern 1993, 1996). In each of the papers, the substantive and theoretical issues discussed span across all four categories in the CCT typology. Each paper is also united in its focus on the struggle of people to control the meanings that inform their identity and sense of community.

June Francis' suggests that a field centered on the consumption of the "haves" both silences marginal voices and fails to see the harm caused to them by those people who consume the most. Eileen Fischer and Lisa Peñaloza contrast work on brand communities with communities of marginalized ethnic/racial minorities. Jeff Murray and Julie Ozanne promote and delineate interpretive structuralism as one possible method for transformational research.

This session challenges the field to think through what consumer behavior can and cannot do to transform our communities and societies. We explore how the market as an institution is configured socially and economically vis a vis public and community interests, and how these configurations impact consumer

behavior. Clearly, not all consumers are positioned equivalently in society, and thus another vital consumer behavior issue is how consumer behavior arrests and/or reproduces extant market and social relations. What is under-examined is the actual and potential ability of consumers to engage in the transformation of social practices and social structure, and to what degree this happens at the level of individual and community action.

These papers seek to explore ways to reduce human suffering (i.e., the transformative impulse) based on critique that is contextualized to the interests and historical circumstances of small, localized groups (the impulse of CCT). If suffering is caused by hegemonic meta-narratives, then this discourse can be destabilized by examining the dance between social actors' subjective understandings and social structure and by seeking to identify fissures and tensions that can be used to forge new contextualized discourses that may alleviate suffering. While this new discourse could itself become oppressive, if it arises from the voices of the participants and reduces suffering, then it is potentially better than a discourse that is imposed from outside (Agger 1994). We avoid grounding our critique on modern goals, such as rationality, and view the critical moment as never-ending; the goal is an immanent critique emphasizing freedom, justice, and equality, values that are inherent to our culture.

We anticipate that this session will appeal to researchers interested in interpretive and critical research, as well as people interested in social and public policy issues. Craig Thompson and Eric Arnould, as both authors of the CCT framework and experts in the area, are the ideal discussants who are well positioned to comment on research that seeks to extend their work.

ABSTRACTS

"We are what *They* Consume: The Neglect of the Non-consumers"

June N. P. Francis

The syntheses of the developments in the field of consumer behavior advanced by Arnould and Thompson (2005) is a timely and warranted contribution if viewed as a gauge of how far the field has come. However, the consumer research agenda suffers from "American myopia," which dictates its research approach and agenda. This synthesis still reflects the field's love affair with consumption and is rooted in the socio-cultural context of the developed world with a presumed access to the market consumption experience.

This perspective puts market consumption at the center of the discipline and, therefore, those who consume and what they consume become the focus. We are intrigued by their activities, motivations, and dispositions. We inquire into their perspectives. Certainly, the CCT research stream has served to provide even greater perspective by examining the consumer from a widened epistemological, paradigmatic, and methodological perspective, but the central actor remains the same—the consumer. This paper is concerned with one such bias, the field's focus on consumers and consumption to the neglect of the marginal or non-consumers.

The act of consumption has intended and unintended consequences on those who do not consume. Some people, given their disproportionately lesser access to consumption, for economic, political or ideological reasons, are not considered as worthy of

research attention. This approach neglects the effects of consumers on the non-consumer and in so doing adopts a capitalist driven paradigm that has consumption as the invisible hand allocating research attention and recourses. This paradigm also escapes the need for critique.

Why should consumer culture theory be concerned with the non-consumption experience? Many of the phenomena of consumption can only be understood from the perspective of the non-consumer, often those that are weaker economically or culturally marginalized. Economics determine which products gets consumed and how. When “Bob Marley” as an icon gets consumed by an increasingly global world, then the citizens of Jamaica are cornered into accepting this image as their defining brand identity. Given our current approach of focusing on the consumers, it is really not possible to understand how foreigners wearing Bob Marley locks affect Jamaican self-identity and perhaps engenders cultural alienation from ones own roots.

Consumer Culture Theory, as typified by the work of Belk (1988), points to the role that possessions and consumption play in creating and expressing identities. However, consumers not only affect their own identities but the identities of others. In describing the types of African films that get produced, Wiwa (2005) describes these films as ‘cinema village’—“films that play to the gallery with rustic, ritualized scenes, increasingly foreign and even offensive to many Africans.” He points to the appetite for these films in Europe as dictating the content and approach. The idea that the powerful dictate of market demand is, of course, not novel. However, when we focus only on the perspective of the consumers, we miss the role consumption experiences, such as these, have on those whose images are being consumed.

Power differences occur in a myriad of intercultural situations but they are perhaps most visible in tourism consumption. Here products acquired by one group from another group can serve to define the selling group’s identity. In tourists’ search for authenticity, often products or experiences that may no longer exist (Turkish Fez widely available in tourist shops in Istanbul) or never existed (feathered headdresses once sold as souvenirs by first nations tribes that had never worn such adornments) are often sought by nostalgic tourists. This search by the consumer, rather than being benign, often dictates the dimension of the culture that survives or, in some case, are even invented. Even those studies that are concerned with marginal consumers, such as Hill (1991), view the possession or loss of it. Thus they still focus on the consumption experience rather than the creation of identities among those who do not consume.

In conclusion, this paper argues for a widening of the perspective to ensure the voices of non-consumers who are significantly affected by consumption and may not qualify as consumers be examined and heard. This agenda would turn our focus to the non-western, developing world and to the culturally and economically marginalized peoples.

“Communities Beyond the Brand”

Eileen Fischer and Lisa Peñaloza

Consumer researchers have understandably demonstrated considerable interest in the phenomenon of communities based upon common consumption interests. An expanding body of work investigates the ways in which particular brands form the basis for communities (e.g. Kozinets 2001; McAlexander, Schouten and Koenig 2002; Muniz and O’Guinn 2001; Muniz and Schau 2005). As characterized by Arnould and Thompson (2005), work that focuses on marketplace cultures, of which studies of brand communities are a part, seeks to “unravel the processes by which consumer culture is instantiated in a particular cultural milieu” and to address “the ways in which consumer forge feelings of solidarity and

creates... cultural worlds through the pursuit of common consumption interests.”

In the spirit of repositioning the CCT brand to highlight more transformative aspects of consumer research than has been (and is being) undertaken, this paper re-examines research on communities that are *not* based upon brands. In particular, it examines the questions raised and the theoretical projects developed by consumer research that is concerned with communities of marginalized racial and ethnic minorities (e.g. Peñaloza 1994; Oswald 1999; Crockett and Wallendorf 2004). To be certain, the kinds of research on marginalized communities that is examined here were not ignored by Arnould and Thompson; rather, they were characterized in a manner that underemphasized the tensions and social conflicts at the heart of this work, thus compromising its critical potential.

Research on marginalized racial/ethnic communities can be contrasted with research on brand communities along multiple dimensions in order highlight this critical potential. For example, whereas research on brand communities is concerned with establishing how consumers create a sense of shared identity in relation to brands, research on marginalized communities looks at how shared identities based on race/ethnicity are configured in terms of social distinctions—exclusions and subordinations, and how/whether these social hierarchies are reconfigured in the course of community members’ engagements with market institutions and other consumers. While research on brand communities is concerned with how rituals evolve around the uses of branded products, research on racial/ethnic communities is concerned with how consumption behaviors impact patterned interactions with products and markets, subsequently reproducing and/or destabilizing the relationship of the marginal with the mainstream. And while studies of brand communities consider how a sense of moral responsibility can develop toward protecting a brand and those within the boundaries of its community, studies of marginalized racial/ethnic communities are concerned with the dynamics of community practices and ideologies as marginalized community members attempt to navigate new identities and transcend the limits of social and market representations and treatments through consumption and market engagement beyond their community boundaries.

This paper explores the transformative potential of consumer research on marginalized racial/ethnic communities, and suggests how the CCT brand can benefit from more explicitly acknowledging these social and market oppositions in advancing its critical potential.

“Transformational Theory and Methodology”

Jeff B. Murray and Julie L. Ozanne

Critical theory assumes that every form of social order includes relations of domination-subordination and that the critical-emancipatory interest underlies the struggle to change these relations. Given this basic assumption, critical theorists believe in the existence and influence of social structures, such as education, mass media, and fashion. They remain committed to some form of structuralism believing that social structures influence social actors and shape their social constructions of reality often without their knowledge or consent. In other words, critical theorists believe that part of the deep structure of every society is power and domination; it is the purpose of critical theory to excavate these relationships, reveal and explain them, hoping that awareness may eventually lead to transformation (Murray and Ozanne 1991). Thus, critical theory offers theories and methods that are compatible with the goal of transformative programs in consumer research.

Recently, in the wake of the postmodern turn, these assumptions have become increasingly difficult to justify. In fact, this is the key challenge for the most recent generation of critical theorists.

Researchers, such as Ben Agger, Stephen Best, Stephen Bronner, Douglas Kellner, and Mark Poster, are interested in reconstructing critical theory so as to embrace the critical insights of postmodernism. These theorists point to a number of primary contributions of postmodernism including an awareness of the repressive potential of meta-narratives, a critique of empiricist and realist accounts of representation, the importance of a reflexive theory of textual reading, and an emphasis on the self and identity.

This new generation of critical theorists seeks to revitalize critical theory by embracing insights from both hermeneutics and structuralism. They hold that social sciences must be based on interpretive foundations. The hermeneutical tradition emphasizes idiographic interpretations of unique social beings whose actions are contextualized and historical, and mediated through language (Arnold and Fischer 1994). But the hermeneutical tradition is silent on the goal of transformation; it refuses to engage in social critique or offer paths for social change. The structural tradition offers insights into the relationship between agency and structure and gives avenues for connecting our theories to practical social action.

In our presentation, we propose that this form of “interpretive structuralism” or “hermeneutic structuralism” (Morrow and Brown 1994) is an appropriate method for critical theory and transformative consumer research. This type of research helps to illuminate consumption cycles and marketplace behaviors. By way of illustration, we present the results of an analysis of a depth interview using interpretive structuralism. We discuss how this critical analysis fits all of Arnould and Thompson’s (2005) four categories: it is an identity project; which focuses on marketplace cultures; is part of the socio-historic patterning of consumption; and it is a critique of ideological reproduction, which enables a form of resistance. Clearly the critical transformative impulse spans substantive problems and theories.

We discuss the processes our informant used to seek out and create meaning useful for identity construction. The problems our informant encountered are all related to the struggle to maintain control of meanings needed to negotiate identity. Consumers seek and find meaning in their life world often through their consumption. These consumption signs are valuable resources for identity construction. Marketing researchers identify these signs and the “sign value” becomes systemized through marketing processes, such as appropriating the meaning of the sign and reshaping it in advertising (i.e., the sign is sanitized in order to appeal to broader market segments). The meanings are then uncoupled from the original life world of the consumer and become mobile, “floating signifiers.” These signifiers are then returned and marketed in the consumers’ life worlds, colonizing them, commodifying identity, and stripping the original meaning from their life world and identity. Thus, whoever controls the meaning of the signs influences the construction of individual and group identities.

But humans have the capacity for reflexivity; that is, they can reflect on their social behavior and change it. For example, if informants learn of the colonization of their life world, then they can jam the process of uncoupling. When humans discover that a social belief is false, they can alter their ideas and any social actions linked to these ideas. “From this it follows that criticism of false belief is a practical intervention in society, a political phenomenon in a broad sense of that term” (Giddens 1984, quoted in Morrow and Brown 1994).

In conclusion, Arnould and Thompson’s synthesis, although a useful starting point for some forms of interpretive research, does not represent the important range of alternatives for critical and transformative theory and method. This presentation will review interpretive structuralism as one such alternative.

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How Time Restrictions Work: The Roles of Urgency, Anticipated Regret, and Deal Evaluations

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumer promotions are a major marketing tool and have long been the focus of academic research. Recent efforts have focused more on the process by which discount size, and especially time restrictions, influence consumer responses to promotions. To date, deal evaluation has been introduced as the primary process mechanism for promotions, incorporating both discount size and any restrictions. However, evidence on the effect of time restrictions on deal evaluation has been mixed. Some research shows a negative effect of restrictions on deal evaluation (Sinha, Chandran, and Srinivasan 1999), while other research suggests a positive effect (Inman, Peter, and Raghurir 1997). Thus, the primary purpose of this paper is to extend the literature on promotional restrictions by reconciling these findings.

We develop a model in which purchase intentions during a promotion are driven by three factors: deal evaluation, anticipated regret, and urgency. We predict that shorter time restrictions lower purchase intent by lowering deal evaluations, and we provide evidence that this occurs because of greater perceptions of inconvenience (Sinha et al. 1999). Meanwhile, we also predict that shorter time restrictions increase purchase intent by creating a sense of "urgency," which we define as a felt need to initiate and complete an act in the immediate or near future.

For completeness of the model, we replicate earlier research in predicting that the effect of discount size on purchase intentions is mediated by deal evaluation (Inman et al. 1997). However, we go on to argue that deal evaluations impact purchase intent not only directly, but also indirectly by affecting anticipated regret. That is, discounts affect consumers' purchase intentions by affecting not only the perceived economic outcomes of redemption, but also the emotional outcomes of redemption. Further, we predict that more favorable deal evaluations and greater anticipated regret both serve to heighten a consumer's sense of urgency. In sum, we suggest that discount levels and time restrictions impact purchase intentions by affecting consumers' rational (deal evaluation), emotional (anticipated regret), and visceral (urgency) responses to promotions.

We conducted two studies in order to test our model. In Study 1 (N=111), we used a 2 (Discount Level: Low, High) x 2 (Time Restriction: Low, High) between subjects design. The promotional context was a simulated coupon for admission to one movie at a nearby theater. The results provide support for our model. Specifically, the constructs demonstrated good convergent and discriminant validity, the model fit the data very well, and all predicted paths were significant. Additionally, hierarchical model comparisons confirmed all of the full and partial mediations implied by the model diagram. Thus, we document the fact that shorter time restrictions can have both a negative effect on purchase intent by lowering deal evaluations and a positive effect on purchase intent by increasing the sense of urgency. We also show that anticipated regret plays a more complex role than previously believed, acting to partially mediate the effect of deal evaluation on both urgency and purchase intent.

In Study 2 (N=166), the promotional context was changed to that of a real coupon for a sandwich at a school-run sandwich shop. This allowed us to address the concern that movie theaters activate

social, rather than individual, decision making processes. The design was the same as in study 1 except that a measure of inconvenience was included to provide greater evidence for the negative effect of time restrictions on deal evaluation. Finally, external validation for the model was provided by measuring actual redemption behavior.

Study 2 replicated the results found in study 1. All paths in the model were supported and all three proposed mediators of the effects of discount level and time restriction on purchase intent (deal evaluation, anticipated regret, and urgency) behaved as expected. In addition, redemption behavior was predicted by the variables in the model; participants who redeemed the coupon had higher deal evaluation, greater anticipated regret, slightly greater urgency, and greater purchase intentions.

Perhaps the most interesting contribution of our research is a heightened understanding of the dual role played by time restrictions in the formation of purchase intentions. In its negative role, a time restriction is seen by consumers as an inconvenience, thereby diminishing deal evaluations and its consequences (anticipated regret, urgency, and purchase intention). In its positive role, a time restriction creates a sense of urgency in consumers, thereby providing an impetus for action that feeds directly into purchase intentions.

Another key contribution of this work is the introduction of a new process model where the terms of the promotion (i.e., discount size and time restriction) affect purchase intentions through three distinct processes: deal evaluation, anticipated regret, and urgency. Comparing the adjusted R-squared values from our full model to a reduced regression model with only deal evaluation provides evidence that urgency and anticipated regret add significant explanatory power above and beyond deal evaluation. Specifically, in study 1, adjusted R² increased from .329 to .480 ($F_{2, 107}=16.875, p<.001$) and in Study 2 the adjusted R² increased from .297 to .381 ($F_{2, 162}=12.055, p<.001$).

Greenleaf and Lehmann (1995) proposed that consumers delay decisions because they are too busy—suggesting that marketers should use longer time limits to accommodate consumers' busy schedules. However, as we have shown, shorter time limits create a greater sense of urgency thereby leading to higher purchase intentions. Perhaps giving consumers more time leads only to more delay and, in effect, the shorter time limit causes the promotion to gain priority on consumers' "to do" lists. However, caution is needed since, as was shown in Study 2, too short of a time limit can also increase perceptions of inconvenience, leading to lower deal evaluations and ultimately lower purchase intent.

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The Impact of Certain and Uncertain Store Promotions on the Decision-Making Process in Product Choices

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Store promotions presented at the beginning of a consumer's shopping trip influence the consumer's affective states during the trip (e.g., Gardner 1985). Although the promotion-induced affect should be regarded as irrelevant in subsequent product choices, previous research shows that it influences a consumer's choice decision (e.g., Heilman, Nakamoto and Rao 2002). The impact of promotion-induced affect on a consumer's product choice can find theoretical support from the incidental affect literature, which has demonstrated that affect elicited in one incident extends its effect to other unrelated incidents (Isen 2001). However, a majority of incidental affect research compares the impact of positive affect with that of negative affect and neutral state. Although this group of studies is helpful for us to predict the impact of store promotions in general, it may be insufficient to discriminate the impact of a variety of promotions which generally would make consumers feel positive, since relative pleasantness is quite unimportant to differentiate positive emotions (Smith and Ellsworth 1985).

Recent incidental affect literature demonstrates that, regardless of valence, the uncertainty associated with an affect influences the extent of systematic decision-making of a subsequent judgment (e.g., Tiedens and Linton 2001). Since promotions are different in terms of the uncertainty of the benefit provided (e.g., an instant dollar-off coupon provides more certain benefit than a sweepstakes), a promotion providing a probabilistic benefit may make consumers feel more uncertain than a promotion providing a sure and immediate benefit. Thus, focusing on the uncertainty of promotion-induced affect can be important in differentiating the impact of types of promotions on subsequent product choice process.

Although it is shown that uncertainty can decrease confidence and leads to more systematic decision making, there exist inconsistent findings which shows less systematic decision making when subjects feel uncertain (e.g., Bodenhausen et al 2000). This inconsistency may be explained by the effect of uncertainty on perceived ability. Uncertainty to which people have no control can also decrease a subject's perceived ability (Sedek, Kofta and Tyszka 1993), which, according to the ability and motivation framework, would decrease the extent of systematic decision making.

According to the affect-as-information theory (Schwarz 1990), we expect that the uncertainty can decrease perceived ability when one is ambiguous about his ability of accomplishing a task. This can be examined by varying choice difficulty. When a choice is easy, people generally perceive themselves as being capable of systematically analyzing information to make a choice. Since the ability assessment is not ambiguous, the feeling of uncertainty induced by an uncertain promotion is less likely to add any informational value for the perceived ability judgment and thus should not decrease the perceived ability. Since in this case, an uncertain promotion may decrease a subject's confidence (Tiedens and Linton 2001) but not perceived ability, it is expected that uncertain promotion would lead to a more systematic decision-making process than the certain promotion and the no-promotion situation. In contrast, when a choice is difficult, it is often ambiguous to a subject whether he/she can systematically analyze all the information to make a correct choice (Payne, Bettman and Johnson 1988). In such cases, a subject is more likely to rely on his/her affective state as an informational

cue for the perceived ability judgment. Thus, the feeling of uncertainty induced by an uncertain promotion is more likely to decrease a subject's perceived ability and lead to a less systematic decision-making process relative to a certain promotion and a no-promotion situation. The hypotheses were examined by a lab experiment.

The experiment (N= 360) investigated the extent of systematic decision making by comparing the impact of feature importance on the choice decision. Subjects who were more (vs. less) systematic should scrutinize the product features more carefully and thus be more likely to differentiate high-importance features from low-importance features. Thus, their decisions should be greatly influenced by the feature importance and more subjects should choose the option that was dominant on high-importance features (vs. low-importance features). Subjects who were less systematic, however, may not discriminate high-importance and low-importance features and may be influenced by heuristic cues like the number of dominating features. Thus, the likelihood of choosing an option that was dominant on high-importance features may not differ from that of choosing the one dominant on low-importance features.

This experiment was a 3 (promotion) x 2 (choice difficulty) x 2 (importance of dominant features) between subject design. Subjects were presented a "certain" promotion (\$50 gift certificate to Disneyland for any purchases over \$200), or an "uncertain" promotion (30% chance to win a \$150 gift certificate to Disneyland for any purchases over \$200), or no promotion. The two choice options were non-dominant to each other in the difficult choice condition and one option was superior to the other in terms of the number of dominating features in the easy choice condition. Supporting the hypothesis, the data revealed that when the choice was easy, an uncertain promotion led to more systematic processing (indicated by a higher choice proportion of the option dominating on high (vs. low) importance features) than a certain promotion and no promotion. In contrast, when the choice was difficult, an uncertain promotion led to less systematic processing than a certain promotion and no promotion. Evaluation and recall data provided converging results.

Overall, the results suggest that 1) store promotions may influence the decision-making process of a subsequent product choice through promotion-induced affect, 2) uncertain promotions influence the decision-making process differently from certain promotions and no promotion situations, 3) the impact of uncertain promotions is moderated by choice difficulty. The demonstration of the impact of promotion-induced affect on product choices enables us to go beyond the traditional view of promotion as signals for product quality and understands the effect of various types of promotions on the choice decision-making process. The comparison of the certain, uncertain and no promotion in different choice contexts lends support to the uncertainty-focused research in the incidental affect research and highlights its importance when affect management objective is not salient (Wegener et al 1995).

Price Matching Guarantees as Signals of Value: The Role of Perceived Risk and Estimate of Lowest Market Price

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Price Matching Guarantees (PMG) are tools where retailers explicitly or implicitly claim to offer the lowest market price and promise to match or beat lower market prices located by buyers. Prior to a purchase, matching or beating of lower prices is achieved by suitably lowering prices by the PMG-offering seller and following a purchase, matching or beating is achieved by issuing a refund to consumers.

Past research on PMG has generally indicated favorable effects of such guarantees on consumer pre-purchase perceptions and behavioral intentions. For instance, exposure to PMG raised consumer perceptions of offer value, their shopping intention and their belief in the overall low-priced nature of the retailer, while reducing their search intention (Biswas et al. 2002; Srivastava and Lurie 2001). Although researchers have indicated some theoretical conditions delimiting the effectiveness of such guarantees (Srivastava and Lurie 2004), no clear-cut understanding exists about marketplace factors consumers consider in their assessment of PMG. In the present research we propose a model of PMG effects and suggest that PMG favorably affects consumer perceptions when consumers perceive a low dispersion of market prices but not when they perceive a high dispersion of prices.

Till date, most researchers have conceptualized PMG as a marketplace signal (Biswas et al. 2002; Srivastava and Lurie 2001, 2004) whose primary function is to overcome information asymmetry between retailers and consumers regarding the precise location of individual retailers' offer prices in the marketplace continuum of prices. The purpose of a PMG is to inform consumers that an offer price is close to or equal to the lowest market price and to compensate consumers monetarily should that information turn out to be inaccurate.

We propose that if PMG is perceived by consumers to be truly diagnostic of the offer price's position among market prices, then exposure to PMG ought to affect consumers' estimate of the lowest market price and should also reduce their perception of financial risk involved in transacting with the retailer. Past research indicates that consumer perception of market price dispersion likely differs from an existing dispersion (Grewal and Marmorstein 1994; Urbany and Dickson 1991) and that usually consumers are not quite confident of their estimates of market prices and consequently, consumer price estimates are susceptible to external cues (e.g., Winer 1986). Hence, exposure to PMG may lead consumers to readjust their estimate of the lowest market price for the product concerned such that consumer lowest price estimate is higher when an offer is accompanied by a PMG, compared to an offer without a PMG. Also, the implicit or explicit promise of a PMG to offer a price close to the lowest market price should reduce consumer concern about overpayment; that is, an offer with a PMG should lead to lower perceived financial risk than one without a PMG. Given that the sacrificial components of an exchange are reduced in the presence of a PMG, we argue that these effects, in turn, enhance consumer perception of offer value, raise their intention to shop the retailer and reduce their intention to search for lower prices. In other words, consumers' estimate of the lowest market price and their

perceived financial risk mediate the effects of PMG on perception of offer value, shopping intention and search intention.

Finally we posit that such favorable consumer responses to PMG as outlined above are not unconditional and that these effects are less likely to occur when consumer perception of market price dispersion is high. A high price dispersion indicates the likelihood of a larger number of existing price points to consumers and given the constraints existing on consumer search ability, this is likely to be perceived as a situation where it is relatively easier for high-priced retailers to opportunistically place the signal in the market with a sense of impunity. In other words, consumer perception of the strength of marketplace disciplinary mechanisms is likely to be low thereby leading to loss of signal potency (Srivastava and Lurie 2004). On the other hand, when consumers perceive low price dispersion in the market, they are less concerned about high-priced retailers getting away with a false signal thereby enhancing signal potency.

In a preliminary one-factor (PMG: present; absent) study with 43 non-students, we found support for our proposed mediation-based model of PMG effects. In a second, 2 (price dispersion: high vs. low) \times 3 (PMG absent, PMG 100% refund, PMG 150% refund) study with 154 undergraduate students, we found that favorable effects of PMG occur only when perceived price dispersion was low. An examination of simple main effects within the low price dispersion condition revealed that the presence of an LPG was effective in influencing all dependent variables in the hypothesized direction (all F 's $(1, 44) > 4.67$, all p 's $< .05$, η^2 ranged from .10 to .30). In the high price dispersion condition, the presence of an LPG offering a 100% refund had no effect on the dependent variables of lowest price estimates, risk perception, offer value, and search intention (all F 's $(1, 53) < 3.63$, p 's $> .06$, all $\eta^2 < .06$). An LPG offering a 150% refund within the high price dispersion condition, however, was effective in enhancing shopping intention ($F(1, 53) = 4.86$, $p < .03$, $\eta^2 = .08$).

Theoretically, our findings are important in their demonstration that signal potency is not unconditional and consumers' judgment of marketplace disciplinary mechanisms delineates the boundary condition for low price signal effects (Srivastava and Lurie 2004). Particularly, our findings include that consumers are observant of the context, as defined by relevant market characteristics, in which a signal is evaluated. Further, our findings are supportive of the basic assumption of consumer rationality integral to signaling theory, in that consumers incorporate perception of seller motives in their evaluation of signals (Kirmani and Rao 2000). The most important practical implication of our findings is that retailers would be well advised to refrain from opportunistic use of PMG, as consumers are not blind to such possibilities in their evaluation of this pricing tool.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

A Variety of Explanations for Variety-Seeking Behaviors: Physiological Needs, Memory Processes, and Primed Rules

Rebecca K. Ratner, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

SESSION OVERVIEW

Why do individuals so often switch away from items that they liked in the past? Why is variety evaluated differently in real-time evaluations vs. retrospective evaluations? This session included three papers that reflect the quite different directions that research in this area has developed in recent years.

The first paper (by Inman, Vickers, and Maier) suggests that variety-seeking behaviors emerge when individuals have satiated on characteristics (e.g., flavors) of an initially-consumed product. This work extends the conventional view of variety-seeking as consumers' seeking to maintain an optimal stimulation level to consider the sensory satiety process whereby the pleasantness of a just-eaten flavor declines. The second paper (by Lee, Kahn, and Varghese) extends previous work in the variety-seeking literature that views individuals' preference for variety as reflecting a bias. Specifically, this work follows up on previous research indicating that when people make retrospective evaluations of options, there is a tendency to prefer options that contain greater variety, compared to when evaluations are made in real-time (Ratner, Kahn and Kahneman 1999). This paper shows that this effect generalizes to persuasive contexts and establishes ease of retrieval as the underlying process driving this preference for variety. The third paper (by Ratner, Zhang, and Fishbach) indicates that whether or not variety is viewed positively can be easily manipulated by the rule ("variety is good" or "consistency is good") that is made accessible to consumers, suggesting that even very subtle aspects of the context in which the individuals make choices can impact the amount of variety they seek, and whether they perceive "consistency" negatively (e.g., as boringness) or positively (e.g., as loyalty).

Collectively, the three papers in this special session, along with the insightful comments by discussant Don Lehmann, focused on new insights about the psychological mechanisms underlying one's preference for variety, and the extent to which variety-seeking behaviors reflect physical needs vs. primed conceptual constructs (e.g., "variety is good" or "consistency is good").

"High Satiety: The Effect of Sensory-Specific Satiety on Choice"

J. Jeffrey Inman, Zata Vickers, and Andrea S. Maier

Retailers and manufacturers continue to struggle to manage the assortment of product offerings within a given product category. For example, should the available popcorn flavors include plain, cheese, caramel, white cheese, and orange cheese, or is some subset acceptable? In the absence of established methodologies to address this issue, they largely rely on ad hoc approaches with little consideration of which attributes are more important to consumers in terms of assortment. Improved understanding of the dynamic factors that contribute to switching within a product category will better enable food retailers to set their category assortment.

We propose that sensory-specific satiety is an attribute of foods that can drive consumers to switch among products within a food category. Sensory-specific satiety is a temporary drop in the pleasantness of a food produced by eating that food. This drop in pleasantness is relative to changes in pleasantness of other foods that have not been recently eaten (e.g., Lyman 1989; Rolls et al. 1981a). For example if one eats a bowl of strawberry yogurt, liking

for strawberry yogurt drops but liking for other foods (e.g. chocolate, bananas, bread, chicken, etc.) remains relatively unchanged. Importantly, when two foods have similar sensory attributes the liking for one can be diminished by consuming the other (e.g., eating a bowl of strawberry yogurt might also diminish the liking for a strawberry jelly bean). Sensory-specific satiety differs across foods (Johnson and Vickers 1992), and it may partly explain why consumers seek variety on some attributes more intensively than others. For example, Inman (2001) reported that consumers switched more intensively among flavors than among brands in 14 of the 15 product categories examined. However, while these findings are consistent with a sensory-specific satiety explanation, this has never been directly tested.

Our objectives are twofold. Specifically, we build upon Johnson and Vickers (1992) to examine crossover effects of sensory-specific satiety as a function of the similarity between the consumed flavor and the target flavor. We also extend Inman's work (2001) by directly assessing the role of sensory-specific satiety and crossover effects on subsequent flavor choice. We draw upon the sensory-specific satiety literature to generate three hypotheses. First, we hypothesize that greater levels of sensory-specific satiety will correspond to increased switching away from a flavor in a subsequent choice. Second, we hypothesize that both sensory-specific satiety and switching among flavors are inversely related to the flavors' similarity to the consumed flavor. That is, we expect the influence of flavor consumed and similarity thereto to be mediated by sensory-specific satiety and crossover sensory-specific satiety. Finally, we hypothesize that sensory-specific satiety and switching among flavors will be moderated by liking—the effects should be stronger for less liked flavors.

We test our hypotheses in two product categories (popcorn and potato chips) across three studies, all of which are complete. The first study uses a consumption diary panel and the second and third studies employ experiments. In the first dataset, 850 participants completed a diary of their consumption occasions of several snack categories over a six-week period (see Inman 2001). The database includes measures of flavor consumed and we supplement this data with inter-flavor similarity data collected in the Food Science laboratory at the University of Minnesota. A multinomial logit analysis shows that, controlling for flavor liking and prior flavor consumed, the degree of similarity to the previously consumed flavor has a deleterious effect on the flavor's choice likelihood.

The two experiments were conducted at the Food Science laboratories at the University of Minnesota and enable us to (a) test the hypotheses in a controlled setting and (b) perform a mediation analysis. Subjects first performed a taste test in which they tasted and rated the similarity between each pair of popcorn/potato chip flavors. Subjects then participated in 5 separate test sessions—one for each popcorn/potato chip flavor, with order randomized across subjects. During each session, subjects rated their hunger, fullness, and liking for each flavor, along with a set of five control products (bread, granola bar, carrot, orange juice, and M&Ms). We then gave each subject an 80g serving of the test popcorn and instructed them to eat the entire amount. When they finished, they repeated their hunger ratings and re-tasted and re-rated a second tray of the 10 rating set foods. Immediately after re-tasting and re-rating the

foods, we presented the subjects with a tray containing five bowls of popcorn/potato chips (one of each of the five flavors) and told them they could take more of whatever they wanted. We then recorded the choice and measured the amount consumed.

The analysis revealed strong sensory-specific satiety effects for all flavors. Further, crossover sensory-specific satiety effects were correlated with similarity to the test flavor, as predicted. Importantly, a mediation analysis supports our thesis that flavor choice is influenced by sensory-specific satiety and crossover sensory-specific satiety, which are in turn driven by prior consumption and similarity to the consumed flavor, respectively. Implications for research and category management were discussed.

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"Retrospective Preference for Variety: An Ease of Retrieval Perspective"

Michelle Lee, Barbara E. Kahn, and Susheela Varghese

Previous research (Ratner, Kahn and Kahneman 1999) has shown that when preferences are made retrospectively, there is a tendency to favor the more varied sequences than when preferences are made in real-time. That there is a preference for variety in memory has important implications for why consumers seemingly make choices that are sub-optimal in the sense of not providing them with the greatest utility. The reason for why it occurs, however, has not been systematically explored and provides the impetus for the current research. In addition, we explore whether this "diversification bias" extends to situations where variety is not instantiated between choices but within choices.

To date, variety-seeking behavior has been studied in contexts where variety in choices is extended in time or across consumption occasions. We examine if variety in the features of an option gives it an advantage over an option with less variety. A context that lends itself particularly well to this objective is that of persuasive appeals in the form of consumer reviews. One of the growing uses of the Internet is to provide consumer-to-consumer reviews of products and services. The website www.epinions.com, for instance, is a platform that allows consumers to share their experiences about various products. These reviews often contain variety on a number of dimensions, such as when reviewers discuss positive and/or negative aspects of the product (i.e., one-sided vs. two-sided appeals), or use different argument types (e.g., utilitarian vs. emotional arguments) to justify one's stand. The increasing prevalence of consumer reviews and the greater reliance on them as a source of information suggests the need to devote research attention to how they influence purchasing behavior.

Three experiments provide support for our hypotheses. We first demonstrate that retrospective preference for variety extends to situations where variety comes about, not as a result of choosing a sequence of different options, as is typical of studies in variety-seeking behavior, but as a result of varied features contained within an option. This is shown in the context of consumer reviews.

Similar to past research, we show that high variety reviews (that are created by adding in a mixture of positive and negative claims) are rated more highly as compared to lower variety reviews (that contain more positive claims) in memory than in real time. We then extend this finding to reviews in which the variety is created through the mixed valence of arguments, but through a mix of types of appeals, e.g., utilitarian and emotional arguments (high-variety) or arguments of a single type (low-variety). We again show a greater preference for the product featured in the high-variety review than in the low-variety review, when preference is expressed retrospectively but not when it is solicited in real-time. Finally, we demonstrate ease of retrieval as the underlying process that accounts for the advantage accruing to the high-variety option. This explanation argues that people use the ease with which they are able to retrieve information as an informative cue for what they know or their attitudes.

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"Variety vs. Consistency Seeking: A Matter of the Primed Rule"

Rebecca K. Ratner, Ying Zhang and Ayelet Fishbach

In repeated choice situations, what factors compel individuals to make similar (vs. dissimilar) consecutive choices? Researchers have often assumed that behavioral consistency is desirable and rewarded by society (e.g., Aronson, 1997, Bem, 1972), thus people should prefer to make choices that mostly resemble their previous ones. On the other hand, there is also research attesting to the value of diversity or variety seeking, which demonstrates that people are less likely to choose something on a given occasion if they have just chosen something similar (McAlister, 1982). Indeed, people sometimes make varied choices even in situations where one choice alternative clearly dominates others (Ratner, Kahn, & Kahneman, 1999; Read & Loewenstein, 1995). For instance, there is research showing that people choose more variety in public than in private to convey the impression that they are interesting and open-minded (Ratner & Kahn, 2002) and the expression of variety is often meant to indicate one's uniqueness (Kim & Drolet, 2003). Taken together, these seemingly contradictory findings suggest that individuals sometimes wish to express loyalty or consistency by making repetitive choices of a single option and sometimes wish to express open-mindedness by making varied choices.

The present research explores the possibility that these opposing choice criteria co-exist, and therefore by increasing the accessibility of either one of them we can influence choice. Specifically, framing a choice sequence in terms of loyalty would encourage repetitive choices whereas framing it in terms of open-mindedness would encourage variety seeking. Moreover, merely associating variety (vs. repetitiveness) with positivity vs. negativity should have similar effects on choice. In several studies, these mental rules were primed before participants had to make choices that could either reflect a preference for high or low variety.

In one study, we presented participants with an ambiguous target person who was said to behave in a rather repetitive fashion (e.g., it was said that this person wears similar clothing, dines in the same place each day, etc.). We manipulated the primed construal of this behavior by asking participants to rate the extent to which the target person is loyal, dedicated, and reliable (i.e., repetition is good), versus the extent to which the person is repetitive, boring, and dull (i.e., repetition is bad). We then measured their liking for

the target person in addition to indicating whether they would choose two of the same type of chocolate across two choice occasions or two different types (for all participants, on the first occasion they either were randomly assigned to consume their favorite type or a less-favored type).

Participants in the repetition-is-good (*positive*) construal condition evaluated the target person as more likable ($M=5.15$) than those in the repetition-is-bad (*negative*) construal condition ($M=4.00$). Further, more participants in the positive construal condition indicated that they would choose the same chocolate on the second occasion as had been assigned for the first occasion than did those in the negative construal condition. Thus, their own willingness to make a repetitive choice was influenced by whether repetition had been primed to be interpreted positively or negatively in the initial phase of the experiment. However, this priming effect only emerged when the chocolate type assigned on the first occasion was the participant's favorite type. Therefore, the rule to "be loyal" encouraged repetitive behaviors only when individuals had a reason (i.e., underlying preference) to be loyal to the initially-consumed item.

In another experiment, we activated these choice criteria in a different manner. Participants were asked to answer various questions (e.g. "to what extent are cassette tapes and compact discs the same or different?," "how good do you think soy milk tastes in general?") by recording their responses on one of two pairs of scale labels that were placed above or below a single 7-point scale. One pair of scale labels contained the endpoints "bad" and "good" (appropriate for the question about soy milk), the other contained the endpoints "same" and "different" (appropriate for the question about cassettes and compact discs). In one condition, the scale labels "same" and "good" were placed as anchors at the same end of the scale and "different" and "bad" on the other end of the scale, thus creating an association between the terms and presumably activating the "same is good" and "different is bad" rules. In another condition, these terms' concordance was reversed, hence presumably activating the "same is bad" and "different is good" rules. This more subtle manipulation was shown to influence participants' subsequent choices across a variety of domains, such that those who saw "good" paired with "different" chose significantly more variety than those who saw "good" paired with "same" (and both were significantly different from a no-prime control condition in the expected directions). For example, participants in the "different is good" condition preferred different brands of cereals, to stay in different hotels, etc., more than those in the no-prime control condition, who preferred more variety than those in the "same is good" condition. As predicted, none of the participants suspected the connection between the two parts of the study (the priming task and the choices task). An additional study demonstrated that these effects emerge using a subliminal priming task, suggesting that these rules for consistency vs. variety can be activated completely outside of awareness.

A final study demonstrated that people's perceptions of their own levels of commitment vs. satiation mediate the effect of the primes. When primed with "repetition is good," people construe their initial choice as reflecting their underlying preference for and commitment to the item. When primed with "repetition is bad," people construe their initial consumption occasion as having fulfilled their desire for the item (i.e., satiation).

Whereas a large number of studies in consumer behavior focus on reasons why people seek variety, the present studies indicate that variety seeking can be attenuated if the salient rule is that "repetition is good" rather than "variety is good." Thus, priming these rules can influence whether individuals construe repetition as indicating

loyalty rather than closed-mindedness. These results suggest that one way to attenuate the amount of variety sought in simultaneous or sequential choice (Ratner, Kahn, & Kahneman, 1999; Read & Loewenstein, 1995; Simonson, 1990) is to activate the rule that it is appropriate or even desirable to be loyal to one's favorite items.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Motivational Influences in Consumer Behavior: The Role of Regulatory Focus

Rongrong Zhou, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Jaideep Sengupta, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

SESSION OVERVIEW

The objective of this special session is to present recent theoretical advances and empirical studies investigating the role of promotion and prevention self-regulation in persuasion and decision making. In his regulatory-focus theory, Higgins (1998) proposed two distinct self-regulatory systems. The first, called “promotion,” regulates nurturance needs and those motives related to aspiration and accomplishment. The second, called “prevention,” regulates security needs and those motives related to safety and responsibilities. These two systems are distinct, not only in the kinds of needs and motives that they regulate, but also in the types of strategies and means that these systems invoke to fulfill these needs and motives. To achieve a given desirable end-state, the promotion system relies primarily on approach strategies and means. The prevention system, in contrast, relies primarily on avoidance strategies and means. The chronic and momentary activation of these two systems has a variety of motivational consequences as suggested by the three presentations in this special session.

The first presentation by Michel Pham and Tory Higgins titled “Promotion and Prevention in Consumer Decision Making: A Propositional Inventory” advances altogether 38 theoretical propositions about the effect of regulatory focus on different stages of consumer decision making. From problem recognition and information search to choice and post-choice reaction, each stage in consumer’s decision making is posited to be differentially influenced by promotion vs. prevention self-regulation. For example, in terms of decision rules, promotion focus is suggested to be associated with greater reliance on disjunctive and lexicographic rules, whereas prevention focus is suggested to be associated with greater reliance on conjunctive and elimination-by-aspect-type rules. This presentation sheds light on many interesting areas of future research and serves as research agenda for researchers who are interested in motivational influences in consumer behavior.

Jaideep Sengupta and Rongrong Zhou examine why some people make unwise eating choices with regard to hedonically appealing but unhealthy food options. They propose that exposure to a tempting food triggers a heightened promotion focus (Zhou and Pham 2004) among impulsives. Such a promotion focus involves an emphasis on the potential upsides of consuming the food (e.g., great taste) while potential downsides (e.g., high calories) are suppressed, thus leading impulsives to choose the hedonically appealing food. Results from two experiments confirmed the mediating role of regulatory focus in impulsives’ eating behavior. Apart from identifying a psychological mechanism underlying impulsive eating, this research also suggests a way to rectify such behavior: inducing a counteracting goal, i.e., a prevention focus. Two additional experiments showed that inducing a prevention focus (using totally unrelated tasks) prior to choice would reduce impulsives’ choice of hedonic food and that inducing a prevention focus after a hedonic choice has been made would reduce the overall satisfaction associated with the earlier decision.

In the third presentation, Prashant Malaviya and Miguel Brendl examine how message framing and the regulatory goal orientation of the message recipient interact to determine the level of persuasion. In particular, they examine message framing along two dimensions: regulatory frames (highlighting a promotion versus prevention outcome), and hedonic frames (highlighting a pleasurable

or painful outcome). They conducted experiments by manipulating four message frames (gain, non-gain, loss, or non-loss) and two regulatory goal orientations of the message recipient (promotion versus prevention). Overall the results are consistent with a dis-inhibition model that they have proposed. That is, a regulatory goal orientation (e.g., promotion focus) activates mental representations that are compatible both on the hedonic dimension and on the regulatory focus dimension (e.g., gains), inhibits mental representations that are compatible only on one of the two dimensions (e.g., non-gains, non-losses), and dis-inhibits representations that are compatible on neither dimensions (e.g., losses), where dis-inhibition has the equivalent effect as activation. In a message persuasion context, activation and dis-inhibition result in greater persuasion than inhibition. Their results also suggest that the matching effect and fit effect that have been documented in previous literature can be reversed under certain conditions.

At the conclusion of the presentations, Bob Wyer led the discussion. He highlighted the similarities and differences across papers and provided insights on directions for future research.

“Promotion and Prevention in Consumer Decision Making: A Propositional Inventory”

Michel Tuan Pham, Columbia University

E. Tory Higgins, Columbia University

In a recent chapter (Pham and Higgins 2005), the authors discuss how regulatory focus theory (Higgins 1998) can be drawn upon to explain a variety of consumer decision making phenomena. They clarify some common misconceptions about the theory and draw on existing empirical evidence and new conceptual analyses to advance a series of 38 theoretical propositions about the effects of promotion and prevention on consumer decision making. These propositions are organized along the traditional stages of the decision making process postulated by standard consumer behavior theory (i.e., problem recognition, information search, consideration set formation, etc.). Some of these propositions have already received empirical support, but most await formal empirical testing in consumer research. This propositional inventory can thus be viewed as a research agenda for studying the role of regulatory focus in consumer decision making. The authors hope that this agenda will help revive consumer and marketing scholars’ interest in the motivational analysis of consumer decision making. Examples of theoretical propositions being advanced are provided below.

The authors propose, for example, that states of promotion versus prevention will result in different perceptions of discrepancies between actual and desired states, hence in different experiences of *problem recognition*. Under promotion consumers will pay relatively more attention to the desired state compared to the actual state, whereas under prevention consumers will pay relatively more attention to the actual state compared to the desired state. In general, promotion-oriented consumers will tend to experience the situation as a “need to be met,” whereas prevention-oriented consumers will tend to experience the same situation as a “problem to be fixed” (Proposition 1.1). With respect to *information search*, the authors propose that promotion-focused consumers will engage in relatively more internal search than prevention-focused consumers, whereas prevention-focused consumers will

engage in relatively more external search than promotion-focused consumers (Proposition 2.3). The authors also propose that, under promotion, information will be searched in a more global and “top-down” manner, whereas under prevention information will be searched in a more local and “bottom-level,” serial manner (Proposition 2.7). With respect to *consideration set formation*, the authors propose that the consideration set of promotion-oriented consumers will generally be larger than the one of prevention-oriented consumers (Proposition 3.1). The authors also propose that, holding the size of the set constant, the consideration set of promotion-oriented consumers will be more heterogeneous than the one of prevention-oriented consumers (Proposition 3.2). The authors further propose that under promotion, consideration sets will tend to be formed through the gradual inclusion of alternatives, whereas under prevention, consideration sets will tend to be formed through the gradual exclusion of alternatives (Proposition 3.3).

With respect to the *evaluation of alternatives*, the authors propose that under promotion, consumers will tend to rely on more heuristic modes of evaluation; under prevention, consumers will tend to rely on more systematic modes of evaluation (Proposition 4.2). The authors also propose that promotion will foster greater reliance on personal preferences and private attitudes, whereas prevention will foster greater reliance on group preferences and social norms (Proposition 4.3). With respect to *choice*, the authors propose that under promotion, choice within the consideration set will be guided by a process of selection or acceptance, whereas under prevention, choice within the consideration set will be guided by a process of elimination or rejection (Proposition 5.1). The authors also posit greater reliance on disjunctive and lexicographic rules under promotion and greater reliance conjunctive and elimination-by-aspect-type rules under prevention (Propositions 5.2 and 5.3). The authors further propose that in choices involving a default option, prevention-oriented consumers will be more likely to choose the default than promotion-oriented consumers (Proposition 5.5). The authors additionally propose that promotion and prevention will moderate the well-known context effects in consumer choice. For instance, the authors predict that the “attraction” effect will be stronger among promotion-focused consumers than among prevention-focused consumers (Proposition 5.8). However, the “compromise” effect will be stronger among prevention-focused consumers than among promotion-focused consumers (Proposition 5.9).

Finally, the authors propose that promotion and prevention will have significant influences on *post-choice processes*. For example, satisfaction from desirable outcomes should be more intense under promotion than under prevention, whereas dissatisfaction from undesirable outcomes should be more intense under prevention than under promotion (Proposition 6.1). In addition, promotion-focused consumers will be more likely to experience post-decisional dissonance and regret about errors of omission, whereas prevention-focused consumers will be more likely to experience post-decisional dissonance and regret about errors of commission (Proposition 6.3). Additional theoretical propositions are offered in the chapter (Pham and Higgins, 2005), along with detailed theoretical and empirical rationales.

“Understanding Impulsives’ Unwise Eating Choices”

Jaideep Sengupta, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Rongrong Zhou, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Around 1.7 billion people worldwide are overweight. People who are overweight are subject to higher risks of diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure etc. In addition, problems created by weight excess have led to huge health care costs. Apart

from physical inactivity, unhealthy dietary habit is the primary cause of overweight and obesity. Many people often seem unable to resist temptation when faced with hedonically appealing yet unhealthy food options. This research examines why some people (eating impulsives) tend to make unwise eating choices.

We draw together knowledge from three different areas—impulsive behavior, regulatory focus theory, and goal structure theory—to identify and provide evidence for one possible mechanism underlying the (usually unwise) eating choices of impulsive versus non-impulsive people. We propose that self-regulatory goals known as promotion and prevention (Higgins 1998) guide people’s choices of hedonic but unhealthy food. Specifically, we propose a mechanism whereby eating impulsives (vs. non-impulsives) spontaneously develop a promotion focus upon exposure to a hedonically tempting food. In turn, this leads to an emphasis on the potential upsides of consuming the food (e.g., great taste) while potential downsides (e.g., high calories) are suppressed, thus leading impulsives to choose the hedonically appealing food. Four experiments provided support for this mechanism and suggested ways of correcting such impulsive eating tendencies.

In experiment 1, all participants were exposed to either a hedonic snack or a non-hedonic snack and later filled out a measure of regulatory focus (Higgins et al. 1994). Results from this experiment suggested that mere exposure to a hedonic food induced a different regulatory focus for high versus low impulsives. High impulsives exposed to the hedonic snack manifested a significantly greater promotion focus, as measured by responses on a completely unrelated task (friendship strategies), compared with low impulsives. Of importance, this difference cannot be attributed to a chronic difference in regulatory focus amongst the two groups, since exposure to a non-hedonic snack did not yield any differences on the regulatory focus measure. In other words, the results confirmed that high impulsives are not intrinsically more promotion focused than low impulsives. Rather, it is the exposure to a hedonic food stimulus that triggers the observed difference in regulatory focus.

Experiment 2 was conducted to test the mediating role of a greater promotion focus in impulsives’ eating behavior. Results from this experiment suggested that faced with a choice between a tempting cake and a healthy salad, greater levels of eating impulsivity produced higher intentions to eat the cake. More importantly, mediation analyses suggested that eating impulsives’ greater tendency of choosing the hedonic food (i.e., the cake) was mediated by a concomitant increase in promotion focus.

One objective of this research is also to identify a corrective mechanism for impulsive behavior. If impulsives’ eating behavior is indeed driven by the heightened promotion focus activated upon exposure to a hedonic food, it should be possible to rectify such behavior by inducing a counteracting goal, i.e., a prevention focus, which would sensitize even impulsive people to the negative aspects of consuming hedonic food. We argue, therefore, that the situational induction of a prevention focus will reduce the propensity of impulsives to consume hedonically appealing, but unhealthy food. Experiment 3 was conducted to test this hypothesis. As in previous experiments, participants were asked to choose from a hedonic snack and a healthy snack. Before they made the choice, for half of the participants, a prevention focus was manipulated by two totally unrelated tasks: a word-categorization task and a proof-reading task. Results from this experiment showed that under baseline conditions, replicating our earlier results, high impulsives were more likely to choose the cake as compared to low impulsives. However, when a prevention focus was induced, high impulsives were less likely to choose the hedonic snack. In fact they did not differ from the low impulsives.

We have argued that impulsives tend to develop a heightened promotion focus when exposed to hedonic food; such promotion focus in turn guides increased choice of the hedonic food by highlighting the potential benefits of consuming such a food. Following this line of reasoning, after a hedonic choice has been made, if impulsive people are asked to evaluate satisfaction with their earlier choice while under the influence of an externally-induced prevention focus, the downsides arising from their earlier decision (e.g., weight gain) should become more salient. This mismatch in regulatory focus between the time of choice and the time of reporting post-choice satisfaction should lower post-choice satisfaction as compared to a situation where impulsive people stay in a promotion focus even after choice. Experiment 4 was conducted to test this possibility. Results showed that even after a hedonic choice is made, inducing a prevention focus post-choice decreased the level of satisfaction with that choice; thus providing a first step towards correcting the impulsive behavior in the future.

This research contributes to the impulsive behavior literature by identifying a possible mechanism underlying the eating choices of impulsive versus non-impulsive people. It also offers something of practical interest for those looking to correct impulsive eating behavior. Finally, the implications of this research to goal representation theory and regulatory focus theory was discussed in the presentation.

“The Influence of Hedonic and Regulatory Focus Framing on Message Persuasion”

Prashant Malaviya, INSEAD

C. Miguel Brendl, INSEAD

Research on the regulatory goal framing of persuasive messages can be broadly classified into two effects. In the matching effect, a message is more persuasive when there is correspondence between the regulatory focus frame of the message and the regulatory goal orientation of the message recipient. Thus, this effect predicts that a person in a prevention goal orientation would be more persuaded by a loss or a non-loss frame while a person in a promotion goal orientation would be more persuaded by a gain or non-gain frame.

The second phenomenon called the fit effect (Higgins 2000, 2002) posits that because people derive value from pursuing a goal with means that fit their goal, a message that conveys a means that fits the goal would be more persuasive. Specifically, a message about a promotion oriented goal is more effective when the message conveys a gain as means to approaching the goal rather than avoiding a non-gain, and a message about a prevention oriented goal is more effective when the message conveys avoiding a loss as a means to the goal, as opposed to approaching a non-loss (Higgins 2000, 2002; Lee and Aaker 2004).

Although research has provided support for the matching and fit effects, it has generally focused on one or the other. As Higgins (1997, 2000) observed, message framing based on the regulatory focus dimension is independent of framing on the hedonic dimension, with distinct effects. This suggests that understanding how frames interact with goals would require varying frames on both hedonic and regulatory focus dimensions, and varying the regulatory goal orientation of the person independently.

Research by Brendl, Higgins and Lemm (1995) adopted such an experimental design. These authors found that respondents who had a chronic promotion orientation were sensitive to monetary gains (promotion outcome) and were not sensitive to monetary non-loss (prevention outcome), a result consistent with the matching effect, but were also sensitive to losses and insensitive to non-gains, a finding that is inconsistent with the matching effect. Moreover, the assumption that gains fit a promotion goal better than non-gains

also cannot account for these results because this assumption is silent on how well losses fit a promotion goal.

To account for their findings, Brendl et al. proposed an information processing model that assumes inhibitory associations between mental representations that vary along the hedonic dimension and the regulatory focus dimension. The model posits three kinds of compatibilities that an individual in a particular goal orientation could experience when exposed to a message frame. Full compatibility occurs when there is a match between the message frame and the individual's goal orientation (e.g., goal and message are about gains). Partial compatibility occurs when the goal orientation and message frame match on one motivational dimension, but mismatch on another dimension (e.g., goal is about gains and message is about non-gains). Finally, full incompatibility occurs when the goal orientation and the message frame do not match on both motivational dimensions (e.g., goal is about gains and message is about losses). The model predicts that a goal (e.g., promotion) activates mental representations that are fully compatible (gains), inhibits mental representations that are partially compatible (non-gains, non-losses), and dis-inhibits representations that are fully incompatible (losses), where dis-inhibition has the equivalent effect as activation. Greater activation of a mental representation of a message in turn should lead to greater persuasiveness of the message advocacy.

We formally tested this model by manipulating four message frames (win, not win, lose, or not lose in a tennis match) and two regulatory goal orientations (promotion versus prevention). Respondents read an advertisement for a tennis racket (adapted from Aaker and Lee 2001), where the potential outcome of a tennis match was framed in one of the four ways indicated above. Regulatory orientation was manipulated by describing a person who either plays for him/herself or plays as a member of a team, thus varying respondent's self-construal: independent versus interdependent. Independent self-construal invokes a promotion orientation, whereas an interdependent self-construal induces a prevention orientation (Lee et al. 2000). The dependent measure was respondent's evaluation of the target tennis racket.

Consistent with the dis-inhibition model, results showed a matching effect when the message frame has positive hedonic valence (win or not lose), such that respondents in a promotion orientation were more favorable toward the target product when the situation was described in a “win” frame and respondents in a prevention orientation were more persuaded when the situation was presented with a “not-lose” frame. In contrast, when the message frame had a negative valence (not win or lose), a mismatch between the regulatory message frame and regulatory goal orientation was more persuasive. Further, when respondents were in a promotion goal orientation, the results are consistent with the fit effect, such that the “win” and the “lose” framed messages were more persuasive. However, for respondents in a prevention goal orientation, the opposite pattern was observed: target evaluations were more favorable for the “not lose” and the “not win” frames. A follow-up replication study provided convergent results. While these evaluation results are consistent with the notion of value from fit, they cannot be accounted for by current assumptions about when fit occurs, but are compatible with the inhibition-disinhibition model. Further, these results help delineate the role of two motivational principles, namely, the hedonic and the regulatory focus principles.

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Of Friends and Family: How Do Peers Affect the Development of Intergenerational Influences?

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ABSTRACT

This paper draws on 110 life history narratives to examine how intergenerational (IG) influences are affected as peers begin to take on a more prominent role in young consumers' lives. Although researchers have traditionally assumed that parental influence sharply declines beginning in adolescence, our findings reveal a more complex picture. Our life histories reveal that peers are readily invoked as benchmarks against which family wealth, spending patterns and lifestyle are assessed. Manifestations of the rich interplay between parental and peer influences are presented. Our study enriches conceptual models by focusing on joint parent-peer impacts rather than their separate spheres of influence.

INTRODUCTION

Traditional socialization theory suggests that childhood learning is so prolonged and powerful that the beliefs and attitudes formed during this period persist well into adulthood. Family members, peers, educational institutions, religious institutions, and the mass media each contribute in important ways to this process (e.g. Faber and O'Guinn 1988). The family is the first and typically the most powerful agent of socialization. No other source enjoys such a cumulative edge in exposure, communication and receptivity (Moore, Wilkie and Alder 2001). However, as a child matures other sources of influence such as peer groups become increasingly important. Beginning in early adolescence peers aid in the development of an individual's personal identity as well as in the search for autonomy that characterizes this life stage (Moschis 1987). Researchers have traditionally assumed that parental influence declines as peers begin to assume a more prominent role in the lives of young consumers (Ward 1974). However, more recent evidence in the social sciences suggests that rather than shifting away from parents, adolescents typically try to maintain these relationships and often consult parents when making decisions (Raja, McGee and Stanton 1992). This is consistent with studies of intergenerational influence (IG) that have revealed enduring impacts of the family on the consumer behavior of young adults (e.g., Moore, Wilkie and Lutz 2002).

To this point, consumer researchers have provided useful insights into the respective spheres of influence that parents and peers have in the socialization process. For example, some studies have attempted to quantify their relative influence in specific domains (e.g., Churchill and Moschis 1979; Moschis and Churchill 1978). Other studies have provided rich perspectives by focusing on the role of a single agent of socialization (e.g., Palan and Wilkes 1997). However, we have yet to capture the ways in which parents and peers simultaneously affect young consumers. These sources of influence may sometimes converge thus reinforcing particular actions or lifestyles, and at others provide conflicting recommendations that a young consumer must adapt to and resolve.

The idea for this paper arose while working on a larger project that examines the role of intergenerational impacts on materialism and financial well-being. In our qualitative research we found, somewhat unexpectedly, frequent mention of friends, acquaintances and peers as a general referent or benchmark. This was intriguing, and seemed to offer a valuable opportunity to learn more about how parental and peer influences operate simultaneously. Thus, our

specific goal in this paper is to explore how intergenerational influences (IG) may be affected as peers begin to take on a more significant role in young people's lives. To do so, we draw on the findings from an interpretive study using 110 life history narratives that were collected from young adult men and women.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Consumer Socialization

Socialization is the process by which individuals learn the social roles and behaviors needed to participate effectively in society (Brim 1968). It helps people to develop their self-identities, and to assume new roles as they progress through the life cycle. Although socialization is a life long process, childhood and adolescence are thought to be particularly significant periods. Consumer socialization represents one domain within this larger process. It has been defined as "the processes by which young people acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to their functioning as consumers in the marketplace" (Ward 1974, p.2). A number of interesting topics have been studied such as the development of consumer knowledge and decision making skills, the relative influence of consumer socialization agents, the impacts of parental style on consumer learning, and the influence of children on household buying decisions (e.g., Beatty and Talpade 1994; Carlson and Grossbart 1988; Churchill and Moschis 1979; Foxman, Tansuhaj and Ekstrom 1989; John 1999).

Intergenerational Influences in Consumer Behavior

The conceptual basis for IG influences rests within socialization theory. The term 'intergenerational influence' refers specifically to the transmission of information, beliefs and resources from one family generation to the next. Since the early 1970s, consumer researchers have shown that IG effects are both significant and potentially important in the marketplace. Although the research base remains relatively small, a number of interesting issues have been studied. Evidence of family transmission has been observed across a range of consumer skills and attitudes such as financial planning skills (Hill 1970; Moore and Berchmans 1996), consumer decision rules (Carlson et al. 1994; Heckler, Childers and Arunachalam 1989), skepticism of advertising (Obermiller and Spangenburg 2000), as well as brand and product preferences (Moore, Wilkie and Lutz 2002; Olsen 1993; Woodson, Childers and Winn 1976). Thus, theory suggests that family influences constitute a powerful socializing agent in children's lives: this has been empirically supported in consumer settings. However, there is evidence to suggest that peers also wield influence in important ways.

Investigation of Relative Influence: Parents vs. Peers

In the social sciences, family and peers have traditionally been viewed as the two most important social forces acting on adolescents, but also as competing or dissonant influences (Kandel 1996). Perhaps as a result, when these researchers have studied the relative impacts of peers and parents the primary focus has been on deviant behaviors such as drug and alcohol abuse. Research on relative influence in consumer settings has focused on explicating the

specific domains of impact for each source. For example, it has been assumed that parents influence the rational aspects of consumption while peers impact more affective dimensions, such as consumption styles and preferences (Riesman and Roseborough 1955). This is empirically supported by research showing that economic motivations for consumption are shaped by family communications, while peer communications affect social motives and materialism (Moschis and Churchill 1978). Researchers have further shown that older adolescents prefer their parents as an information source when making purchase decisions that rely heavily on price, social acceptance, and product performance while peers are preferred when decisions primarily relate to issues of social acceptance (Moschis and Moore 1979). Parents and peers may also exert different levels of influence depending on whether a product is publicly or privately consumed (Childers and Rao 1992).

Thus, there is evidence that parents and peers each possess specialized roles in the socialization of a young person's consumer skills and attitudes. Implicitly, this research stream has tended to look at the nature of these contributions in isolation from one another. Yet, there is also evidence that the extent of family and peer communications about consumption are positively correlated (Churchill and Moschis 1979). This seems to suggest that the presence of some degree of specialization does not preclude joint influence on a particular topic. As individuals we are simultaneously exposed to multiple external sources ranging from our broader culture, to various subcultures, family, and reference groups that are each acting to influence our consumer behavior (Wilkie 1994). These sources of influence sometimes converge so as to reinforce particular actions or lifestyles, and at others provide conflicting recommendations to which we must adapt. For young consumers, we know little about how the multiplicity of recommendations they encounter in their daily lives are assessed. Negotiation and resolution may be particularly challenging at this life stage when the desire for autonomy is great, yet personal experience is limited. In the next section, we turn to the unique developmental tasks of this period.

Development of the Self

Adolescence has long been characterized as a time when individuals begin to explore and examine the self as a means to discover who they are, and how they fit into their social world (Steinberg and Morris 2001). This view of adolescence as a time of self-exploration dates back to Erickson's (1950; 1968) theory of the adolescent 'identity crisis.' More recent theorizing has supplanted the notion of a crisis, and instead emphasizes the development of personal identity (e.g., Waterman 1999). Identity formation is a long process that begins in adolescence and extends well into early adulthood. Researchers have suggested, for example, that in contemporary society significant aspects of identity are still being formed between the ages of 18 and 22 (Meeus et al. 1999). Consumer behavior is a domain in which self-identity is developed and expressed (see e.g., Arnould and Price 1999). Consumers in late adolescence and early adulthood associate who they are with what they have and do (Belk 1985; 1988). This is a stage in an individual's development when financial management skills, perspectives on spending and saving, and assessments of the personal significance of material goods begin to coalesce.

Both parents and peers are potentially influential in the process of identity formation. However, conflicting conclusions have been advanced about the relationship between parents and peers in the development of personal identity. For example, based on an extensive review of the literature to that point, Gecas and Seff (1990) speculated that peers and parents act as competing influences during adolescence. They attributed this to the fact that parents and

peers may possess opposing values and opinions due to their respective associations with dominant or youth culture. Similarly, Steinberg (2001) suggested that conflict is created as children attempt to emotionally detach from parents. Other researchers have emphasized more harmonious relations. Rather than assuming conflicting impacts, parents and peers are each seen as playing unique but important roles in the process of identity development (Raja et al. 1992; Wilks 1986). Because youth become much more concerned with how the significant people in their lives view them at this stage of life (Erickson 1950), it is important to consider how the inputs from these two sources are reconciled.

Researchers in a number of academic disciplines have suggested that one of the primary ways in which individuals make sense of their lives is through the creation of personal narratives or stories (e.g., Bruner 1986; Clandinin and Connelly 2000; Polkinghorne 1988). Narratives help us to interpret, evaluate and integrate our personal experiences. More broadly, life stories are a primary venue for structuring our self-identities. When specifically related to consumption, the telling of life stories allows individuals to impose historical meaning on their consumption activities, as a means of affirming their uniqueness (Arnould and Price 1999; Thompson 1997). In this study, we draw on a specific form of narrative inquiry, the life history method.

METHOD

Research Design and Sample

The life history method belongs to a broader domain of biographical research methods which tap into personal experience through the use of narrative such as profiles, memoirs, life stories, autobiographies, and diaries (Smith 1994). This is a qualitative research method that is based on the assumption that personal narrative is a particularly useful linguistic form in which human experience can be expressed (Polkinghorne 1995). Thus, it relies upon the "subjective verbal or written expressions of informants, these expressions being windows into the inner life of the person" (Denzin, 1989a, p. 14). Here we use a topical life history approach which focuses investigation on a single phase or domain of an individual's life (Denzin, 1989b).

Life history narratives were collected from 110 young adult men and women. Posed at the threshold of independence, young adults are a particularly interesting population for the study of IG influences. All of our informants were university students living in off-campus housing. Forty percent were male, and their average age was 21. They had been living away from home for an average of 38 months at the time of the study. The majority (83 %) had grown up in households with mother and father both present. A wide range of family income levels were represented.

Our informants were asked to write personal essays in which they described how their families have affected their consumption style, beliefs and behavior. With an assurance of anonymity, informants were encouraged to share their personal story drawing on specific events in their lives. Consistent with prior research, informants were given a "life history guide" containing a large number of open-ended questions (e.g., Barnhurst and Wartella 1991; Blumer 1933). The guide was designed to direct their attention to the broad domain of interest, yet allow them great freedom to personalize the questions within their own frame of reference (Denzin 1970).

Analysis

The essays generated well over 500 pages of transcript which are the primary data from which conceptual categories and relationships were identified. We used a relatively structured process following the discovery-oriented aims and procedures of grounded

theory (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Each essay was read, and independently coded by the authors. Given our purposes in this paper, our analysis was focused on those sections of the essays in which both parents and peers were discussed. Emergent categories from the first few essays were identified by the second author, and then reviewed in detail by the first author. These initial categories then served as the structural basis for the coding of the remaining essays. Discrepancies were few and resolved through discussion. Data applicable to each category was then sorted, compiled, and evaluated for conceptual fit.

FINDINGS

The essays provide a rich set of observations into IG influences. Peers are readily invoked as benchmarks against which our informants' experiences within their own families can be understood. Their narratives move back and forth through time as they recount significant childhood experiences, and then shift into the present as they describe consumption practices which characterize their behavior now as a young adult. A range of parental influences across time are evident in our data. Friends and acquaintances are also much in evidence whether actively reinforcing IG influences, introducing divergent perspectives, or simply serving as a salient point of comparison.

Striving for Social Acceptance

The desire for social acceptance provides a significant backdrop against which our informants describe their childhood experiences. Family wealth and possessions figured prominently in their judgments about whether they were likely to fit in, and to be accepted by their peers. Perceptions of popularity were linked to having nice things, and parents sometimes played an active role in ensuring their child's acceptance, as in the following:

I always had nice clothes and shoes and expensive hobbies. This just seemed to be one factor of being "popular" at this time. Others looked up to you for having all of these things. As a family we were among the first in our area for example to have a VCR among other things. (114, M)

My house was always the house that kids came over to—they would play the new video games, play with new guns, ride a new bike, big wheel, green machine, etc. In fact, looking back at my childhood I would say that my having so many things was one reason that I was so popular (and I say this with all humbleness). And I think my parents loved buying me things not only because I loved them, but my friends loved these things too. (162, M)

Although popularity was associated with greater wealth in some cases, the relationship is not strictly linear. More commonly expressed was the desire to have an equal amount of possessions as friends and neighbors. This enabled positive social relationships and removed the potential for jealousy. Informants who had more than others as children seem to experience an "embarrassment of riches" and describe how they attempted to conceal their wealth in order to blend socially. Those from less advantaged backgrounds also expressed fear of embarrassment and rejection. For them, particularly painful are the memories when these limitations came into public view.

I never wanted to really have more than other kids. The most fun we had was when me and my friends had about the same because nobody was envious then. (121, M)

I had no clue about our finances, but I knew I had it better than other children. This also made me feel like I needed to fit in with the other children. All the way up through high school I didn't want people to think that I had more money because I guess in a small town that makes you a snob. So I generally would say I tried to keep my consumption on the level of everyone else. (018, F)

When I was younger, my mom did all the grocery shopping and always bought generic—the original kind w/ the white box and black writing—and that always made me feel insecure because all my friends had name brand cereal—and it made me feel like we were poorer than my friends—and made me embarrassed for my friends to look in the pantry. (153, F)

A range of economic circumstances are represented in our informants' descriptions of their background and experiences. However, as children they were not always cognizant of the differences that existed among families. Neighborhoods and schools sometimes created geographic and economic boundaries, such that children only became aware of differences in their family's wealth position when their circumstances changed. Many expressed a kind of awakening to their family's financial position as they entered adolescence.

When I think about it now, my family was pretty well off, but I never realized it when I was younger. This had a lot to do with the fact that I went to a private school for kindergarten through high school. As I looked around everyone had pretty much everything they wanted without thinking about it twice. (058, F)

As a child, I did not have a lot of material things. I certainly had plenty of toys and such, but I didn't have a lot. I think other kids my age that I played with had about the same amount, but that can be attributed to the neighborhood I grew up in. (063, F)

I didn't realize until junior high, when my best friend had everything, how poor we really were. (010, F)

Parents as Supporters of Social Acceptance

How childhood experiences have been interpreted by these young adults appears to be driven more by the level of parental involvement and support they remember, than by the absolute level of household wealth they enjoyed. Our informants describe varying involvements of their parents, both as facilitators of peer acceptance and as teachers of consumer skills and preferences. Parental support was manifested in many different ways. Some parents were actively involved, and sympathetic to the social pressures that their children felt, while others expected their children to fend for themselves. Levels of IG influences apparent today, appear to be linked to these early experiences.

Some parents tried to overtly facilitate their child's social success by providing material goods that were similar to friends' and classmates'. Even if parents didn't necessarily like the significance being placed on possessions, the desire to help their child fit in with peers seemed to outweigh hesitations they might have. In some cases, mothers and fathers did not agree between themselves that this was the best use of family resources, yet one parent would act as the primary facilitator. In contrast, other informants feel that their parents discounted the social pressures they encountered as a child, and this continues to influence their behavior today.

The only reason my mother bought us extra things and spent more than my dad wanted her to was because she knew we could afford it and she wanted us to have the things our friends had. (014, F)

My dad would prefer it if we put our money in the bank and never spent it, whereas although my mother was interested in encouraging us to save our money, she would still want us to have things that we wanted so that we wouldn't be too different from other kids. (130, M)

I think that I grew up in a time where you had to be fashionable to be "cool." My parents would grill me on why I needed the \$60 Nike instead of the \$20 Payless shoes that looked almost the same. I carry on this trend today in my daily spending. I still try to buy the best that my money can buy even though I don't have much of it. (144, M)

Not surprisingly, our informants describe occasions when they were disappointed by the amount of money and material goods that their parents made available to them. Whether these disappointments later translate into a rejection of parental values seems to be more a function of the motives they attribute to their parents, than the amount of money and goods involved. Even when money was limited, if they believed that parents were not withholding resources they tended to accept their situation with gratitude, and are now more likely as young adults to adopt similar monetary perspectives. In these cases, informants recount being asked to contribute money for major purchases, and the important lessons they learned from doing so (even if painful at the time).

My parents did the best they could with the money they had. (006, M)

Growing up, when we were not as well off as we are now, I was taught early the benefits versus costs of extra unnecessary items such as fancy erasers and pencil sharpeners at school. In the end I wasn't denied things that I wanted. I was just asked to think about it. So I can't exactly place where, but somewhere some time we learned to spend very wisely from my parents. (154, F)

One thing that I appreciate from my upbringing is my parent's example of a good work ethic. I have had a part-time job since I turned 16 and had to buy a car. My sister and I were both expected to purchase our own vehicles, and my parents covered the insurance. As my high school friends were getting new cars for their birthdays or a hand-be-down from older siblings, I thought my parents were the meanest in the world. Looking back, I took better care of my car than most of my friends did. (149, F)

Other respondents recount quite disparate experiences. Rather than feeling supported and encouraged by parents, these young adults expressed feelings of isolation and resentment. Some respondents believe that their parents didn't trust them as children, and as a consequence deliberately withheld information. Others feel that their parents were simply unwilling to provide money or goods, though they clearly had the means to do so. Feelings of being left out, or unfairly criticized are also apparent. When expected to learn on their own, they report turning to peers for guidance.

I was insatiably curious about money back then but my parents said they couldn't tell me how much they made cause I would

run and tell my friends. This lack of trust to discuss money matters always bothered me and I've always wished they could be more open about money with me. Perhaps I would have developed a more frugal spending style if they had. I never truly learned the value of money in terms of saving for future needs. I didn't even have my own savings account until late high school. Friends of mine were encouraged to put money into a saving's account even as early as five years old. (124, F)

As a child, my parents weren't ones to give me everything that I wanted. It was especially hard when all my friends would get it (e.g., a Cabbage Patch doll), and knowing that they had the money to afford it, but didn't want to spoil me. (140, F)

My dad says that I am spoiled but I don't think I am as spoiled as a lot of people I know. I hope that I don't act like they do. (135, F)

My parents never really taught or told me anything about shopping that I really remember. I think I just went off on my own and did it. When I first started shopping my friends influenced me a lot. (176, F)

These characterizations of parent-child relationships reveal clear differences among families in the ways in which questions of independence and autonomy are negotiated. For some, the transition into adolescence and then into adulthood is marked by parental conflict or laissez faire attitudes. For others, warm, supportive relationships facilitate the acceptance of parental beliefs and values. This is largely consistent with the research findings on parental styles (e.g., Carlson and Grossbart 1988). Overall, it is apparent that the young adults in our study retain powerful feelings—both positive and negative—about their childhood experiences. These memories and their emotional connotations are now being carried forward into adulthood, and are helping to shape their self-identities.

Manifestations of IG Influences: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Evidence of continuing IG influence in our informants' lives is readily apparent in the life histories. Many of the IG impacts observed in our study are related to savings and spending behavior. Generally, parents are viewed as positive role models and the primary source of input on financial management. This is consistent with early theorizing that parents influence the rational aspects of consumer learning (Riesman and Roseborough 1955). Peers also continue to serve as important benchmarks in young adulthood. However, by this point in their development social acceptance is not the driving issue. Rather, peers are a salient comparison against which they can assess their own financial management behavior. Though our informants report significant similarities to their parents, their friends and acquaintances also stimulate new opportunities and desires. Subtle tensions between these two sources of influence are evident.

I try to deposit as much of my money as possible and occasionally will spend money on a dinner or movie or a night out with friends. I think I spend a little less on clothes and other possessions than many of my friends. Therefore I think I am similar to my parents. (064, F)

I hate to buy things that aren't on sale. I think that is definitely one thing that I've gotten from my parents. The values that they have installed in me are saving your money and shopping

around. I do save more than most of my friends, but nowhere near as much as my parents. I think that would be hard. (052, F)

I am more like my parents than I am to my friends. When my friends and I go shopping, they buy anything and everything that is on sale, regardless if they need it. (111, F)

Parental influences are not always positive however. IG influences are sometimes associated with personal anxieties, poor decision making and dysfunctional behaviors (Moore and Wilkie 2005). Evidence of “dark side” IG influences is apparent in our data, particularly with regard to poor financial management, overspending and credit abuse. Poor financial management is an IG influence that may continue to create savings and spending problems for future generations (Hill 1970). These problem behaviors can be very painful to these individuals who are highly cognizant of the problems, yet may feel unequipped to resolve them.

My mother let me have a credit card when I was 17 years old. Most of my friends didn’t have one until they went to college. Looking back, it may have been a really young age to teach me about the buy now, pay later idea. That way of thinking has gotten me into a lot of trouble. (136, F)

As a child I was what many would consider “a spoiled brat.” Any new toy, game, sport, or pastime, I had to have it. And, I got it. I was the envy of most of my neighborhood friends. This feeling grew on me to my near demise. I now feel I must have the latest greatest in technology to get the same attention I once did. I was an only child, misunderstood by my peers because of my family being wealthy, most children were jealous and had little to do with me. So, the only way I could get attention from my peers was to have a cool toy. I soon learned that money and monetary items get people’s attention. And so I have since lived with my desire to buy and impress my friends who undoubtedly are quite sick of my toys, but I cannot quit buying. (027, M)

Overall, the manifestations of IG influences in our informants’ lives are rich and varied. Significant aspects of their savings and spending patterns, desires for material goods and financial management skills are grounded in their experiences growing up within their family households. Having moved out of the household, it is with friends and acquaintances that they now have the most frequent daily contact. As young adults, they are largely independent. They are in a position to either act on, or disregard what they have learned from their parents. To the extent that these influences are now embedded in their self-identities, they may be difficult to isolate. At the same time, peers introduce new ideas, preferences and approaches. In our final section, we consider how these may work to sustain or disrupt IG bonds.

Peers as Sustainers and Disruptors of IG Bonds

Although the influence of peers in the maintenance of IG impacts has not been investigated in depth, researchers have reported that these “new influencers” can have disruptive effects (Moore, Wilkie and Lutz 2002). Our data suggests that peers may help to sustain IG bonds, as well as facilitate their disruption.

Disruptive Impacts. We observed situations in which peers are exerting influences that are in conflict with parental views. They may encourage or facilitate behavior that parents find not only less preferred, but also potentially objectionable. Although we should

be careful to recognize the limitations of our research design, it is interesting to note that when our informants indicate they are engaging in behaviors that deviate from parents these are generally instances of “misbehavior”—primarily overspending, gambling, or overeating. They are well aware that their parents disapprove, and try to hide these activities from them. Though often motivated by simple pleasure seeking, over-consumption is sometimes used as a vehicle for rebellion. Thus, deeper family conflicts may surface in their consumption choices.

My bank account is still in my hometown therefore all of my money transactions have to go through them. This became a problem when I lost a little bit of money gambling on the riverboats this summer. It turns out that I really didn’t lose that much money but to my parents it was a lot. My dad could not understand how I could just throw my money away like that. I was just having fun with my friends. (144, M)

My parents would probably have a heart attack, (knock on wood) if they knew how much money I spend when I go out to the bars with my friends. (026, M)

I have trouble saving money, and that scares me for the future. It seems as though no matter how much I make, I manage to spend it all. My parents have always taught me to save money. I think that I learned from my friends. (139, F)

I think my father would be shocked and really upset if he knew how much I eat out. First because it’s so bad for you and second because it’s so expensive. My friends say that I’m just trying to rebel against them by eating out and eating so much junk food. (152, F)

Sustaining Impacts. We also observed many instances in which the influence of parents and peers are mutually reinforcing. Perhaps the most powerful way in which peers sustain IG influences, is by providing opportunities for these beliefs and attitudes to be enacted. IG impacts are now well-integrated into their identities, and become the norms for behavior. Although they acknowledge the roots of these beliefs in their parents’ model, they now view these as a natural and appropriate way to engage the world. Gift giving, shopping strategies and product preferences are all now reinforced and strengthened via their interactions with friends. The mechanism may be as simple as being the willing recipient of a gift, or more involved as in the shoe shopping ritual noted below.

I think that because I remember the activity so fondly from when it was a tradition with my mother, I enjoy it so much now. I admit that I have a thing for buying shoes. In fact, my best friend Nikki and I have sort of a competition going as to who has more pairs of shoes. At this point, I am at 56 pairs, while she has 59. We have discussed this and we figure that shoes can never look bad on you. (136, F)

I have also picked up lots of gift giving techniques from my parents. Pictures, making dinner for friends who have experienced a loss of a loved one, birthday gifts, etc. I love to give heartfelt gifts. Things that are important to me and can be symbolic. I also like to give things to people that they really want. (052, F)

My mom’s generous and supportive use of money has influenced me to do the same with my family and friends. (003, F)

It is funny how I am always in amazement with my boyfriend about his ridiculous purchases, just like my dad would be with my mom. (140, F)

CONCLUSIONS

This exploratory study highlights how IG influences are affected as peer groups begin to take on a more prominent role in young people's lives. Although consumer researchers have often assumed that parental influence sharply declines in adolescence due to the countervailing influence of peer groups (e.g., Ward 1974), a richer and more varied picture emerges here. Peers serve as an important frame of reference beginning in childhood. They are used as a benchmark against which family wealth, spending patterns and lifestyle are assessed. IG influences were manifested in a number of ways related to financial management and material possessions in our study. Interestingly, the level of perceived parental support, not in terms of tangible resources, but on emotional dimensions emerged as the key sustaining force for IG influences. Peers also help to sustain IG, via shared shopping rituals and by providing venues in which to enact lessons learned at home. These findings extend conceptualizations that have tended to focus primarily on the disruptive impacts of "new influencers."

Our findings are of course subject to the limitations of this study's scope, sample and method. Nonetheless they are informative and potentially useful for future research. Because our study centered on IG influences related to financial well being and material goods, it is likely that the scope of peer influences in consumer settings is underrepresented here. Our substantive domain of interest focused on what might be considered the "rational aspects of consumption," thus we would expect parental impacts to be particularly salient. Future research might be directed toward designs that capture the broader domain of peer influences, as well as potential interdependencies with IG impacts.

More generally, the significance of parental support (or the lack thereof) that was observed in this study seems to suggest a direction for future IG research studies. Greater understanding of the factors within the parent-child relationship that strengthen or weaken IG impacts would be useful. The literature on parental styles seems to offer a useful starting point for conceptualization (e.g., Carlson and Grossbart 1988). More broadly, it would seem that there is much to be learned about the interdependent actions of parents and peers in the consumer socialization process. The depth of insight provided by our informants reinforced for us the richness of this topic, and the potential for future advancements.

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Dependence in Consumer Behavior Research: Exploring Measurement

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ABSTRACT

This paper proposes that healthy, normal dependency is a construct that would be valuable in consumer behavior research. The area of family life cycle research has always considered the very important implications of the dependent child but other areas of normal dependency have not been examined. Based on a survey of 97 undergraduate students, a dependency scale having three factors: social, financial and physical; is shown to have some value in predicting several recent purchases.

INTRODUCTION

Healthy normal dependence has perhaps not gained popularity as a construct of interest in consumer behavior research because it has historically been associated with abnormal or over dependence and codependent personalities. Only recently has dependency been "depathologized" as a concept and healthy dependency measures developed in psychology (Bornstein 1998). Exploring dependence as a meaningful underlying construct related to consumer behavior liberates the discussion from normative overlays of dependence within traditional frameworks such as the family life cycle. In addition to capturing the dependency found in provision for and in care of a child, a basic concept of dependence could be useful in understanding consumer behavior related to other relationships including but not limited to those with elders, pets, significant others, and even organizations. The purpose of this paper is to outline the aspects of dependency that might be incorporated into the study of consumer behavior and to explore one possible approach to measurement of dependency.

From a social policy perspective, dependency has been defined as "a state in which an individual is reliant upon others for assistance in meeting recognized needs" (Wilkin 1987, p. 868). Consumer behavior requires a broad based conceptualization of dependence, one that allows for all the variability found in normal behaviors and one that is flexible enough to encompass dependent relationships outside of human to human interactions. Memmi (1984) defines dependence as a relationship with a real or ideal being, object, group, or institution that involves more or less accepted compulsion and that is connected with the satisfaction of a need. He explains dependence as a trinitarian relationship where there are two partners and an object. Memmi contends that it is constructive to ask three questions about the trinitarian relationship: "Who is dependent? On whom? And for what?" (p.18). Before outlining the categories of dependency that might be considered in consumer behaviour research, it is useful to establish a theoretical jumping off point and that is the family life cycle research.

Family Life Cycle Research

The family life cycle has been a standard conceptual template in consumer behavior and marketing for decades. It is of interest here, in part because it has housed accounting of the influence of dependent children on family expenditures and constitutes the main contributions to our understanding of dependence and consumption. Due to space limitations, the history of the family life cycle will not be reviewed, rather, we will consider the most recent significant development, and that is argued to be the Gilly and Enis (1982) "redefined" modernized family life cycle. The model adds to the modernized model of Murphy and Staples (1979) the influ-

ence of timing of marriage and children, divorce/death and aging and results in the following 16 categories:

Under age 35 and single
Under age 35, married with no children
Under age 35, married with a child under six
Under age 35, married with a child six or older
Under age 35, divorced with no children
Under age 35, divorced with a child under six
Under age 35, divorced with a child six or older
Age 35 or older and single
Age 35 or older, married with no children
Age 35 or older, married with a child under six
Age 35 or older, married with a child six or older
Age 35 or older, divorced with no children
Age 35 or older, divorced with a child under six
Age 35 or older, divorced with a child six or older
Age 35 or older, retired and single
Age 35 or older, retired and married

Even those making strong past contributions to the literature on household life cycle stages (Wilkes 1995) now, readily admit that the concept is overly narrow (excluding for example, gays and lesbians, see Wilkes and Laverne 2002) and thus exclusionary. Moreover, extrapolations of the original idea are not parsimonious and it could be argued that the family life cycle is declining in explanatory usefulness as fewer and fewer households are constituted as traditional families.

Development of a dependency construct in consumer behavior research offers several advantages over the family life cycle (authors working paper, 2005) including (1) movement away from the terminology of "stages" and "cycles" which did not receive universal support even when it applied to majority of living arrangements (Murphy and Staples 1979); (2) recognition of multifarious dependencies such as present in relationships with significant others, elders and organizations; (3) acknowledgement of the increasing complexity of living arrangements in terms of both their constitution and duration; and (4) potential reinvigoration of a research area that has declined and become repetitive (Commuri and Gentry 2000). Moreover, development of a dependency construct would allow a move away from defining the behavior of groups of individuals as "non-traditional" (and thus "other") as contrasted to a historical and dwindling mainstream.

Categories of Dependence

As a starting point, three broad categories of dependence are offered here as those which encompass the spectrum of human dependence:

Financial/Economic-This type of dependence is mainly concerned with the provision of tangibles and commercially available services. Financial dependence is a more individual (micro) concept whereas economic dependence is a more societal (macro) concept. From the financial dependence perspective, the United States Internal Revenue Service (1996), states that a dependent must be a live relative (by blood or marriage) without sustaining income for which the claimant provided over half the person's support in the previous year. Support includes food, a place to live,

clothing, medical and dental care, and education. For the purposes of consumer behavior researchers, dependents need not be blood or marriage relatives but financial dependence is characterized by the provision of the support discussed by the IRS. From the economic perspective, ideas such as the company town (towns with one dominant employer), urban decay and rural poverty create types of dependence that strongly influence consumer behavior. For example, residential segregation has been associated with the development of an American underclass which experiences among other things welfare-dependence (Massey 1990). From the macro perspective, individuals are dependent on the overall business climate, the value of their currency, and the success and failure of public policies at the broadest level.

Physical/Time- Physical dependence of a general nature has seen very little research within consumer behavior. Research on consumers with disabilities was inspired by the 1990 US Americans with Disabilities Act (Kaufman 1995) but prior to that, consumer behaviors of the disabled or physically dependent received only tangential mentions. For example, Gelb (1978) found that retirement age shoppers value retail store promotions that consider their physical limitations (e.g., offering early opening hours so that they can avoid crowded shopping situations). In particular, the relationship between marketing and the physically disabled (e.g., Burnett 1996; Mueller 1990) and the challenges faced by individuals with particular disabilities (e.g., visual impairments; Baker, Stephens and Hill 2001) have been examined. However, given their focus on disabilities, these studies particularize physical dependence rather than develop general applicability of the concept.

Time is grouped here with physical dependence in that the single most important aspect of physical dependence is time as the dependent object. Unlike physical dependence, a great wealth of literature and theory on time use is available and important links to consumer behavior have already been made (e.g., Jacoby et al. 1976, Hornik 1982; Kolodinsky 1990). Over several decades of research the concept of time has moved from having a primarily economic meaning (family production variable) to conceptualizations as a constraint (as in "time pressure," Suri et al. 2003) and "timestyles" (Cotte, Ratneshwar and Mick 2004) and to consideration of polychromic time use (Kaufman, Lane and Lindquist 1991; Linquist and Kaufman-Scarborough 2004).

Psychological/Social- Psychological and social dependence has the richest literature from which to draw. Bornstein (1993) found more than 500 published studies examining the antecedents, correlates, and consequences of dependent personality traits in children and adults. Even though a great deal of literature may focus on abnormal aspects of psychological and social dependency, almost all aspects of these dependencies have less extreme, normal counterparts. For example, Hirschfeld et al. (1977) defined the interpersonal dependence found in the normal adult personality structure as follows.

Interpersonal dependence is a complex of thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors which revolve around the need to associate closely with, interact with, and rely upon valued other people. The thoughts concern views of self and one's relationships with others. The beliefs pertain to the value one places on friendship, intimacy, interdependency, etc. The feelings include both positive and negative emotions. The behaviors seek to maintain interpersonal closeness, for example, by being 'pleasant,' giving or requesting advice, or helping others (p. 610).

In psychology, Bornstein and Languirand (2003) have considered dependency as a full spectrum ranging from destructive overdependence to healthy dependence (they also consider dysfunctional detachment). Destructive overdependence is characterized as maladaptive and inflexible dependency whereas healthy dependency is characterized as flexible, adaptive and help- and support-seeking (Bornstein et al. 2003). The focus of Bornstein and his colleagues is on the person and the personality, the ability of an individual to form a healthy dependent relationship.

Given the macro nature of economic dependence, and the potential overlaps of social with psychological dependencies, and time with physical dependencies, this first attempt at measurement was limited to financial, social and physical dependence. The following sections describe development and testing of a scale to capture these three dimensions of dependency.

Measurement

The survey instrument had three sections. The first of these asked respondents about themselves and included a question regarding their family life cycle stage as measured by the 16 categories found in the Gilly and Enis work (1982). This question offered the life cycle categories as response alternatives but also allowed respondents the opportunity to explain if they felt that their current household situation was not described in those categories offered. The second section asked respondents a series of questions regarding particular purchases made in the last year and others made in the last month drawn from Wilkes (1995). The third section contained a battery of five-point semantic differential questions each anchored by "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree". These items were developed following the "item pool" as suggested by Churchill (1979). After a large number of items were generated by the authors, they were reviewed by six students in a PhD seminar in consumer behaviour for their wording and responsiveness to the categories outlined. This section included a reduced set of eight items tapping financial dependence, eight items designed to capture physical dependence and seven items measuring social dependence. These items are shown in Appendix A.

Study Participants

Undergraduate students at a large state university attending introductory marketing and consumer behaviour classes were invited to participate in the study. Participation was voluntary and students were not compensated for their participation. They were debriefed regarding the study objectives after participation. Overall, nearly 60% of the respondents were female, and the majority were between the ages of 20 and 24 (75%). A total of 97 surveys were distributed and all were deemed usable in the analysis.

RESULTS

Not surprisingly, 87% of this student sample reported that their family life stage was that of "Under age 35 and single." This suggests a high degree of homogeneity amongst study participants, at least as far as traditional measures are concerned. Since the remaining responses were distributed amongst the Gilly and Enis categories, it also suggests that the stages approach could distinguish few differences in this particular sample.

Overview of the Data Analyses

Research questions were addressed via two categories of analysis. First exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted in order to develop an appropriate dependency scale. Second, logistic regression was employed to determine the predictive ability of dependency factors on purchasing behaviours.

TABLE 1
Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations

Scale	Mean	SD	1	2	3
Social Dependency	3.50	.7438			
Financial Dependency	3.51	.93969	.248*		
Physical Dependency	1.8118	.77088	-.044	.023	

* $p < .05$

TABLE 2
Items and standardized estimates resulting from CFA

Item	Standardised Estimates		
	Factor 1 – Social Dependency	Factor 2– Financial Dependency	Factor 3– Physical Dependency
I'm the kind of person that needs strong interpersonal relationships.	.96**		
I need to have dinner with friends or family regularly in order to feel close.	.43*		
I need strong social relationships.	.60**		
From a financial perspective, I am not self-sufficient.		.71**	
I am receiving financial support.		.68**	
I do not have financial independence.		.83**	
I look forward to the day when I am financially independent.		.54**	
Because of a physical condition, I must often depend on others for help			.79**
Getting out and about is difficult for me.			.59**
With regard to my personal care, there are some things I can't do without help.			.66**
Coefficient alpha	.65	.78	.71
Highest item SMC	.926	.696	.618
Lowest item SMC	.180	.288	.344

** Significant at $p < .001$

* Significant at $p < .01$

Scale Development

SPSS 13.0 was used to conduct an exploratory factor analysis on the student sample ($N=97$) to determine how the various dependency items loaded onto factors. An oblique rotation using principal axis factoring extraction was requested. Investigation of the pattern matrix identified the variables that loaded onto the three factors at a level above .5. Descriptive statistics and correlations relating to factors are displayed in Table 1.

Using AMOS 5.0 (Arbuckle 1986), a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to further assess the fit of the exploratory model to the data (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). Issues relating to sample size, normality of data, and missing data are addressed. Initially, maximum likelihood (ML) estimation was employed in the analysis. Indeed, reliable estimates have been obtained by ML estimation based on sample sizes as low as 50 (Gerbing and Anderson 1985). This method assumes normality of the data which was an assumption that was violated in this sample (all variables: Shapiro-Wilk; $p < .05$). To ensure non-normal data did not influence the results, a Bollen-Stine bootstrap procedure (500 iterations) was employed. This analysis was not significant

indicating that the chi-square indicator of model fit was not inflated. Lastly, missing data was inspected and considered to be missing at random. As per Allison (2002), an EM algorithm was used to replace missing data via MVA in SPSS. Fit indices relating to the CFA are displayed in Table 2 and indicate a reasonable fit of the model to the data based on conventions (Hu and Bentler 1999).

Predictors of Purchasing Outcomes

Several binary logistic regression analyses were performed to investigate the predictive ability of self-reported ratings of dependency on past purchasing outcomes. In all, 97 participants were surveyed, with missing data apparently randomly scattered amongst categories and subsequently listwise deleted (Tabachnick & Fidell 1996). The independent variables proposed as important with respect to predicting purchasing outcomes were (a) social dependency, (b) financial dependency, and (c) physical dependency. Table 4 displays regression coefficients, standard errors, Wald statistics, significance levels, and confidence intervals for significant and near-significant predictors of purchase outcome variables. Table 5 shows base response rates for the behaviors examined.

TABLE 3
Goodness of fit statistics for confirmatory factor analysis

Goodness of Fit Statistics	Value
Chi-square	54.32
DF	32
CFI	.91
NFI	.81
RMSEA	.085
Standardised RMR	.072

TABLE 4
Regression weights, standard error, Wald chi-square, df, significance, and confidence intervals relating to logistic regressions

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>S.E.</u>	Wald	<u>Df</u>	Sig	95% C.I. for Exp(B)	
						Lower	Upper
<i>Purchase of dinner in a restaurant in the past month</i>							
Social Dependency	1.664	.579	8.268	1	.004	1.699	16.427
Physical Dependency	-1.434	.488	8.647	1	.003	.092	.620
<i>Purchase of dry cleaning services in the past month</i>							
Social Dependency	1.048	.406	6.670	1	.010	1.287	6.320
<i>Purchase of automobile in the past year</i>							
Physical Dependency	.713	.378	3.562	1	.059	.973	4.276
<i>Purchase of power tools in the last year</i>							
Social Dependency	.917	.520	3.108	1	.078	.903	6.941

From Tables 4 and 5 we can see that while the models did not improve our prediction over the base rates, the models do tell us something about the dependencies influencing the reported behaviors.

Purchase of dinner in a restaurant in the last month. A test of the full model with the predictors (social, financial, and physical dependency) against a constant-only model was statistically reliable, $\chi^2(1, N=96)=37.37, p<.001$, indicating the set of predictors reliably distinguished between students that had or hadn't purchased dinner at a restaurant in the month prior to completing the survey. Prediction success was 85.4%.

According to the Wald criterion, both social and physical dependency predicted dinner purchasing outcomes. First, higher levels of reported social dependency significantly predicted the purchase of dinner in a restaurant in the last month, $z=8.27, p<.010$. Conversely, higher self reports of physical dependency significantly predicted not purchasing dinner in a restaurant in the last month, $z=8.65, p<.010$.

Purchase of dry cleaning services in the last month. Testing the full model with the predictors (social, financial, and physical dependency) against a constant-only model was significant, $\chi^2(1, N=96)=28.22, p<.001$. Based on the composite set of independent variables, prediction success was 85.4%. As per Table 4, those reporting higher perceived levels of social dependency were sig-

nificantly more likely to purchase dry cleaning services in the month prior to surveying, $z=6.67, p<.05$.

Purchase of an automobile in the last year. Based on automobile purchase, full model analysis with all predictors against the constant-only model was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1, N=94)=38.66, p<.001$. Prediction success was 87.2%. Overall, this analysis showed that higher self levels of physical dependency neared significance in the prediction of an automobile purchase in the past year, $z=3.562, p=.059$ (see Table 4).

Purchase of lawn or power tools in the last year. Analysis of the intercept-only model was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1, N=95)=40.98, p<.001$ with an overall prediction rate of 89.5%. Whilst a marginal result, the results revealed that higher self-reported levels of social dependency neared significance in the prediction of purchases relating to lawn or power tools in the past year: $z=3.108, p=.078$ (see Table 4).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

While only a first empirical examination of the potential value of a dependency measure in consumer behavior, the scale, or at least the idea of development of a scale of dependency, must be considered viable and potentially useful. A reasonably well estimated set of three factors was shown to have some predictive value within a relatively homogenous sample. Particular prediction of recent

TABLE 5
Base response rates to purchase behavior questions

Variable	Yes	No
<i>Purchase of dinner in a restaurant in the past month</i>	82	14
<i>Purchase of dry cleaning services in the past month</i>	20	76
<i>Purchase of automobile in the past year</i>	12	82
<i>Purchase of power tools in the last year</i>	10	85

consumer behaviors was not our objective in this study, rather, prediction was only utilized to support the usefulness of the scale and thus only purchases of potential interest to the sample were considered. Although the research could be criticized for using a student sample, the use of this sample actually represents a strong test of the potential value of such a measure since the student sample offers so little variance.

Development of a dependency construct in consumer behavior has been positioned as a possible alternative to the analysis of household or family life cycle but it is also the case that this type of measure might work well within that paradigm. The more important value, however, is the potential to dispense with the "traditional versus non-traditional" distinction, especially when each particular "non-traditional" group (e.g., gays, lesbians, single fathers, displaced homemakers, committed pet owners, returning adult children, elder care-givers) is treated as unique and isolated. The challenges faced by individuals often emanate from some of the same central dependencies.

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APPENDIX A
Items Measuring Dependency in Three Areas

Social

Every once in a while I just need to get out with a group of friends.
I prefer to be by myself. (R)
I need strong social relationships.*
Before I plan a social event, I usually ask my friends for advice.
I need to have dinner with friends or family regularly in order to feel close.*
I am the kind of person that feels alone if I do not get to socialize regularly.
I am the kind of person that needs strong interpersonal relationships.*

Financial

I make my own money.
I support myself financially.
I do not rely on anyone for financial support. (R)
I have to rely on others financially.
From a financial perspective, I am not self-sufficient.*
I am receiving financial support.*
I look forward to the day when I am financially independent.*
I do not have financial independence.*

Physical

Physically, I am able to go and do easily. (R)
I have a physical dependency.
I often have to rely on others to get where I need to go.
I often must ask others to help me do things around the house.
Because of a physical condition, I often times must depend on others for help.*
With regard to my personal care, there are some things that I can't do without help.*
Getting out and about is difficult for me.*
I really don't have any physical limitations. (R)

* Items retained in scale development.

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Brands and the Identification Process of Children

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ABSTRACT

Literature shows a growing interest in the role played by brands in the everyday life of consumers. And identity construction is often underlined since brands are recognized to be linked to consumers' own identity. Yet, even if this link occurs at an early age, few studies deal with children. That is why this paper aims at identifying the role played by brands in the identification process of 10-11 years children. Thanks to a qualitative research led in schools, this article suggests that brands intervene in the sexual identification, the identification of an age group, of a peer group, of the family and of a whole community.

INTRODUCTION

"Identity is a keyword in contemporary society" (Howard 2000). In a society where change rapidly occurs, individuals have difficulties in building their own identity, what is particularly true during transition periods, such as pre-adolescence. That is what was remarked from the ground while leading observations of 10 to 11 year-old children at primary schools. This research comes from a qualitative study which objective was at the beginning to understand the brand relationship (Fournier 1998) between brands and a particular consumer (the child) in a specific environment (at school). In so doing, during the observations and interviews led, the research question of the identity conveyed by brands emerged from the ground. Indeed, during the last year children spend at primary schools, they are about to build and transform their identity of children into an identity of pre-teenagers and brands (particularly of clothes) play an important role in this identity construction.

The aim of the present paper is then to propose a comprehension of brands as playing a role in the identity construction of children in the natural context of schools.

The structure of the article is as followed. First, identity is defined and presented as the result of the socialization process of children. Second, the research question and the methodology are briefly exposed to finish third with an explanation of the results proposing that brands take part in the identification process of 10 to 11 year-old children.

LITERATURE REVIEW: IDENTITY AND SOCIALIZATION

After having defined identity in general, the particular case of the child's identity is approached before revealing the marketing literature treating about the role played by products and brands in the identification process.

Definitions

There are multiple definitions of identity, which can be understood as a structure, a function, a result or a process. Our purpose here is to focus on identity as a process. There are different levels of studying identity: at the level of the individual, of the interaction between two persons, of the group and of an ideology (Baugnet 1998). We will focus here on the identity of the self but evolving thanks to interactions. One global definition is Harter's¹ (1983, in Adamson, Hartman and Lyxell 1999) who defines identity from its three components: the subjective feeling of *unity* among one's self-conception, a sense of *continuity* of these attributions over time, and a sense of *mutuality* between the individual's conception of the self and the conception held by others. Then even the individual identity cannot really be disconnected to others. As a matter of fact, the

individual does not construct her/his identity in a social emptiness. On the opposite. According to Chappuis (2002), "being oneself is inseparable of being with... the individual exists only inside and thanks to her or his relationships with others" (p.48). Identity formation is viewed as a reciprocal process between the psychological interior and her/his socio-cultural environment. Then, emphasizing the close link between individual's identity and relationships highlights its evolution: if identity supposes to follow a certain continuity in time, it is not fixed forever but does evolve too, according to the interactions and meetings with others. That is why identity can be studied as a process, by which others (another person, a group of persons, a celebrity or a character) are used as a model.

Dealing with identity is far from being new, but is particularly in fashion nowadays, in sociology, psychology as well as in the media. Traditional cultures do not ask the question of identity, which is "taken-for-granted" (Bendle 2002). On the opposite, identity is a cultural problem which emerged during the evolution of a modern society, becoming more and more individualistic. Giving individuals more choices to become what they want, modern society gives freedom (allowing a certain social mobility), but at the same time makes the construction of identity difficult (putting forwards the value of realization of the Self) (Mead 1979).

Identity and children

The construction of identity is guided by the research of an ideal after which one aspires and tries to conform to. If the individual judges her/himself through other valuable people's eyes, it is because she/he tries to be accepted by them. The quest is then guided by the desire of being recognized as a valuable person. If identity is in evolution all along the life span, it is all the more significant during childhood, while the child is in construction and socialization. Erikson (1972) built a model of the progressive evolution of identity composed of eight stages (with the first four stages happening during childhood) that lead to a "sane adult personality".

According to the author, as soon as during her/his first months (until 18 months), the child accedes to the feeling of confidence that she/he gains through her/his first interactions with her/his mother, receiving and accepting what she gives. The second stage (from 18 months to three years old) consists of acceding to autonomy thanks to the opposite feelings of ability and inability. During this period, the child begins to experiment her/his autonomous will even if she/he is still extremely dependent of others. During the third stage (from three to five years old), the child needs to discover who she/he wants to become. She/he makes comparisons in order to understand which classes and groups she/he belongs to. This period is characterized by the realization of actions. The last stage of childhood identity (from five to 13 years old) is linked to the identification to specific tasks. This emerging desire to make things well, and even perfectly, is called the "sense of industry". The child tries to identify to adults who have knowledge and know-how. While the child spends most of her/his time at school, the identification to the teacher is important.

¹Harter, S. (1983). Developmental perspective on the self system. In: P.H. Mussen & E.M. Hetherington (Eds.), Handbook of child psychology (Vol.4). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

The environment of the child is essential for the good development of her/his identity and it becomes more and more complex over time. First, only the interactions with the mother are really important (during the first months), then both parents (the first three years), then the whole family (until five) and at last the neighborhood, the teacher and peers at school.

If the identity construction relies on interactions with emblematic persons, it can also be conveyed by things, such as brands and products, which represent these persons. That is how brands and products can become media for children's identity construction too.

Brands and products, media of children's identity construction

Research about materialism tried particularly to understand how people attach themselves to special objects in order to construct their identity. Any commercial product bears a symbolic sense (Levy 1959) and when buying one, one judges implicitly or explicitly if it suits to her/his own image. The object is thus a mean to express oneself, the self being defined as: "a sense of who and what we are" (Kleine, Kleine, and Kernan 1993). From Sirgy's works (Sirgy 1982; Sirgy and Danes 1982) about congruence between the image of the self and the image of the product, Belk (1988) proposes that the objects we use and choose are part of a significant world we create around us that serve as an "extended-self". We transcend the immediate limits of our bodies incorporating in our identity construction objects from the physical environment. In so doing, the chosen objects play the role of a mirror reflecting a part of our life history (Kleine, Kleine, and Allen 1995). And the sense we give to these objects can at the same time be private or public (Richins 1994). These meanings can refer to different personal events and be a media for nostalgic feelings (Belk 1990; Wallendorf and Arnould 1988), and being a support during transition periods (Chang and Arkin 2002; Kamptner 1995; Noble and Walker 1997) or during the realization of rites (Schouten 1991). We particularly attach to objects during moments difficult to live, like the little kid who needs her/his first transitional object that represents her/his mother to reassure her/himself when she is absent. If Baudrillard (1968) qualifies this act as being "regressive", it can nevertheless help the individual to get over the worst.

Even if defining a border between brands and products is not easy-if a border does exist-brands particularly play the role of mediating the identity (Kapferer 1998). The brand, in itself is proven to convey and express the self identity (Fournier 1998; Fournier and Yao 1998), the family identity (Olsen 1993), or a community identity (Kates 2000; McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001; Schouten and McAlexander 1995).

Elliott and Wattanasuan (1998) having studied teenagers, highlighted that their representations are mostly social ones (conveyed by the media) and from these common representations, brands are used as symbols in order to, in the one hand construct their identity of teenagers and in the other hand communicate this identity to others (Elliott 1994, 1997). According to Elliott and Wattanasuan (1998), the brand gains a strong significance once it is part of a socialization process thus when attitudes and behaviors take shape. But this phenomenon has not been studied yet with younger children.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND METHODOLOGY

This research follows the principles of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). I was actually leading a first research whose objective was to understand the way sponsored educational materials used at school could create a child-brand relationship. When observing and interviewing children at school, the question of the construction of identity appeared prevalent, if not inevitable. Intu-

tively, brands indeed seemed to strongly intervene in the identification process of the children encountered. Literature helped then to specify the research question. It allowed to justify that brands and products do play a role in individuals' identification and that an individual's identity is socially constructed thanks to the multiple interactions with others. But if it is recognized that brands are linked to consumers' identity particularly from "Golden Age", there are no research describing how this process occur during childhood. From these points, it seems that, if this research deals with children, it is necessary to study them in their natural environment (at school) and to pay attention to all the persons important in their socialization process. These factors are: parents, sisters and brothers, the media, peers and school (the teacher) (Brée 1993; McNeal 1992). Then the present research question was to understand the role played by brands in the identity construction of 10-11 year-old children² in the natural social context of school.

The methodology is composed of two main phases. Following the principles of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967), from the first exploratory phase emerged the research question. It consisted of interviewing 15 children and their mother at home³. Then a case study aimed at observing everyday life of children at school. Six classes of the 5th grade were observed in two kinds of schools: Three in Priority Educational Zone (ZEP)⁴ schools (where children come mainly from poor families) and the other three were composed of children coming from middle class families. The case study is mostly based on two methods: observations and interviews. The six classes were observed during six months (in class and on the playground). All in all, 112 pupils were observed. During the non participating observations (Delalande 2001), methods recommended for observations at school were followed (Postnic and de Ketele 1988). I led 36 days of non participating observations, while sat at the corner of the class or of the playground, I noted in a note book: the way children were dressed, any game they use, any sentence and discussion dealing with brands, etc... Then in each of the six classes, four children were interviewed twice (at 6 months inter-

²The age of 10-11 year old, often called pre-adolescence, was chosen because the environment of the child is indeed particularly complex, composed of all the factors: the child is still interested in the media (while during adolescence, he/she is less attracted by them), he/she begins to act like other children who seem more affluent (sisters and brothers and other peers), and at the same time, have not yet established a break-up with their parents and their teacher (what they are about to do during adolescence). This is the period of time when they look for their place in the adults' world. The age studied is limited to 10 to 11 years old, that is the last class of primary school, in order to at least "control" the variable of the age and of cognitive development, and not to multiply the observations. Moreover, this age is chosen because this is the last year during which the teacher is still important for them (because they have the same referent professor the whole day) and the children are old enough to be studied (in order to respond to interviews, to be able to make introspections, etc...).

³During the semi-directive interviews, children were especially asked to draw their preferred product and to realize Chinese portraits: imagine this brand is a person, how would you describe this person?

⁴In France, the term ZEP (for Zone d'Education Prioritaires) is used for schools situated in poor suburbs where the population comes most often from the immigration. The State makes a supplementary financial effort in order to help these schools: there are fewer children in each classroom, the teacher has more money to buy supplying, etc.

vals): two boys and two girls, more leader or more isolated (according to the teacher). At the end of the case study, a group interview with four other children was led in each class. Moreover, implicit discussions were led with the six teachers as often as possible outside the class after school⁵. 9 parents (among the 24 children interviewed) were interviewed at home at the end of the study. The approach is hermeneutic-like, that is signs are interpreted as being symbolic meanings of the culture studied (see for example Thompson, Pollio, and Locander 1994). Each interview is entirely taped and transcribed before being analyzed in two steps. First, each given case is analyzed globally (this is the intra-case analysis where the individual story of each child is approached) and second the cases are compared two by two (the inter-case analysis). The notes written during the observations are associated to the collective interviews and are analyzed jointly in order to understand the social aspect of the identification to the brand.

RESULTS: BRANDS, AT THE CENTER OF THE IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN

Brands seem to intervene at five levels in the identification process of the children met. Each level is first presented linearly and then a dynamic process of identification is proposed.

Brand as a gender identification medium

The first level of identity borne by brands (and mainly brands of clothes⁶ and sportswear) is gender identification. Different factors converge in order that the sportswear brand (such as *Nike*, *Adidas* or *Reebok*), represents for children the male power: the pregnancy of sports stars, the fact that leaders (who try to already play the role of small gang leaders at school) wear those brands, as well as older, and thus stronger, boys do. In that case, the product is not really important (sportswear in itself) without the brand. Male power is conveyed only by the brand. This association between brands and male power is perceptible in boys and girls' own definitions of brands and in their Chinese portraits. Wearing branded clothes is associated to adjectives such as "*superior*", "*strong*", "*gang leader*", "*richer*" and "*being at the centre of attraction*". Paradoxically, "*those who wear brands*" fascinate the others and are respected but at the same time are not particularly loved: "*those who wear brands are loud*", "*If Nike was a person, he would be self-centered*". Then, most of the boys still want to identify to "*leaders who wear brands*", even if they do not like them, because they represent the male power: they are those who are listened to and feared. Not to wear brands is then reserved to boys who hang along with girls:

Clément: If there's a boy who wears brands and who goes along with girls, he looks really weird to me, yes really weird...

- The researcher: Why?

- Clément: Because the one who wears brands is like a gang leader, he's a bad boy who walks weirdly and if he goes with girls, it's not right, it's strange!"

Then wearing brands (let's understand in their words "brands of clothes") is a way for boys to stand as boys in opposition to girls. And their manliness can be questioned by others if they do not wear brands, except in certain cases⁷. Nevertheless the reverse logic is not necessary true: this is not only because a boy wears brands that he becomes powerful. For example, *Thomas* who is quite smaller and younger than the others (nine years old), bought one day only *Nike* products from head to foot, because the gang leaders put pressure on him everyday in order to make him do so. And after this purchase, *Thomas* remained an isolated child, but became just a

little more respected. But he felt stronger and proud of himself and became the first to criticize other boys "who do not wear brands"...

As for girls, the dynamic is quite different. They are considered by boys-and they consider themselves-as less concerned by brands:

"Boys do wear brands to be remarked by the others, but girls rarely care about that" (Sarrah).

"When I buy something, I'm interested in the whole class' s opinion.... well, when I say "the whole class" I don't include the girls of course, because they know nothing about brands" (Jean-Christophe).

"The researcher: According to you, what is a brand, what it is for?"

- Oh, this is a question to rather ask boys, because we, girls, are more interested in the kind of clothes we wear, the kind of sweat, of jeans or things like that, but we don't care about the brand like boys. Except sometimes for tracksuit..." (Elise).

"If I were a boy, I would be the leader, I would be naughty when necessary and I would always wear brands like Nike and Reebok..." (Chloë, in a essay).

According to girls' words, brands are not that important for them... And indeed they have many other different ways to position themselves in opposition to boys, wearing female clothes (skirts, dress) which boys have not access to. Whereas boys can hardly differentiate themselves from girls since the latter wear also jeans, sweats, sportswear and sport shoes like them. Then girls easily identify themselves to stars who wear clothes in fashion with no particular brands. The girls met are more sensible to the type of product than to brands. Even girls who are considered as leaders do not exert an influence on the others in order to make them wear a specific brand⁸. Girls who are interested in brands, mostly of

⁵The objective of these implicate discussions was to better know the children and the interactions between them. Important facts were transcribed afterwards in the notebook.

⁶Even if, with the children interviewed, different product categories were dealt with, brands which play a more important role in the identification process are those of categories that, according to children, "we can see", that is mainly clothes and shoes.

⁷For example, *Abdellatif* and *Youssef* who are considered by others as "gang leaders" do not wear brands at all. But, being older than the others (12 years old) and being a little bit quarrelsome and strong, the others are persuaded that they do wear brands... because they are strong! In other words, the other children do not change their idea that "brands=male power". On the opposite, they do not remark at all that *Abdellatif* and *Youssef* do not wear brands because they are powerful, and they even let them make fun of them about the way they get dressed!

⁸Nevertheless this is perhaps inherent to the kind of girls encountered because there exist many brands of clothes that are particularly for girls (like *Chipie* or *Caprice de Filles*), but these brands were very rarely seen in the classes observed. It is supposed that either these branded clothes are too much associated to younger girls or they are bought by richer families (and here only poor and middle-class children were encountered). For example, *Cecilia* exposes her experience lived in another school where brands were important for girls too: "Here girls don't care about brands but in my former school they did. There were two groups: the first used to wear only athletic brands like Nike and could go with boys, and the second used to wear brands like *Chipie*, and we didn't like each other and always quarrelled".

sportive brands are considered-and consider themselves-as tomboys who play only with boys. But boys are less exigent with girls than with boys about the way they get dressed⁹.

Brands as an age group identification medium

The brand (and once again particularly the sportswear brand) symbolizes the identification to an age group. Brands of clothes are indeed worn by older children, because of their high price. Then for kids in the 5th grade, wearing brands is assimilated to older children and is a way to get ready for the important passage to high school. Children in the 5th grade identify to their older brothers and sisters and peers in the neighborhood. They imitate the way they are dressed to get ready to be soon part of the teenagers' world. Those who do not wear brands yet are hence considered as "*the young*". They are called "*the small kids*", "*the weak kids*" or "*the oversensitive babies*". The more expensive the branded clothes are, the more they are valorized. The cheap clothes are bearable for "*little children*" but they are no longer once children get older. To be respected as a future teenager, it is necessary to wear more expensive branded clothes.

The identification to age group follows the same force for girls as for boys. Girls get prepared to the fact that, once in high school, they will have to "*wear brands*" too: whatever the type of product, it will have to bear a brand. Girls in the 5th grade already know that from their older sisters and peers' experience. Nevertheless, once again the influence is less strong between girls than it is for boys. As a matter of fact, girls have many other ways to identify to older girls: they can wear high heels, jewels, making up, short skirts... what they could not do in elementary school. On the opposite, clothes for boys do not really evolve. They still have to wear jeans, sweats, sport shoes like before and that is why brands play a more important role in order to mark a change.

The identification to the age group is similar to a rite of passage, like Le Breton (2002) observed for corporal brands. First a personal rite that the child imposes her/himself in order to prove her/himself she/he is getting older. And second a social rite that the child uses in order to show the others she/he has changed. The child tries to surpass her/himself through the identification to an older age group, and brands intervene in this identification process, for they symbolize teenagers, high school and "valuable people".

Brands as a peer group identification medium

Brands can convey the identification to a group of peers, and particularly the peers of the class. Among the class, three variables play a role in the identification process to peers: the personality of the leader, the teacher and the class atmosphere.

The leader, first, plays a major role. Leaders are valorized because they are supposed to be more successful and popular. They often represent an ideal the other children want to reach (even if they are not really good friends). And, since most of the leaders of the classes wear branded clothes, a way to identify to them is to wear the same brands. A brand can hence become the symbol of a whole class by this game of influence. In a class where the leader is particularly valorized by others, he exerts his influence in three ways:

- he often wears the latest models of the fashion brand;
- he is the first to be consulted by others as for the branded clothes to buy;
- he fixes standards about which brand is good or not and who is "cool" or not.

Each of the six classes observed has its girl and boy leaders, but not all of them play the same role. The most influent leaders are those who are considered as "*bad boys*". They are usually bad pupils, violent, not really liked but very respected anyway. The "*bad boys*" are often associated to the most famous sportswear brands.

Second, the atmosphere among the pupils of the class seems important too for the identification to the peers is possible. Among the classes observed where the atmosphere was very friendly (where boys and girls respect each other and where there was less social differences between children' origin), the role of the "*bad boy leaders*" was diminished. On the opposite, in the classes where children do not get on well, the leader is empowered and brands intervene in the identification process to the peer group.

And third, the teacher plays a role in the identification to peers according to the way she/he teaches (if she/he is authoritative and talks or not about the brands and the game of influence among children) and according to the relationship she/he maintains with the pupils (if she/he can play the role of an ideal for children, letting more or less the leader influence the other pupils). Let us consider the two opposite examples as follow:

In class A, "bad boy leaders" wear essentially Nike clothes and shoes. But they are not really powerful and they do not try to influence the others to wear brands because they are "controlled" by their teacher. This fifty-year-old man plays indeed a very important identification role in the class. He is loved and respected because he takes as much as he can care of the pupils, but at the same time he is feared because he is authoritative. Yet this teacher puts forwards Faïçal, the best pupils of the class and disparage the "bad boy leaders". In so doing, he reduces their influence and makes Faïçal being the leader of the class, but a leader who is recognized and loved by the others for being "a good person". And Faïçal does not really care about brands. He has his own theory on brands: good persons do not wear brands, or only very rarely (for example he only wears Adidas shoes) whereas bad boys are found of brands like Nike. Faïçal is then an identification model and those who want to imitate him do not care either about brands. And "bad boys" cannot exert their influence on this class because the teacher plays a strong gatekeeper role (the children say that "if he hears a child making fun of another about the way he or she is dressed, he would violently kicked her/him off!"). Moreover, this teacher tries to educate the pupils about values such as respect and he diffuses the idea according which, for example, isolating a child because he does not wear brands is a kind of racism. In class A, there is a good atmosphere: all the children are quite similar (they come from poor and Arabic families), they are respectful to each other.

In class F, Kevin, the leader, is really strong, respected and feared by the other children. He pays a peculiar attention on the wearing of brands by others. Nike is particularly appreciated. Then he exerts a strong influence on the way kids are dressed. Those, like Nicolas, who respond to his requirements are valorized and can take part of the central group. Those, like Mathieu, who do not wear brands, are isolated. The

⁹For example, *Kevin* is the gang leader of the class that everybody fears. He can be very aggressive with boys as for their clothes (because, he says, "*if boys don't wear brands, they are not cool like me*") but says nothing to *Linda*. She is "authorized" to play with boys because she is good at sports, and even if she never wears brands, she is respected. Nobody request her to do so.

teacher, a forty-year-old woman, does not want to intervene into the children relationship. She does not play any identification role model either. In so doing, she lets Kevin exert his power and fix his standards on the whole class. In class F, to be “cool and popular”, pupils have to wear sportswear brands, and particularly Nike and Reebok. The atmosphere in this class is quite bad: children insult each other even during lessons. The origin of the children is diverse: few of them come from Arabic and poor families while the majority comes from French middle class families.

Since these three variables (the atmosphere, the power of leaders and the role of the teacher) intervene at the same time in the observations led, this is not possible to elaborate a hierarchy among them.

Brands as a family identification medium

Parents are the first identification models for children. Then, if the child associates her/his parents to a specific brand, she/he will want this brand too. Nevertheless, the identification process to adults is more complicated than to other children, since adults have access to products that children cannot obtain (for example alcohol or cars). Yet, with a specific brand of car, parents can convey a certain value (for example, power). And the child, who would like to identify to her/his parents through consumption will try to find a brand which convey the same value but in a product category she/he can reach (waiting for the time when she/he can buy a car...). In this case, parents intervene in the identification process of the child where brands play a role, even without using and even liking the same brand as the child.

Moreover, when the child feels she/he is closely linked to their parents' choices, she/he feels that these choices are common to the whole family. As Franck says: “We are all Renault in the family” or Abida's mother: “I don't know why, but we are all Colgate, my husbands, all the children and I. We only like Colgate. Everyone. Always. It's like that!”. The central role of the brand in the family identity is highlighted by the use of the auxiliary “to be” rather than “to have”. The brand links the family, and liking the brand is a way to feel part of it.

Parents play another role in the identification process of their children, since they remain their “gatekeepers”. The child cannot make autonomous consumption choices yet. Then if parents accept to buy whatever the child wants, they do not play a role in the identification process to peers and to the age group. On the opposite, if they refuse to buy their children the brands they want and if they explain their choice, they can play a moderating role in the identification function of the brand.

Brands as a cultural identification medium

Children also need to feel that they are part of a bigger community or culture. Children construct an ideal of a culture or of a community they want to take part. To this culture, they associate products and brands. Then they will use the associated brand in order to feel part of the chosen community and in order to communicate their membership to others. This search to be part of a culture was particularly obvious for Arabic children. They often refer to certain products and brands' origin to justify their choices. For example:

“The researcher: Which car do you prefer?

- Faïçal: Renault, it is better.

- the researcher: Why?

- Because when I went to Algeria, there were only Renault cars, the Megane, the Clio, the Laguna. All the others were

old-fashioned cars. They don't have much money in Algeria. The brands of cars I know to be strong are Peugeot for the engine and the coachwork, and Renault. The French brands are better cars. Well...of course there are brands like Mercedes that are better, but I do not think that this is the better choice anyway... and if you take a car too high in quality, you take the risk not to see it again the day after...”.

This example is eloquent because Faïçal is a child who particularly wants to be part of the French society but whose origin is at the same time really important. And Renault allows him to make a link between both cultures, even if it is not the best brand of cars. On the opposite, other children choose brands, even without knowing their real origin, but thinking that they are “from somewhere else”, to claim their no-membership to the French community: “What I prefer is Sergio Blanco, Eden Park and Lacoste. I like these brands because they are not from France. They come from other countries, it is better...” (Nourredine). Even if Nourredine is wrong about the origin of these brands, he uses them as a way not to be a member of the French society, but of another one (likely the American one). For these Arabic children, it appears that few alternatives are possible: most of the sportswear clothes represent an occidental model, either a European or an American one. The adhesion to American brands is then the only way (except not wearing branded clothes at all) to be in opposition to the French culture. That is why the new brands that appeared recently at the effigy of Arabic culture (*Mecca-cola* for drinks and *Muslim* for sportswear) will probably have success in the future among these children looking for a contra-culture. In reverse, some children can reject a brand because it represents a community they dislike. For example, Elie says he does not like Adidas because “this is a Moroccan brand”. If he is wrong about the origin of the brand but Elie associates Adidas to Morocco because the children who wear this brand in his class come from this country. Then, rejecting the brand, he rejects this peer group but also the whole community.

The identification process

The identification process has been exposed linearly in order to simplify the purpose. Nevertheless, the process is a lot more complex since all the levels are interconnected and all the socialization factors intervene at the same time. Let's only take the example of the gender identification process. All the socialization factors of the same gender than the child (and in opposition, the persons of the other gender) intervene in the gender identification process: parents, siblings, the teacher, peers, stars, etc... Through the image conveyed by all these factors of same gender, the child constructs an ideal image of her/his gender. And brands can intervene in this ideal image. If a brand is associated by the child to her/his gender, she/he will want to possess it in order to feel reassured, to claim her/his membership to the gender and to communicate it to others. And to do so, the brand must be visible. The ideal model is like a mosaic constructed by the child, taking only pieces of important persons.

Then the socialization factors intervene in a complementary or a contradictory way. The identification is easier for the child if all the factors converge and if the same kind of brand, or of value, is highlighted by the factors of the same gender. When the factors are in opposition, the child is likely to follow the factor the most important to her/him. When there is an opposition among factors, this is often when parents and teachers play a role of moralizing gatekeepers preventing the child from using the brand in the identification process, in opposition to peers, siblings, and stars. Then the less parents and teachers play their educative role, the more the brand is used as an identification mark. Then, the identi-

fication process is particularly complex first because each socialization factor intervenes on all the identification levels, and second because all the identification levels are interconnected. For example, wearing a certain brand of shoes is a way to identify to a gender, but also to a peer group, an age group, the family group or a whole community...

CONCLUSION

The child's identity is constructed through the interactions with others who are important for her/his development. For 10 to 11 years-old, those are parents, siblings, peers (particularly at school) and the teacher as well as other persons that they cannot directly meet but they know from the media (stars, characters, ...). The child's identity is partly constructed like a mosaic, taking piece after piece, ideal people's characteristics. And brands intervene in the process for they can symbolize these people, groups or culture the child wants to identify to. Once obtained as a symbol, brands allow the child to assert her/himself and to communicate this gender, age group, peer group, family and cultural identity to others.

The implications of the research stand at a theoretical, managerial and social levels. From a theoretical point of view, the research highlights the complexity of consumer socialization where all the factors intervene in a complementary or contradictory way. The role of teachers, almost never studied, is underscored. Then it presented more generally the brands as intervening in the children's identification process. Brands' and children's identities are then linked, but not in an exclusive person-brand relationship and rather on a person-brand-person basis. The identification process must then be analyzed in the complex social context of the child's everyday life.

From a managerial point of view, the research offers reflections especially about brand extension since it appears that the child can be attached to and would like to gain adults brands she/he has not access to (like a brand of car). Moreover, the research offers the opportunity to show that brands convey identity values. From a societal point of view, the research offers the opportunity to question the role of educators (parents and teachers) in children socialization. The role of peers and media-and corollary of brands-seems indeed empowered when educators let them fill the gaps.

This research offers many ways for future research. For example, the identification to the peer group needs to be deepened. The simultaneous role of leaders, of the teacher and of the class atmosphere has been remarked. It appeared that the leader was empowered as soon as the atmosphere was bad among the pupils... but what constitutes a good atmosphere? The balance between boys and girls? Socially mixed or homogeneous classes? Rules stated by the teacher? The leaders' personality needs also a better understanding. And more generally each result is not fixed but deserves a fertile deepening in order to better understand the role played by brands in the children's identification process. And this process is likely to become more and more pregnant, as Le Breton (2002) explains: "Because the crisis of sense and values makes the relation to the world more problematic, the individual is cautiously looking for her/his brands and tries to brave her/his discomfort constructing a more favorable identity" (p.17).

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Children's (Mis)understanding of Nutritional Information on Product Packages: Seeking Ways to Help Kids Make Healthier Food Choices

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), overweight and obesity has reached epidemic proportions after rising dramatically since the 1970s. Nearly 59 million adults are obese and approximately 9 million young people ages 6-19 are overweight as well (NCCDPHP 2004). The CDC acknowledges that promoting healthy eating, and creating an environment that supports this behavior, is essential to reducing this epidemic of overweight and obesity.

Encouraging people to eat healthier foods requires that basic information about food nutrients and healthy diets is available, and understandable, to consumers. While adults may understand nutritional guidelines but not put them into practice, kids may have difficulty even understanding basic nutritional information that can help them make healthy food choices. The Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990 (NLEA) was implemented by the U.S. government with the goal of providing more complete, useful, and accurate nutrition information that had previously been available on food packages so consumers would have the information needed to make healthy food choices (U.S. Food and Drug Administration 1995). However, despite the increased efforts to provide standardized, accurate information about nutrients in food and nutritional guidelines, the U.S. faces even higher rates of overweight and weight-related health problems than ever before, and public health officials are alarmed at the rapidly rising rate of weight-related health problems in children.

This study examines how much 7-12 year old children understand about nutritional information and labeling on food packages. Previous marketing and developmental psychology research has demonstrated that kids have difficulty understanding information that requires abstract or hypothetical thinking, as much of the nutrition guidelines and information require. We would expect some type of comprehension deficit in kids, but we lack studies that examine the nature of these deficits or how we can provide more appropriate information to kids to guide their food choices.

This study qualitatively explored kids' knowledge and understanding of nutritional information, and their use of nutritional information appearing on food packages. A snowball sample of 7-12 year olds resulted in four split-gender focus groups (20 children) and ten one-on-one interviews. Focus group participants were shown empty packages from foods commonly consumed by kids their age and were asked to show and talk about the nutritional information on the package. In the interviews, participants were asked questions about their general nutritional knowledge, perceptions, influences, inferences, and decisions.

Results of this study reveal that kids demonstrate wide variance in their levels of nutrition knowledge. This variance is often related to educational situation factors such as where nutrition is taught in the curriculum and whether the child attends public school, private school, or is home schooled. Both nuclear and extended family members appear to have significant influence on children's nutritional knowledge and the kids often go to a family member who they believe is most knowledgeable for guidance on food choices. Children also are very attentive to parents' discussions of nutrition, foods, and diets and could identify and discuss extensively the various diets their parents were using. Nutrition

information learned at school is often reinforced and validated at home, but mostly through pejorative statements about "fat people" and the relationship between food and disease.

Participants stated that they do not read food package information, unless they are bored while they are already eating, and they do not use package labeling to make food choices. They rely on schema (i.e., "fruits are healthy") or they ask a parent if they can eat a particular item. They have simple knowledge of basic nutritional markers such as calories and sugar, but express great confusion about the extended information on food labels. They have great difficulty understanding the various types of nutrients listed on nutrition labels and they do not understand % RDA recommendations. When the children could not understand the nutritional label information, they often turn to other visuals on the package and use these as cues for nutritional quality (i.e. pictures of fruit, marshmallows, cartoon characters, or pictures of children on a package).

These findings suggest that marketers, food companies, and health officials need to seek better ways to communicate nutritional information to kids via product packaging. Perhaps the use of a more visually-presented model can do a more effective job of providing information. Additionally, more research is needed to help researchers and health officials understand how kids interpret abstract information such as calories and even serving sizes, in order to provide kids with better tools for managing portion control. There also appears to be a need for attention to mandatory nutrition education standards.

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Do Products Smile? When Fluency Confers Liking and Enhances Purchase Intent

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SESSION OVERVIEW

A recent ad for a tri-zone watch (where the face of the watch is split in three sections corresponding to three different time zones) carried a picture in which all three zones were simultaneously set at 10:10 am. Other watch-advertisers follow similar practice, employing ads showing several watches all set at 10:10 am, and car manufacturers sometimes curve the edges of the front grill up at the sides just a little. Whereas some suggest aesthetic or functional reasons for these practices, marketing folklore advocates that this makes the product appear as smiling to the consumer, and enhances liking and purchase intent of the product. Academic research based on processing fluency, however, suggests that this is not the case and that although liking and purchase intent sometimes increases, this is not because the product is smiling.

In investigating factors that enhance liking and purchase intent, three papers in this session build on the processing fluency model. The fluency model posits that liking of objects is influenced by the ease (or difficulty) associated with processing physical features of the object (perceptual fluency, e.g., Zajonc 1968) or in assigning meaning to the object (e.g., Whittlesea 1993). Adding to this literature, in the first paper, Labroo, Dhar, and Schwarz show that liking judgments are enhanced from perceptual ease of processing the target, and further suggest that perceptual ease can be manipulated through closely-related specific concepts. They find, in three studies, that prior exposure to a watch enhances later liking of the watch. However, a minor mismatch (displayed time 10:10, resembling a smiling face, vs. 8:20, resembling a sad face) between the watch at exposure and evaluation eliminates this fluency effect. Similarly, overexposure to the watch decreases liking; but again, a minor mismatch (displayed time 10:10 vs. 8:20) eliminates this disfluency effect. Finally, conceptual priming (“watch” and “smile” words) enhances liking of a “smiling” watch (10:10 display), relative to non-specific activation (“watch” related words only) or baseline conditions.

In the second paper, Aggarwal and McGill test two competing explanations—mimicry versus fluency—for differences in consumer responses to products that have human-like features, such as a smile or a frown. Mimicry-based explanation suggests that people will evaluate an object more positively when it is perceived to be smiling than frowning and that this difference will be larger when the object is seen as a living being. Fluency-based explanation suggests that smiling leads to higher evaluations than frowning when perceived as a living being (people smiling are likely more common than frowning ones) but the reverse when perceived as an inanimate object (if frown is more compatible with product features or goals of the perceiver). Results of a laboratory study provide support for the fluency-based explanation over its alternative.

Extending fluency effects to likelihood of engaging in a behavior, the final paper by Janiszewski and Chandon presents evidence from seven studies showing that processing fluency also contributes to the mere measurement effect. Previously, the mere measurement has been attributed to the increased accessibility of the information supporting the attitude toward the behavior. Janiszewski and Chandon suggest that a second source of the mere measurement effect may be the redundancy in the processes used to generate the mere measurement response and the processes used to decide whether or not to engage in the behavior. Process redun-

dancy creates a fluency that can be interpreted as supportive of the behavioral tendency. That the degree of overlap between the two sets of processes affects extent of behavioral intent is compatible with data reported in this session by Labroo et al. wherein liking of products emerges from an exact match between the prime and target.

Stijn van Osselaer served as discussant on this session. Van Osselaer’s research focuses extensively on understanding memory processes, in particular, how accessibility toward cognitive constructs affects consumer judgment, and the three papers included in the session form a cohesive set within this area, but each with unique findings.

“Of Smiling and Frowning Watches: Stimulus Specificity in Perceptual Fluency”

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Norbert Schwarz, University of Michigan

Several studies suggest that liking of objects is influenced by the ease (or difficulty) experienced by consumers in processing information relating to the product (see, Schwarz 2004). This facilitation (impairment) is associated with the ease of processing physical features of the object (perceptual fluency, e.g., Zajonc 1968) or in assigning meaning to the object (e.g., Whittlesea 1993). Whereas perceptual fluency is stimulus-specific and sensitive to changes in features (e.g., Mandler, Nakamura, and Van Zandt 1987), conceptual fluency arises without prior exposure to the stimulus, although those results are more mixed. Some authors report enhanced liking from prior conceptual activation (e.g., Lee and Labroo 2004), others do not always find the effect (e.g., Nedungadi 1990). Note that the former authors induced specific expectations of seeing the target by manipulating the context; however, this was not the case in the latter studies. It is possible that conceptual fluency is also stimulus specific and enhances liking only when the primed concepts are closely related to the target. Three studies were designed to investigate this and examine the extent of match required between a prime and a target to enhance liking.

Experiment 1 followed a 3(prime: control; watch set at 10:10, resembling a smiling face; watch set at 8:20, resembling a sad face) x 2(target: watch set at 10:10, watch set at 8:20) between-subjects design. The experiment followed a two-stage procedure whereby participants first evaluated one of three prime-storyboards and then indicated liking toward the target watch. The results indicated that prior exposure to the 10:10 watch increased liking of the 10:10 but not of an 8:20 watch. Similarly, prior exposure to a watch set at 8:20 increased liking of the 8:20 but not of a 10:10 target. Note that the evaluation of storyboard prime did not differ, nor did mood or involvement differ across conditions. The data thereby indicated that an exact perceptual match is required to enhance liking of a target and that a minor mismatch of features can remove any enhancement in liking. Furthermore, conceptual fluency effects were not observed in these data and a single prior exposure of the mismatched watch did not enhance liking of the target over baseline liking. In particular, prior exposure to the 8:20 watch, relative to not seeing any watch, did not increase liking of the 10:10 target; nor did prior exposure to the 10:10 watch enhance liking of the 8:20 target.

It is possible that conceptual fluency requires more extensive elaboration of the prime-watch to enhance liking of other (mismatched) watches. Also, it is possible that participants generated prime-specific meaning (e.g., “10:10 is in the morning and...”), and so liking of the matched but not mismatched watch increased. It is not clear why participants should elaborate specifically about the time and not watches in general; however, experiment 2 was set up to rule out these possibilities. Elaboration was manipulated by number of prior exposures, and the experiment followed a 2(prime: 10:10 vs. 8:20) x 2(target: 10:10 vs. 8:20) x 2(exposure of prime: one vs. seven) design. If the results of experiment 1 are a matter of calibration, then seven (vs. one) exposures should enhance liking of the mismatched target (via enhanced elaboration about watches). Also, if prime-specific meaning was generated by participants, then seven (vs. one) exposures should enhance liking of the matched target (via enhanced prime-specific elaboration). However, if the results are from perceptual fluency, then overexposure of the prime (e.g., Kruglanski, Freund, and Bar-Tal 1996) will enhance boredom and decrease liking of the matched but not mismatched target. Indeed, seven relative to one exposure decreased liking of the matching targets. Moreover, liking of the perceptually-mismatched targets was not affected by number of prior exposures. This enhances our confidence that the observed effects are perceptual, not conceptual.

Experiment 3 was designed to test whether perceptual-fluency effects are also stimulus specific when conceptual cues are employed to prime the perceptual features of the target. Participants first completed a word-jumble task (priming phase) in a 2 (prime words: smile versus frown) x 2 (prime words: control versus watch-related) x 2 (target watch: 10:10 versus 8:20) between-subjects design. The data indicate an enhancement in liking of the 10:10 watch when people are primed with words relating to “smile” and “time,” but an enhancement in liking of the 8:20 watch when people are primed with “frown” and “time.” This suggests that conceptual fluency, like perceptual fluency, is stimulus specific and requires prior activation of meaning that is specific to subsequent processing of the target. As a set, these studies speak to the specific nature of perceptual fluency.

“Is That Car Smiling at Me? Schema Congruity as a Basis for Evaluating Anthropomorphized Products”

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Anthropomorphizing, that is, seeing the human in nonhuman forms, pervades human judgment (Guthrie, 1993). Furthermore, marketers commonly encourage consumers to see their products in human terms. Hence, people sometimes see their cars as loyal companions; they argue with, cajole, and scold malfunctioning computers and engines. Prior research also reveals that products may be seen as having consciousness or a soul (Gilmore 1919), an underlying defining essence, analogous to a genetic code (McGill 1998), personalities (Aaker 1997; Keller 2002), and relationships (Aggarwal 2004; Fournier 1998). In addition, people apply social norms of reciprocity in their interactions with computers (Moon 2000; Moon and Nass 1998).

Although the tendency to anthropomorphize is pervasive, people do not anthropomorphize all objects nor are they able to anthropomorphize different objects with equal ease. The ability to anthropomorphize depends on the presence of specific features. For example, movement in an object can often create the impression that it is alive (Hieder and Simmel 1944; Tremoulet and Feldman 2000) as can sounds/voices, facial features, intentionality, imitation, and communication ability (Dennett 1996).

The primary questions that this research attempts to address are whether an anthropomorphized presentation of a product affects its evaluation and, if so, how? Our central hypothesis is that when marketers encourage consumers to anthropomorphize a product, consumers bring to mind their schema for human beings and that the product is evaluated in part by how well its features fit that human schema (Fiske 1982; Mandler 1982; Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989). Depending on the characteristics of the object, therefore, consumers may or may not be able to see the analogy suggested by the marketer to successfully anthropomorphize the product. Thus, this research proposes schema congruity as a theoretical basis for examining the effectiveness of marketers' efforts to anthropomorphize their products.

This overall hypothesis is examined in two laboratory studies. In these studies, a human or an object schema is first triggered by encouraging participants to think of the product as being like a person or an object. Next, a new product is presented to them with a feature that is more or less congruent with the human schema. Finally, the dependent variables are administered.

Study 1 uses a car as the target product. Prior research suggests that smiling faces are more familiar (Baudouin, et al. 2000), and that smile is part of the human face schema (Martin and Rovira 1982). We manipulate the shape of a front grille of the car visual so that the edges point up to resemble a smile or down like a frown. We expected that the “smiling” car would be a better fit with the human schema than the “frowning” car. As a consequence, we predicted that when primed with a person schema, participants would be more likely to perceive a smiling car as a person and evaluate it more positively than a frowning car. The study was a 2 x 2 x 2 design with schema prime (person, object), facial feature (smile, frown) and car model (Lexus, Thunderbird) as the between-participants conditions with 120 undergraduate students as the participants. The results confirmed our hypotheses: participants primed with the human schema (but not the object schema) were more likely to see the car as person (2-item anthropomorphism score) and evaluate it more positively (15-item scale) when the target feature was more congruent (smiling) than less congruent (frowning) with the human schema. Further, the anthropomorphism score partially mediated the product evaluations. Finally, there were no differences across the conditions on an 11-item affect score—ruling out mood as an alternative explanation.

In order to get deeper insights into the underlying mechanism and further validation of the schema congruity hypothesis, study 2 was conducted. Thus, Study 2 also incorporated participants' thought protocols. We also wanted to rule out two alternative explanations: 1) product mimicry—which suggests that participants mimicked the smile of the car in the human schema condition, and this mimicry resulted in more positive evaluations (Chartrand and Bargh 1999), and 2) contingent quality—which suggests that a smile is seen as a better quality feature than a frown.

In study 2, we primed participants with a person or an object schema by telling them about the product “family” or the product “line” of a new beverage. The visual showed four bottles that were either identical in size, or they differed in size as well and placed in a way so as to suggest different individuals (much like different members of a family). A pre-test confirmed that people expect members of a family to be different sized—suggesting different sized bottles to be congruent with the human schema. As before, we expected participants primed with the human schema to be more likely to see the product as a person and evaluate it more positively when the feature was congruent (different sizes) than incongruent (same sizes). Also, since the bottle sizes (same vs. different) could not be mimicked, nor were they inherently better (or worse), this study rules out the two alternative explanations suggested earlier.

Ninety-two undergraduate students participated in this 2 (schema prime: person, object) x 2 (bottle sizes: same, different) between-participants study. Results showed that participants in the person prime (but not the object prime) condition who saw different sized bottles were more likely to perceive the beverage as a person and evaluate it more positively relative to the other conditions. Further, coding of the thought protocols showed that these participants made more schema-match related comments compared to the others. Finally, the anthropomorphism score (3-items) partially mediated the product evaluation (18-item) score.

Our research offers a framework to better understand the phenomenon of anthropomorphism. Two studies provide support for schema-congruity theory as the underlying theoretical basis for explaining consumers' evaluations of anthropomorphized products. Our findings also offer marketing managers specific guidelines of how to ensure a successful anthropomorphism of their products. Future research that delves more deeply into the evaluation of anthropomorphized products is awaited.

“Transfer Appropriate Processing, Response Fluency, and the Mere Measurement Effect”

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There is considerable evidence that the mere measurement of intent influences subsequent preference judgments, behavioral intent, and behavior (cf. Morwitz and Fitzsimons 2004; Spangenberg and Greenwald 1999). Specific intent questions can influence specific behavior (e.g., Greenwald et al. 1987; Sherman 1980) or general behavior (e.g., Spangenberg and Obermiller 1996) and general intent question can influence general behavior (e.g., Morwitz, Johnson, and Schmittlein 1993) or specific behavior (e.g., Fitzsimons and Morwitz 1996; Morwitz and Fitzsimons 2004). Moreover, mere measurement influences the performance of shopping behaviors, health-related activities, and pro- or anti-social behaviors (cf. Morwitz and Fitzsimons 2004).

The pervasiveness of the mere measurement effect makes the identification of a single underlying process difficult. Short-term, ephemeral mere measurement effects have been attributed to semantic priming and information accessibility. For example, Fitzsimons and Shiv (2001) propose that prior consideration of information about a target will influence subsequent judgments about the target because the prior information remains accessible and contaminates the subsequent judgment (see also Fitzsimons and Williams 2000). Long-term, persistent mere measurement effects have been attributed to the increased accessibility of attitudes (Fitzsimons and Morwitz 1996) and the increased accessibility of normative beliefs (Spratt, Spangenberg, and Fisher 2003). Morwitz and colleagues (Chandon, Morwitz, and Reinartz 2004; Dholakia and Morwitz 2002; Fitzsimons and Morwitz 1996; Morwitz and Fitzsimons 2004) provide evidence suggesting preexisting attitudes exert a strong, long-term influence on brand loyalty and consumption as a consequence of being measured.

It is possible that there is an additional source of the mere measurement effect. There is now considerable evidence that people are not only sensitive to the content of the information generated in cognition, but also to the characteristics of the processes used to generate the information (Klinger and Greenwald 1994; Schwarz 2004; Whittlesea and Leboe 2000). Processing fluency refers to the ease of executing a cognitive activity, whether it be the generation of a perception (i.e., perceptual fluency), the retrieval of information from memory (i.e., retrieval fluency), or the assigning of meaning to an event (i.e., conceptual fluency). Attributions about processing fluency have been shown to influence judgments about preference, truth, and memory (Hasher, Goldstein,

and Toppino 1977; Mandler, Nakamura, and Van Zandt 1987; Whittlesea, Jacoby, and Girard 1990) as well as influence eating behavior, social interaction, and compliance with requests (Burger et al. 2001; Capaldi 1996; Zajonc 1968). We propose a similar bias, based on the processing fluency of response planning, can contribute to the mere measurement effect.

This article investigates the influence of mere measurement on subsequent intentions to purchase the product. Our objective is to show that attributions about the processing fluency experienced during response planning, termed response fluency, can contribute to the mere measurement effect. We will show that response fluency effects are independent of information accessibility and attitude accessibility effects, while acknowledging both information content and attributions about process contributed to mere measurement effects. In experiment 1, we show that response fluency increases a subsequent purchase intention. Experiments 2A and 2B show that it is the degree of overlap in the processing activities used to answer the mere measurement question and the processing activities used to respond to the purchase intention question that creates the response fluency responsible for the mere measurement effect. Experiment 3 and 4 identify a boundary condition of the response fluency effect, showing attributions about response fluency are limited to situations where response fluency is high relative a baseline. Experiment 5 documents that people will not rely on attributions about response fluency when more diagnostic information is available.

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Joint Versus Separate Evaluations of Mental Accounts

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We can measure preferences one alternative at a time (*separate evaluations*, e.g., Choose Brand A or not choose Brand A; Choose Brand B or not choose Brand B), or many alternatives at a time (*joint evaluations*, e.g., Choose Brand A, or choose Brand B, or choose neither). Research typically shows that if one alternative is more attractive in a particular evaluation (say, Brand A is more popular than Brand B in separate evaluations), it is less so in the other evaluation (Brand A is less popular than Brand B in joint evaluations; see, for example, Hsee and Leclerc, 1998). Such preference reversals often occur because consumers shift from a within category processing in separate evaluations (consider Brand A only, or consider Brand B only) to reconciling across category differences in joint evaluation (how Brand A compares to Brand B; Bazerman, Moore, Tenbrunsel, Wade-Benzoni, and Blount, 1999).

In this paper, we extend the study of joint versus separate evaluation effects to mental accounting, a form of cognitive book-keeping that consumers often use to evaluate transactions (Thaler, 1980, 1985). In mental accounting, consumers organize the costs and benefits of a transaction within that transaction's mental account. If separate evaluations encourage consumers to look only within one mental account, but joint evaluation encourages broader across account comparisons (e.g., how the costs in one account compare to the costs in another account), it is conceivable that the mental accounting process itself may be susceptible to separate and joint evaluation effects.

In the first experiment, we consider the theater ticket problem from Kahneman and Tversky (1984). Upon entering the theater, Consumer A discovers that she has lost the \$10 ticket, and Consumer B discovers that she has lost a \$10 bill. Mental accounting predicts that B is more likely to buy the theater ticket than A because B will organize the lost \$10 bill in a wealth account (and keep it separate from her theater decision), but A will organize the lost \$10 ticket directly into her theater cost. We, however, expect that the mental accounting prediction will hold in separate evaluations but not in joint evaluation. In separate evaluations, we can make out that there is a qualitative difference between A's theater decision (\$10 cost) and B's theater decision (\$0 cost). In joint evaluation, however, as our focus shifts to comparing the costs across the two consumers, we can see that both consumers are equally worse off (A is \$10 poorer in her theater account, and B is \$10 poorer in her wealth account). To test our predictions, we have three separate groups of participants read about (1) Consumer A, or (2) Consumer B, or (3) both Consumer A and Consumer B. As predicted, we find that the mental accounting prediction is supported in separate evaluations but not in joint evaluation.

In the second experiment, we consider the basketball game problem from Thaler (1980). Here, Consumer A has to decide whether or not to brave a snowstorm and drive to a basketball game for which she has already paid \$40, whereas Consumer B faces the same decision, except that she got the ticket for free. Mental accounting predicts that A is more likely to drive to the game because closing the game account, with a \$40 cost already in it, is too painful. B, on the other hand, is not wasting money by not going to the game, so she has, in that sense, nothing to lose (other than the enjoyment of the game). In this case, we expect that the mental accounting prediction will hold in joint evaluation, but not in separate evaluations. Unlike the \$10 bill in the previous example,

which could have been used for any purpose, it is difficult to separate the cost of driving to the game from the game itself. In separate evaluations therefore, we cannot easily distinguish between A's tradeoff (risking a dangerous drive to get the satisfaction of not wasting \$40) and B's tradeoff (risking a dangerous drive to enjoy the game). When the scenarios are presented jointly, however, all other costs and benefits remaining the same, the paid ticket becomes salient when it is compared to a free ticket. To test our predictions, we have three separate groups of participants read about (1) Consumer A, or (2) Consumer B, or (3) both Consumer A and Consumer B. As predicted, we find that the mental accounting prediction is supported in joint evaluation but not in separate evaluations.

In Experiment 3, we make one change to the basketball game problem. Instead of reading about a snowstorm, participants are told that the consumer will have to spend \$40 in transportation should she want to go the game. Thus, Consumer A must spend \$40 for transportation in addition to the \$40 for the ticket, while Consumer B, with a free ticket, must spend \$40 on transportation. Mental accounting predicts that, in this case, A is less likely to go the game. Making the expenses easy to track, the extra \$40 transportation costs de-escalates the sunk cost faced by A (Heath, 1995). However, as before, we expect that the mental accounting prediction will be supported in joint evaluation but not in separate evaluations. In joint evaluation, when the two amounts are presented together, we can see that the cost of attending the game is double for A relative to B. In separate evaluations, however, since the two costs cannot be compared, it is hard to judge who is spending more money (i.e., \$80 is a lot of money, but so is \$40). To test our predictions, we have three separate groups of participant read about (1) Consumer A, or (2) Consumer B, or (3) both Consumer A and Consumer B. We find that the mental accounting prediction is supported in joint evaluations, but not in separate evaluations.

Our results cast the normative status of mental accounting in doubt. It appears that consumers are unable to decide whether mental accounting is good for them or bad for them, as is evident by their shifting preferences across joint and separate evaluations. This, however, offers an opportunity to educate consumers. If some outcomes of mental accounting are not desired, encouraging consumers to think in both separate and joint evaluation modes may show that what they think is attractive in one condition is not so in the other.

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The Effects of Mixed Bundling on Consumers' Inferences and Choices

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

For several product categories like cars, computers, vacation packages, and new homes, consumers choose not only the product itself, but also various options for the product. When sellers offer such products to consumers, they make decisions about presentation format. For example, a computer manufacturer like Dell can offer different models of computers featuring different options, or they can offer a base model and give consumers a choice of options (Huffman and Kahn 1998). Further, if the seller offers a base model with options, the options can either be offered individually or in bundles of multiple options (Venkatesh and Mahajan 1993).

Economic theory predicts that when bundles are not discounted, consumers' option choices should be the same regardless of whether options are presented individually or in bundles. However, this prediction assumes that consumers' reservation prices for individual options do not change across presentation formats. Empirical evidence suggests that consumers' valuations for options can be influenced by the presentation format (e.g., Huffman and Kahn 1998; Park, Jun and MacInnis 2000). In this paper, we examine how cues such as whether the options are offered as part of an option package and how the option package is labeled, affect consumers' inferences and choices.

While there is a substantial body of research considering incentives for sellers to bundle products and options, and optimal bundling strategies in various situations, there is much less research considering consumers' inferences when they encounter bundles of options. For example, suppose that a computer manufacturer offers Microsoft Office software, a modem, an extended warranty and a printer as an option package in addition to offering these options and other options individually. If customers can purchase the bundled options individually, and the options in the bundle are not discounted, then offering the bundle does not materially change the consumer's choice set. However, we argue that as consumers evaluate an offer, they make inferences about the options that are offered based on various cues, such as whether certain options are bundled together into option packages, and how these option packages are labeled. Consumers may infer that these options are bundled together because they are more important or because the package was designed to target certain groups of consumers. Such inferences are argued to change consumers' valuations for the bundled options.

We test our predictions in a series of three studies. Study 1 shows that offering an option as part of a bundle significantly increases the likelihood that the option is chosen relative to otherwise similar options that are not part of the bundle. Participants were more likely to choose options that had been included in the bundle than options not included in the bundle. Providing evidence for the robustness of this effect, the same pattern was replicated for three different products categories.

The description of the option package further affects consumers' valuations for options that are bundled together. For example, if an option package is labeled "Collegiate Package" instead of "Option Package," consumers are likely to infer that college students—but not necessarily other consumers—would find these options particularly useful. Therefore, this label is expected to increase the number of college students who buy at least some of the options in this bundle, but decrease the number of non-college students who purchase options included in the bundle.

Studies 2 and 3 demonstrate that the way an option package is labeled can change consumers' perceptions of the appropriateness of the bundle for them, resulting in changes in the purchase likelihoods for options in the bundle. Consumers draw inferences about the value of the options to them based on the presence of the bundle and the label of the bundle, and these inferences influence their choices. The results of studies 2 and 3 suggest that the label of the bundle moderates the effect of presenting options as part of a bundle that was shown in study 1. Moreover, we show that study 1's effect is not due to anchoring or salience, because the inferences and the labels given to the bundles affect the options selected.

Our findings from these three experimental studies underscore the importance of the presentation format in influencing consumers' choices of options for products. Because consumers make inferences based on cues such as whether certain options are bundled together into option packages, and how these option packages are labeled, these cues can systematically affect their choices. These inferences may explain why consumers continue to encounter many examples of mixed bundling even when online ordering and flexible manufacturing reduce the costs of customization.

On-Line versus Memory-based Information Credibility Inferences: Implications for Memory-based Product Judgments

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ABSTRACT

Product quality judgments based on retrieved information should take the credibility of the information source into account. We used information complexity to manipulate cognitive resources during information processing and used information processing goals to trigger either on-line or memory-based information credibility assessments. Our results suggest that consumers may take source credibility into account if they assess it on-line or if they have the cognitive capacities to store the source during information processing. Otherwise, source credibility may have no impact on product quality judgments. In addition, our results suggest that source credibility effects on perceived quality may be mediated by information trust.

INTRODUCTION

Consumers often have to make quality judgements with respect to products of which they have received information in the past. Obviously, to make adequate memory-based product judgements, consumers need to retrieve as much information about the product as possible. In addition, as the information may stem from multiple sources (e.g. from advertising, consumer reports, friends, ...) that may vary in credibility, consumers have to take the information into account to the extent that the retrieved information is trustworthy, or, equivalently, to the extent that its source is credible. This implies that, for each retrieved piece of information, people also need to retrieve the source of the information and assess its credibility. Studies on the sleeper effect (Kumkale and Albarracín 2004) have shown that people may not always be able to do so. In fact, it appears that persuasive information may have an increasing impact over time, simply because people forget the source of the information, or, at least, are no longer able to match the various pieces of information with the various sources.

Drawing on the distinction between on-line and memory-based (product) judgments (cf. Hastie and Park 1986), we propose that people may make either on-line or memory-based inferences with respect to the credibility of the information they receive. On-line credibility inferences are inferences that are made while the information is being received, whereas memory-based credibility inferences are inferences that are made when the information is retrieved from memory. Clearly, accurate memory-based credibility inferences require that consumers are able to recall the source of each specific piece of information that is retrieved. The proposed distinction between on-line and memory-based credibility inferences may help to identify the conditions under which source credibility may affect memory-based product judgments. There are two possibilities. First, if consumers have made an on-line credibility inference, we assume that they integrate and code this information with the product information. As a result, consumers will be able to take into account the credibility of the information upon retrieval. Whether or not they can retrieve the source of the information should not affect the ability to retrieve credibility information. Second, if consumers have not made an on-line assessment of the credibility of the information, adequately judging the credibility of the information requires that they can retrieve the source of the information. Clearly, retrieving the source of the

information, in turn, requires that consumers have stored the source in the first place. Therefore, whether or not they can retrieve the information source should strongly affect the ability to retrieve credibility information in this case. If consumers lack the cognitive resources at the time they process the information, they may not store the source of the information at all. As a result, they will not be able to adequately account for the credibility of the information later on. Their memory-based product judgments, then, will not be affected by the source credibility.

In sum, the proposed distinction between on-line and memory-based credibility inferences implies that if consumers make an on-line credibility inference, their subsequent memory-based product judgments will reflect source credibility, irrespective of cognitive load. In contrast, if consumers have not made an on-line credibility inference (i.e. have to make a memory-based credibility inference), their subsequent memory-based product judgments will reflect the source credibility only if they had sufficient cognitive resources to process the information and store the source.

In studies on product judgments and person impressions, processing goals are used to have participants make either on-line judgments or memory-based judgements (e.g., Lichtenstein and Srull 1987). Likewise, we asked half of the participants to assess the information credibility of the information they are presented with (credibility condition) in order to trigger on-line credibility inferences. We asked the other half to assess the comprehensibility of the information for average consumers, which reduces the need for on-line credibility judgments (comprehension condition).

The information credibility was manipulated using 'suspicions of ulterior motives' (cf. DeCarlo 2005; Fein 1996). Although information credibility may depend on various source factors, like source expertise or source liking, suspicions in ulterior motives may be more interesting for our research. In particular, inferences about ulterior motives may be cognitively more demanding than inferences about source expertise and source liking. In fact, inferences about source expertise and source liking may be made somewhat automatic (i.e. on-line), whereas inferences about ulterior motives may require more controlled processes (i.e. made either on-line or memory-based, depending on the goal one has while processing the information).

Cognitive load may be induced in various ways ranging from very artificial (e.g. memorizing 7 digits, Shiv and Fedorikhin 1999) to natural (e.g. time pressure, Park, Iyer, and Smith 1989). We decided to manipulate cognitive load by using complex versus simple information, based on the fact that, in natural settings, information varies considerably in complexity. Processing complex information requires more cognitive resources than processing simple information (Daneman and Merikle 1996). Therefore, source information may not be stored spontaneously in complex information conditions. Taken together, source credibility should affect product judgments if consumers focus on credibility, irrespective of information complexity. In contrast, if consumers focus on information comprehensibility, source credibility should affect product judgements for simple product information but not for complex product information.

METHOD

Participants

For a participation fee of 6 Euro, 157 students from the University of Leuven took part in a one-hour experimental session that included the current experiment (mean age=21.77 years; 23% male).

Procedure

Participants arrived at the lab in groups of 5 to 8 and were seated in separate cubicles. They were told that they would receive information about a product or service. Half of the participants had to assess how understandable the information was for average consumers (comprehension condition) whereas the other half had to judge how credible the information was (credibility condition). Participants received either uniformly positive information about a 'new food supplement that could diminish the effects of aging' or uniformly positive information about an established restaurant. The food supplement was described in terms of chemical substances and their purported beneficial effect on various old-age illnesses (complex information). In contrast, the restaurant was described in very simple terms (simple information). Half of the participants received the information from a source that stood to gain from it (the firm that made the food supplement or the restaurant owner: dependent source condition) or from an independent source (FDA and a restaurant guide, respectively: independent source condition). After participants received the information and gave their credibility or comprehension judgment (depending on their processing goal), they were also asked to rate how well they had understood the information. The program then closed and participants engaged in an unrelated task that lasted about 5 minutes. Afterwards, participants were asked three questions about the product/service on which they had received information. They were asked to indicate on an 11-point scale (ranging from 0 to 10) how good they thought the product/service was, how good they thought it would be compared to competing products/services and how convinced they were that the product/service was good. They then were asked to type in as much information they could still remember. Finally, they were asked three questions about their trust in the information they had received. They were asked to indicate on a 11-point scale (ranging from 0 to 10) how objective they thought the information was, how much they would trust the information, and how much they would trust the source of the information.

RESULTS

Manipulation checks

Information complexity. We analyzed the participants' self-proclaimed understanding of the information using a 2 (processing goal: credibility versus comprehension assessment) x 2 (information complexity: simple versus complex) x 2 (source: dependent versus independent) between-subjects ANOVA. Complex information ($M=5.74$) was judged to be less comprehensible for the participant than simple information ($M=9.03$), $F(1,149)=88.39$, $p<.001$. The other factors did not affect comprehensibility.

In the comprehension condition, we had also obtained ratings of how well the average consumer would understand the information. We analyzed these ratings using a 2 (information complexity: simple versus complex) x 2 (source: dependent versus independent) between-subjects ANOVA. Consistent with the previous, complex information ($M=4.29$) was judged to be less comprehensible for average consumers than simple information ($M=6.89$), $F(1,76)=19.28$, $p<.001$.

Information credibility. In the credibility condition, we had obtained information credibility ratings. We analyzed these ratings using a 2 (information complexity: simple versus complex) x 2 (source: dependent versus independent) between-subjects ANOVA. Information from a dependent source ($M=5.50$) was judged to be less credible than information from an independent source ($M=6.60$), $F(1,73)=5.59$, $p<.05$. Information credibility, then, seems to be affected by the source manipulation as intended. Unexpectedly, information complexity also affected information credibility, $F(1,73)=10.35$, $p<.01$. Complex information ($M=5.29$) was judged to be less credible than simple information ($M=6.80$). Although one must be cautious to interpret this difference as such because the complex information involves another domain than the simple information, a reading of the recall protocols does support our interpretation: Quite a few participants commented that the technical jargon in the 'food supplement information' may have been used to persuade people through authority arguments that preclude potential consumers to critically process the information. This apparently raised suspicions about the product. Note that this counteracts our hypothesis, because complex information apparently raises suspicion in itself, which probably facilitates the encoding of consistent (suspicious) source information. Finally, it is important to point out the total lack of interaction between source and information complexity, $F(1,73)=0.08$, $p>.77$. This suggests that the source affected information credibility similarly in the simple information condition as in the complex information condition.

Trust ratings

The three judgements with respect to information and source credibility were averaged to form a general index of 'information trust' (Cronbach alpha=.80) that was analyzed using a 2 (information complexity: simple versus complex) X 2 (processing goal: credibility assessment versus comprehension assessment) X 2 (source: dependent versus independent) between-subjects ANOVA.

Not surprisingly, we replicated the effect of information complexity that was obtained for the information credibility judgements, $F(1,149)=5.35$, $p<.05$. Complex information ($M=4.82$) was trusted less than simple information ($M=5.48$). More pertinent for our research question, a main effect of source was obtained, $F(1,149)=16.91$, $p<.001$. Overall, information from an independent source ($M=5.74$) was trusted more than information from a dependent source ($M=4.56$). A planned contrast revealed that the source affected the trust ratings in the two credibility conditions and the comprehension condition involving simple information, $F(1,149)=16.70$, $p<.001$. Moreover, the source effect did not differ over these three conditions, $F(1,149)=0.19$, $p>.83$. Another planned contrast showed that the source had no significant effect in the comprehension condition involving complex information, $F(1,149)=1.04$, $p>.30$. These results suggest that source affected trust in the credibility condition, irrespective of information complexity. In the comprehension condition, however, source affected trust only in the simple information condition.

Perceived quality.

The average of the three product/service quality judgements (Cronbach alpha=.84) was analyzed using a 2 (information complexity: simple versus complex) X 2 (processing goal: credibility assessment versus comprehension assessment) X 2 (source: dependent versus independent) between-subjects ANOVA.

The results parallel the results for the trust ratings. Information complexity affected perceived quality, $F(1,149)=53.45$, $p<.001$. Complex information ($M=4.97$) led to lower quality ratings than

TABLE1
Trust & Perceived quality as a function of Processing Goal, Information Complexity and Source
(dependent vs. independent)

Information:	credibility judgment		comprehension judgment	
	simple	complex	simple	complex
Source:	Information Trust			
dependent	4.73	4.32	4.77	4.41
independent	5.95	5.59	6.47	4.94
	Perceived Quality			
dependent	6.21	4.56	6.27	5.05
independent	6.86	5.26	7.16	5.00

simple information ($M=6.62$). In addition, a main effect of source was obtained, $F(1,149)=5.83, p<.05$. Overall, information from an independent source ($M=6.07$) led to higher perceived quality than information from a dependent source ($M=5.52$). A planned contrast revealed that the source affected perceived quality in the two credibility conditions and the comprehension condition involving simple information, $F(1,149)=7.65, p<.01$. The source effect did not differ over these three conditions, $F(1,149)=0.07, p>.93$. Another planned contrast showed that the source had no effect in the comprehension condition involving complex information, $F(1,149)=0.02, p>.89$.

Mediational analyses

We investigated if the effect of source on perceived quality was mediated by trust. Baron and Kenny (1986) suggest testing mediation using four steps. Above, we already showed that source (independent variable) affected trust (mediator) as well as perceived quality (dependent variable). Further, trust was highly correlated with perceived quality ($r=.58, p<.001$). Finally, a 2 (information complexity: simple versus complex) X 2 (processing goal: credibility assessment versus comprehension assessment) X 2 (source: dependent versus independent) between-subjects ANCOVA with trust as covariate and perceived quality as dependent variable, revealed that trust had a significant effect on perceived quality, $F(1,148)=65.41, p<.001$, whereas neither the main effect of source, nor any of the interactions involving source was significant, all $F_s<0.63, p>.42$. Information complexity continued to affect perceived quality, $F(1,149)=50.29, p<.001$. This direct effect of information complexity is probably due to theoretically unimportant differences between domains: People may perceive an established restaurant as being of (relatively) high quality where they may refrain inferring this level of quality for a new food supplement.

DISCUSSION

We hypothesized that consumers may infer information credibility on-line or memory-based. In addition, whereas on-line assessment of information credibility may not be affected by the cognitive load that is present during product information processing, memory-based information credibility inferences may be affected by the cognitive load that was present during product

information processing. We manipulated the cognitive load in processing the information using an intrinsic quality of the information, namely information complexity. In addition, on-line credibility inferences were elicited by asking participants to judge the credibility of the information whereas memory-based credibility inferences were elicited by asking participants to judge how well average consumers would understand the information. Our results are entirely consistent with our hypothesis. The source affected both trust in the information and perceived product/service quality in all conditions, except in the condition designed to trigger memory-based information credibility inferences when the information was hard to process (complex information). Moreover, mediational analyses revealed that the source effect of on perceived product/service quality was due to its effect on trust.

Whether or not consumers make on-line credibility inferences may depend on a variety of factors. The persuasion knowledge model (e.g., Friestad and Wright 1994) suggests that consumers may make on-line credibility inferences if a persuasion attempt is very blatant. For more subtle persuasion attempts, consumers may be able to make on-line credibility inferences only to the extent that they have sufficient cognitive resources. In addition, product involvement may also determine the likelihood of on-line credibility inferences. Indeed, on-line credibility inferences may be especially likely if people have already decided to buy a product from that category or if they have a strong interest in the product (i.e. if they have a high involvement in the product [category]). Finally, consumers may also differ in the extent to which they take information for granted: Some consumers may chronically be very sceptical of any information they receive, whereas others may, as a default, readily accept the information they receive. However, depending on the situation (salience of the persuasion attempt and product involvement), even less-sceptical consumers may become more sceptical when processing information.

Of course, several questions remain for future research. First of all, on-line inferences were triggered very directly by asking participants to assess information credibility. It remains to be seen whether on-line credibility inferences can be triggered more subtly through priming of scepticism or through alternative information processing goals. A related question is to what extent credibility inferences occur spontaneously in natural circumstances. Second, we obtained a direct effect of information complexity on trust and

perceived quality. As information complexity was confounded with information content, it appears necessary to replicate the current experiment using either a constant script and manipulate cognitive load externally, or continue to manipulate load internally through information complexity but keep the content of the script constant (e.g., using a simple and a complex food supplement script). Finally, our framework suggests that sleeper effects may be obtained particularly when consumers have failed to make an on-line credibility inference, but, nevertheless, had sufficient cognitive resources to store the source and the association between the source and the information. Consequently, it would be interesting to investigate how judgment delay affects trust and perceived quality in the various conditions that were used in the current experiment.

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Looking for Lake Wobegon: Why Sometimes We Are All Below Average

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In many product domains, consumers must evaluate their abilities as they compare to others' abilities. For instance, two consumers who disagree about which restaurant to visit together need to determine which of the two consumers is better at picking restaurants. However, evidence suggests that consumers cannot accurately gauge their own relative standing in many contexts (see Alba and Hutchinson 2000 for a comprehensive review). Kruger (1999) and others show that people are influenced by the difficulty of a task when they make estimates about their relative standing. When tasks seem easy, people on average believe they are above average. When tasks seem difficult, people on average think they are below average. Many researchers posit that this bias is due to an egocentric focus on the target of social predictions. People appear to attend to themselves and neglect information about the group average. Researchers point to strong correlations between participants' estimates of absolute ability and their estimated percentile and a weak or nonexistent correlation between estimates of average ability and estimated percentile. We will call this pattern of correlations "asymmetric weighting". In this paper, we explore the idea of asymmetric weighting in two ways: We identify one cause for asymmetry and we determine if this pattern is an error or not.

First, we determine whether or not the type of absolute estimate elicitation has an impact on asymmetric judgmental weights. We hypothesize that absolute estimates generated about one's "skill" evoke comparative rather than truly absolute judgments while absolute estimates generated about one's "score" will not show this tendency. In the first study, we manipulate how absolute estimates of performance are elicited on three different tasks—in terms of "skill" or in terms of "score". We find consistently greater asymmetric weighting when absolute estimates are provided on a "skill" measure than when they are provided on a "score" measure. This finding suggests that participants asymmetrically weight absolute information in judgments of relative standing only to the extent that this information is redundant with their subsequent relative estimate. Presumably, comparative thoughts ("skill") do not need to be supplemented with thoughts about the group average while singular thoughts ("score") must be composed of estimates of own and average performance. Since the "score" absolute measures were truly singular, participants should not *and did not* show egocentric attention to their absolute estimates.

In the second study, we test the hypothesis that symmetric weighting is "ideal" weighting of absolute information. We suggest that symmetric weighting does not necessarily produce accurate percentile estimates. Previous research has argued that a more normative weighting strategy (equal weight on one's own score and average person's score) would improve the accuracy of participants' percentile estimates and make biases less likely to occur. However, estimates made about others are surely less accurate and reliable than estimates made about oneself. We predicted that even a substantial amount of asymmetric weighting would not necessarily hurt participants' accuracy in percentile estimates. In fact, we expected that when the absolute information being weighted by participants was perfectly accurate, percentile estimates would be quite accurate despite some asymmetry.

To test this hypothesis, we varied the amount of feedback participants received about their own and the average participant's scores on a task. Then we ran regressions for each individual across

ten trials in order to determine how they weighted this information. We compared these weights to the *best* weights that they could have used with the provided information—the weights that would produce accurate percentile estimates. We found that participants were essentially weighting information about themselves and others in an "ideal" manner. While these weights were not symmetric, the weight given to the provided information was proportionally correct when it was compared to the ideal weights. Participants' error seemed to be simply too much weight on that information in general, not too much asymmetric weighting. Furthermore, as expected, accuracy in percentile estimates improved as each absolute estimate was replaced with actual absolute score.

These two studies shed light on the process decision makers use to evaluate themselves relative to others. Consumers do not necessarily egocentrically focus on themselves in this process. To the contrary, they symmetrically weight information about themselves and others when that information elicited in terms of "score"—a singular estimate. The second study demonstrates that "ideally", judges should employ some asymmetric weighting of information in most cases. Study 2 shows that, when consumers have no truly certain information about their or others' absolute performance, asymmetry is ideal. This makes sense given that information about oneself is more accessible than information about others. However, when consumers have access to both their own absolute ability and that of the group average, they are better off estimating their relative standing using both pieces of information to equal extents.

Of course, in life, consumers rarely have access to information about the performance of their reference group. Marketers can choose, however, to help consumers more accurately predict their relative standing. Because consumers will incorporate information about the median performance into their comparative assessments when that information is diagnostic, marketers may choose to provide it to their customers. The pro shop that tells the disappointed putter that the average person performs below her level can correct an irrationally low self-assessment. Similarly, the ski resort that takes the time to inform skiers that the average skier cannot ski down a triple black diamond slope can prevent its customers from a disappointing and dangerous experience. For these reasons, we believe that our results are an important addition to the growing body of research on consumer calibration.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Public Policy Prescriptions from Consumer Research

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SESSION OVERVIEW

In what ways can research on consumer behavior inform public policy and help to design more effective and more efficient policies? In the session “public policy prescriptions from consumer research” three papers that deal with a variety of consumer research topics exemplified their possible contribution to theory and demonstrated the overall applicability of research on consumer behavior for policy.

The field of consumer research continuously produces papers that give other researchers valuable new insights in understanding motives, goals, and reasons for why consumers act in certain ways under certain conditions. Surprisingly, little of this knowledge has ultimately been applied in real world to improve the quality of individual consumers’ decisions, their life in general, or our society’s welfare. The goal of this special session was to bring together research that has examined more directly questions related to social policy in an attempt to promote not only the particular topics of research (which are very interesting in and of themselves), but also the general theme of pursuing public policy as a goal for research.

The particular topics of the three papers are moral behavior, health, and fund raising. In essence, all three papers deal with the multiplicity of goals consumers face, their attention to these goals, and their pursuit of them—with the recognition that some of these goals represent the public good and some do not. The question of interest then is how to align the actions of the individuals with those of society at large. Joel Cohen, who is the editor of the *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing* and who has been involved in this intersection between consumer behavior research and public policy for a long time, discussed the three papers.

We hope that our call for more collaboration between these fields will invoke fruitful follow-up thoughts and discussions that will ultimately result in a larger role of consumer research in politics.

“Almost Honest: Internal and External Motives for Honesty”

Nina Mazar, On Amir, Dan Ariely

The standard rational model of human behavior in philosophy as well as economics assumes that individuals are motivated to maximize their selfish needs. In the domain of honesty and deception this representation of homo economicus means that individuals are honest only to the extent that the cost-benefit analysis of the dishonest act points in favor of honesty. In other words, the standard rational model of decisions about honesty and dishonesty is one in which these decisions are no different from any other decisions. In contrast, we sketch a psychological model in which we assume that decisions about honesty also include considerations of internal reward mechanisms. Such considerations imply that even without any external downsides to a dishonest act, individuals will consider being honest. Our current work tests the existence of such internal mechanisms by manipulating one factor that the standard rational model predicts would largely influence the tendency to be dishonest: the probability of being caught in the dishonest act, and one factor that the standard rational model predicts would not influence the tendency to be dishonest: awareness of the dishonest act (e.g., religious priming or having individuals sign a bogus honor code).

Our experimental results support our hypothesis that individuals possess internal reward mechanisms for honesty. In particular, first we show that when given the opportunity and incentives to be dishonest individuals do exhibit dishonest behavior but that this dishonest behavior is limited in its extent (limited by the degree to which dishonesty activates their internal reward mechanisms). Second, we show that when the probability of being caught further decreases, the tendency for dishonesty does not change substantially (we argue that this is based on the fact that the probability of being caught only changes the external, but not the internal rewards from honest behavior). Finally, our third finding is that increasing awareness of motivation for honesty dramatically decreases the tendency for dishonesty. This last finding seems to be in line with the notion that higher awareness might cause the internal mechanisms for rewards from honesty to be more active or to “kick in” earlier (see related experiments by Duval and Wicklund [1972] with, for example, mirrors).

We would like to argue that these results could offer a different perspective when thinking about how to design policies for punishments. If we were to adopt the standard rational model when designing policies, we would subscribe policies in which the expected magnitude of punishment is set to be larger than the possible benefits of a dishonest action (another option would be to increase the probability of being caught). In principle, such setups will make the cost of the dishonest act higher than the expected reward, and hence there should be no dishonest acts. To the extent that the standard rational model is incomplete, it might be useful to reconsider punishment policies. Such considerations would set the magnitude of punishments to be smaller than the possible benefits of dishonest actions in order to take into account not only the effects of the external rewards but also of the internal rewards. To illustrate this point imagine that for a particular possible crime the expected benefit is Y , and the internal positive reward for honesty is X . In this case the standard rational model would prescribe a punishment with expected magnitude of $-Y$ to offset Y , while the model that includes internal rewards would prescribe $-Y+X$ under the assumption that the joint magnitude of the two components influenced the decision to commit the dishonest act.

Another interesting difference between the standard rational model and our extended version of it relates to how both models treat cases in which crime and dishonesty do exist. In such cases, the standard rational model would suggest that the expected magnitude of the punishment is not sufficiently large, and it needs to be increased in order to prevent further crime. From the perspective of the model that includes internal rewards, the existence of crime and dishonesty could just as easily be attributed to low activity in the internal reward mechanisms. The recommendations under these conditions would be to invest in educational efforts to increase the internal mechanisms for rewards, which in turn would decrease the tendency for dishonest acts.

Finally, the perspective that includes internal reward mechanisms also suggests that there are immediate changes one could implement in the environment that would increase honesty. Much like the honor code manipulation in one of our experiments, one could imagine to ask people to sign an honor code just before starting to fill out their tax return forms. Similarly, for universities

and other educational institutions that are considering whether and how to implement an honor code the recommendation is simple: Implement the honor code and use an explicit and salient signature as an invoking cue for honesty.

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“A Repeated Decision-Making Framework for Understanding Decisions about Protective Measures: The ‘Magical Thinking’ Model”

Barbara E. Kahn, Mary Frances Luce

We believe that the use, and neglect, of protective measures is an issue with crucial public policy implications. As just one example, nationwide accidents from bicycle riding cause more childhood injuries than any other consumer product except automobiles but only 41% of children use bicycle helmets while riding. Clearly, it is in the public interest to encourage and reinforce helmet use. Most strategies for doing so focus on education as to the benefits of helmets. As such many people are aware of the advantages of bike helmets and own helmets, but still do not ensure that their children wear them every time they ride. In other words, educational campaigns have focused on motivating initial *compliance* and have not focused on the repeated *adherence* in use every time a child rides. Our research addresses this problem of repeated adherence to protective measures over time. We will review and provide empirical support for a model of adherence focused on the segment of people who are educated, and largely persuaded, about the benefits of protective measures (e.g., screening tests, safety precautions) and who have not experienced the relevant threats (e.g., disease diagnosis or accidents). This is a situation where a marketing approach is particularly relevant to public policy considerations (see Rothschild (1999) on distinctions among marketing, education, law).

We are concerned with the problem of lapsed use, whereby consumers who have initially adopted protective measures become less vigilant over time. We apply our model to two major classes of chronic behaviors. First, we have data from several experiments (published as well as ongoing) that address adherence and delay in the context of medical screening tests such as mammograms. Second, we will discuss extensions of our model and experimentation to non-medical protective measures such as bike helmet, car seat, or sunscreen use.

Our “magical thinking” model focuses on two problematic classes of events and their implications for repeated decision behavior. First, we focus on “false positive” events where the protective measure is used, the relevant threat does not occur, and there is some “hassle” associated with use of the protective measure (e.g., a false positive in mammography screening). For instance, our prior published work indicates that false positive mammography test results can reduce intentions to engage in cancer screening, unless coping resources are bolstered (Kahn & Luce 2003). Data collection that is currently underway suggests that these processes are moderated by individual difference factors as well as by one’s prior medical history.

We are currently extending our model to include a second set of problematic “false security” events. In work that is currently underway, we extend our focus to include situations where the protective measure is not used but again the threat is not realized. Initial tests of this model will occur within the domain of bike helmet use, focusing on why and how adherence declines as a function of previous behavior. In this domain, we hypothesize that declines occur because (1) if there is discomfort or stress involved

with wearing of the helmet and an accident does not occur, the perceived efficacy of the helmet diminishes and (2) if a helmet is not used, and an accident does not occur, perceived vulnerability to the threat diminishes. Although experiments currently in development focus on use of bicycle helmets, we suggest that our model will generalize to the patterns of behavior that exist for a wide variety of preventative measures (e.g., seatbelt use, cars seats, etc.) and screening behaviors.

Our theoretical approach to the effects of false positive and false security events on adherence begins with a normative, decision tree structure for the value of protective measures. We then augment that analysis with a more descriptive process model that has two components. First, we argue that incorrect causal inferences occur due to “magical thinking” or the erroneous interpretation of causality between two closely occurring events. We suggest consumers may incorrectly infer a causal relationship between the “false positive event (hassle)” or the “false security they feel” and subsequent evaluations of subjective probabilities associated with the decision to use the preventative measure. For instance, decision makers may incorrectly infer, or over-infer, from “failure” associated with hassle of a protective measure to relative efficacy. As another example, decision makers may incorrectly infer reduced vulnerability from a “false security” event. For instance, an individual may infer that it is generally acceptable to neglect bike helmets simply because negative outcomes do not follow from an instance of neglect. Second, we believe it is important to understand decision makers’ processes of emotion and coping, as protective measures address anxiety-provoking events (cancer, car accidents). We will also discuss how our model overlaps with, and diverges from the traditional health belief model, and similar approaches to health related decisions.

Our theoretical model provides several avenues for public policy application, as understanding the causes of adherence declines will allow us to suggest specific strategies and tactics to reverse these declines. First, because our approach relates behavior to a normative framework, it allows for calculation of normative, rational actions (some protective measures are not worth taking) and for comparison of actual behavior to model predictions. Further, it provides an “as if” framework for individual consumer behavior that may directly suggest avenues for intervention. We believe that there are three main classes of approach for public policy interventions following from our work. First, there is a “cognitive” debiasing approach rooted in the behavioral decision theory literature. This approach may allow for identifying and correcting biased interpretations people draw from prior behaviors (e.g., biased judgments of vulnerability). Second, there is an “emotional” approach based on emotional appeals and specific appraisal dimensions. This approach may suggest specific emotional appeals to signal goal relevance and mitigate the impact of reactions to “problematic” (False Positive or False Security) events. Finally, there is also a “behavioral” approach acknowledging that it may be possible to generate behavior that bypasses intention by creating habits. This could be beneficial in that it might provide some resistance to impact of factors such as negative evaluation given hassle or reduced subjective vulnerability given neglect of measure. More generally, we believe that by addressing the problem of repeated adherence to protective measures over time, we can uncover interventions with public policy benefits.

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“Social Psychological Motivations in Nonprofit Marketing”

Jen Shang, Rachel Croson

Recently funding for public goods such as education, healthcare, and other public services have become more dependent on local and voluntary funding sources, especially individual contributions, and less reliant on taxation and government grants. Local governments, schools and other nonprofit organizations have increasingly turned to private donations as a source of funding for public goods. In 2003, individual giving accounted for 74.5% of donations to nonprofits. One challenge facing policy-makers is to evaluate the effectiveness and permanence of this funding source, and to decide how much of its limited budget to allocate toward making nonprofits more effective in their fundraising as opposed to funding the nonprofit providing the public goods directly.

We identify social psychological motivations that impact the extent of voluntary funding through a survey of contributors to public radio stations. We use results from this survey to suggest interventions that can be used to increase this funding source, and use a field experiment to test these interventions. Our results suggest both tactics that nonprofits can use to increase their voluntary contributions, and publicity campaigns that policy-makers can use to increase voluntary contributions to these nonprofits (and thus decrease their reliance on governmental funding).

In the survey of current and lapsed members of public radio stations we elicit ratings of various motivations for giving, then correlate those ratings with self-reported contributions and actual contributions (matched back to the radio station's historical database). As expected, we find that individuals over-state their actual contributions; claiming that they contribute more than they actually do. However, we also find that the motivations that correlate with reported contributions are not the same as the motivations that correlate with actual contributions. Thus in addition to the substantive contributions, this part of the project also makes a methodological contribution to research in this area; the type of response seems to interact with motivations for giving.

One motivation identified in the survey is that of social norms (Fisher & Ackerman, 1998); individuals contribute because they believe others contribute, or because it is the appropriate thing to do. In the field experiment, we focus on the impact of social information and its impact on voluntary contributions to fund public radio. We test the impact of providing social information about another donor's contribution to targets in both on-air fund drives and mailing campaigns. We find that contributions are extremely responsive to this social information; they increase their contribution when the social information is higher than their previous contribution, and decrease it when the social information is lower. When social information is omitted or is the same as their previous contribution, they contributed the same amount as they did the year before. The differences in these changes are statistically significant ($F(2,296)=3.03, p=0.05$), and economically significant; the difference in the average contribution between the high and the low social information condition is over \$30 per donor, representing a 15% increase in contribution revenue.

It is also heartening to note that this social information effect is long-lasting. Having been exposed to higher social information does not affect the retention rate (likelihood of contributing the next year), and generates higher revenue in the subsequent year as well. Thus this intervention does not simply shift future intended contri-

bution to the present; it actually increases overall contribution and thus the extent of the public good provided.

A follow-up lab study searches for the causes of this effect. We find that the effect of social information on behavior is fully mediated by beliefs in the social norm (what others contribute and what is appropriate to contribute). Identifying this mechanism has the potential to help policy-makers in designing publicity campaigns encouraging voluntary contribution (and thus reducing the reliance of nonprofits on government funding); highlighting others who contribute high amounts or influencing beliefs of appropriate contribution is likely to have an impact on revenue from individual contributors.

In this research, we use field surveys and field experiments to investigate the motivations for, and impact of social psychological factors on, donors' contributions to nonprofit organizations that provide public goods. Increasing our understanding of these motivations can help policy-makers to make better decisions about designing publicity campaigns to increase nonprofit's effectiveness in fundraising, and how to allocate limited budgets between these activities and direct funding.

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Special Session Summary

Word-of-Mouth and Word-of-Web: Talking About Products, Talking About Me

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EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

“Subjective Expertise and Word-of-Mouth”

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Consumer-to-consumer communication or word-of-mouth (WOM) is an impactful marketplace force that has been studied for decades by academics. Two prevalent constructs in the WOM literature are “opinion leaders” (Rogers and Cartano 1962) and “market mavens” (Feick and Price 1987). It makes sense that consumers who give and are asked for information regarding certain product categories (opinion leaders) or the marketplace in general (market mavens), are also likely to be experts. While the relationship between WOM and expertise is backed by very little empirical evidence (see Jacoby and Hoyer 1981 for exception), it remains as a common and non-contentious assumption in the WOM literature.

Why are these experts talking? Researchers have suggested a few motivations that may encourage consumers to generate WOM, including involvement, altruism, reciprocity, cognitive dissonance, and self-enhancement (cf. Feick & Price 1987, Gatignon & Robertson 1986). This last motivation, self-enhancement or status-seeking, may be particularly compelling in the context of WOM and expertise. Consumers may use WOM as a means to gain attention, social status, superiority, or power by showing off what they have bought, what they’ve been doing, or to enhance their reputation as an expert.

According to self-enhancement theory, people strive to associate themselves with the positive and avoid the negative (cf. Baumeister ’98). It follows then that consumer experts may be motivated to self-enhance by talking about their positive (satisfying) experiences. But this would only be the case if these experiences were diagnostic of or attributable to the consumer’s expertise. One way of operationalizing this attribution is with choice. If the consumer chose the product to consume, the outcome may be attributable to their expertise. If, however, the product was imposed, the outcome would be attributable to something else, such as chance. Study 1 will test the hypothesis that satisfied experts generate the most WOM, but only when they had choice. Based on the insight that the salience of consumers’ identities can affect their behaviors (cf. Tybout and Yalch 1980), Study 2 will test whether this effect is intensified when consumers’ expertise status is primed. It is predicted that the same pattern of results described above will persist in both the primed and not primed conditions, but they will be exaggerated in the primed condition such that satisfied experts will generate even more WOM when their expertise status is primed versus when it is not primed.

Study 1

Subjects from an online subject pool were emailed an invitation to participate and given a 72 hour window to complete the study. 449 subjects completed the study and were mailed a \$5 money order as compensation. When they logged on to the experiment website, they first read a hypothetical restaurant scenario that was randomly assigned to the choice or imposed and the satisfied or dissatisfied conditions. Following a distraction task, subjects answered questions regarding subjective expertise (Mitchell & Dacin 1996), opinion leadership (Childers 1986), involvement (Higie & Feick 1988), all specific to restaurants, as well as the market maven scale (Feick & Price 1988).

Consistent with predictions, the two-way interaction between outcome and expertise was significant in the choice condition ($p=.042$) and an analysis of simple effects revealed that satisfied experts generated more WOM than any other group. The main effect of expertise was also significant, and expertise, opinion leadership and WOM are all positively and significantly correlated, even after controlling for involvement. In the imposed condition, the interaction between outcome and expertise was not significant ($p=.283$).

Study 2

459 subjects from a different, independent online subject pool completed this study. A third factor, salience (primed versus not primed) was added to the design. Subjects in the not primed condition followed a procedure very similar to Study 1. Subjects in the primed condition first answered the expertise scale questions and were then explicitly labeled as a restaurant expert or non-expert. They were also reminded of this status before they indicated how much WOM they would generate regarding the hypothetical restaurant scenario.

Results confirm hypotheses—the three-way interaction between salience, outcome, and expertise was significant ($p=.001$). Importantly, the simple effect of salience for satisfied experts was significant ($p<.001$), as was the main effect of expertise ($p<.001$).

Discussion

This research demonstrates self-enhancement as a viable and significant motivation for consumers’ WOM behaviors. Based on their desire to enhance their expertise status, satisfied experts generate the most WOM, but only when they can take credit for a positive outcome (Study 1), and even more so when their expert status is salient (Study 2).

This research also demonstrates new and nuanced evidence in support of the relationship between expertise and WOM; the main effect of expertise on WOM was significant in both studies. It should be noted though that it is satisfied experts who are driving this main effect. These results may also illuminate previous inconsistencies regarding prevalence of positive versus negative WOM in the marketplace—a question that has received some attention, but with ambiguous results. Here, we see that consumers who are satisfied generate more WOM than those who are dissatisfied, but only when they are experts, and only when they had choice.

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"Word-of-Mouth in Virtual Communities: A Netnographic Analysis"

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Online forums, boards, list servers, chat rooms, newsgroups, and blogs provide consumers worldwide with the ability to share their knowledge, experiences, and opinions. The popularity of electronic consumer exchanges is reflected in the vast number of virtual communities that specifically focus on consumption-related interests. When making a purchase decision, consumers may turn to the community to gather information, ask for advice, or review experts' opinions. Post-purchase, they may communicate their own experiences to the community. The result is an ongoing process of interpersonal influence and online word-of-mouth recommendation. As information exchange between consumers via the Internet continues to grow exponentially, spheres of influence will become increasingly virtual. Marketers are challenged to cater to this development. It is therefore important to acquire systematic knowledge about this process of online interpersonal influence within virtual consumption communities.

Considering existing research efforts, we start to understand why people participate in and contribute to virtual communities (e.g., Dholakia, Bagozzi and Klein Pearo 2004; Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh and Gremler 2004), with what effect (e.g., Algesheimer, Dholakia and Hermann 2005; Bickart & Schindler 2001; Muniz & O'Guinn 2001), and how we can measure that effect (e.g., Godes and Mayzlin 2004). However, what is still lacking is a deeper understanding of what people talk about and how they try to influence each other online. This study applies the method of netnography (Kozinets 2002) to investigate interaction dynamics between virtual community members. The main goal of the study is to analyze how the discussants communicate with and influence each other.

The community under study (www.SmulWeb.nl) is organized around culinary matters attracting around 30,000 unique visitors per month. It consists of theme pages, member pages, discussion forums, chat rooms, and databases for articles, reviews, and recipes. I made my entrance in the community and started informal observation of the forums in September 2000. I reviewed a range of member contributions, conducted in-depth interviews with members and administrators, and participated in offline community gatherings. After three years of knowledge building, I intensified my monitoring by systematically reviewing all topics discussed in the forums in 2003. In several rounds, I made a purposeful selection of 53 discussion threads for further analysis. The total research volume amounted to 3161 postings generated by 82 distinct contributors. The conclusions are based on an iterative content analysis. My interpretation of the data has been constructed through continuously moving between individual postings, chunks of postings, entire discussion threads, and the emergent understanding of the complete data set. The evolving netnography has been posted in its

entirety to the community to elicit member feedback. In total, sixteen members (active discussants and lurkers) reacted. All reactions were positive and affirmed the analysis and interpretation.

First and foremost, the netnography has given insight in the character of the virtual community as a reference group. SmulWeb consists of a varied member database. Participants differ with respect to gender, age, race, nationality, education, income, profession, family situation, and lifestyle. No real life counterpart of SmulWeb (e.g., cooking club or wine course) shows this level of diversity. Offline reference groups are geographically more restricted, but they also tend to be more limited in terms of economical, social, racial, and ideological characteristics according to the principle: birds of a feather flock together. Online, these feathers are not directly apparent. They are also less relevant because members have one important thing in common: their passion for the community's topic of interest. Although they share this passion, their related opinions and behavior diverge due to their different backgrounds. It is these differences that are the motor of the community's processes of interpersonal influence and WOM recommendation, because the community members actively learn from and influence each other.

The netnography has revealed four main frames of discussion. The discussants engage in communicative acts to (1) share knowledge, (2) negotiate norms, (3) oppose values, and (4) celebrate similarities. These labels do not only exemplify the aim of discussions (to share, negotiate, oppose, and celebrate), but also what is at stake (knowledge, norms, values, and similarities). The categorization is valuable for researchers and marketers alike, because it highlights the complexity of online forums as sites of interpersonal influence between consumers. It is not just about information exchange related to specific purchase decisions, but discussants engage in far more encompassing communicative acts to define, negotiate, argue, and cheer about value systems surrounding the community's focal topic of interest. Furthermore, discussants have several tactics to influence each other. They call upon authority to convince others of their expertise. They tell stories about other people's deviating behavior to express and reinforce their shared norm, and they contextualize their own behavior whenever it deviates from this norm. Finally, the 'virtuality' of the community stretches the unifying character of the discussions, because members more easily let go of their decorum, and show their true selves to an audience of like-minded individuals to whom they confess secret passions.

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"Viral Marketing Mavericks: Capturing Word-of-Web"

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Viral marketing refers to the strategy of encouraging consumers to sell a product on behalf of the company that creates it. The effectiveness of viral marketing on-line has been well documented in the business community. Some examples include WD-40, which quadrupled visitors to its website by giving away 1,000 radios shaped like its product to those who signed up 10 other members (Business Wire, 2002); or Listerine which created a game called Germinator on its web site and encouraged players to email their scores to friends (Neff, 2001). Other viral marketing programs are loyalty or fidelity programs. Consumers can earn points for every contact person they give the company. They can then trade their points for company merchandise. The web documents both the sender and receiver of that information.

Encouraging current consumers to tell their friends about one's brand and encourage purchase is about the most trusted form of product endorsement. Consumers who tell others about products can be classified into four categories, depending upon the amount of information they give and receive. Consumers who both give and receive a great deal of product-based information are called socially integrated. Those who mainly give information, but do not care to receive it are called socially independent. Those who like to receive information, but rarely give information are deemed socially dependent. Finally, consumers who give and receive low amounts of marketplace information are deemed to be socially isolated (Schiffman et. al, 1975). The web has made the social aspect a virtual aspect because consumers can both send and receive a great deal of information without the face-to-face contact, and in fact may be socially isolated on a face-to-face basis, but be socially integrated on-line.

Therefore the computer and the World Wide Web have added an extra layer or dimension of explosion to WOM, creating "word-of-web." Consumers are now able to send the same message to dozens or hundreds of consumers at a time through a click on their address book. They are also able to link the company of interest to their own web site, which may be deep linked to certain key words in search engines. This web-imbedded information has the potential to be seen by thousands or more. The question is who are these consumers who practice word explosion and what motivates them to link and share company information. As a first step to answering this question, the network behavior of customers of an on-line company is documented.

The Study

An electronic greeting card company (established in 2002) supplied the following data: the number of subscribers; the number of e-cards sent on monthly basis; a list of paid subscribers to their service; the start and expiry date of their subscription; and a list of all cards sent to other members from July 2004 to January 2005. Due to the nature of this business, the volume of e-cards sent is subject to seasonality. There was a low of 0.41 cards sent per member in September and a peak of 12.38 cards sent in December. November and April showed minor peaks, 5.41 and 3.64, due to Thanksgiving and Easter.

Exploratory analyses showed the following: (1) During the peak season (November and December which accounted for 78.1% of e-cards sent), new customer acquisition was more effective (22.3 cards sent to acquire each new subscriber) than during the off-peak season (33.4 cards). Less cards were sent to non-subscribers compared to existing subscribers (the ratio of e-cards sent to non-subscribers from existing subscribers was significantly lower during the peak season (0.25) than during the off-peak season (0.31)). These results show the importance of timing to diffuse word-of-web. The impact on new customer acquisition can be maximized if it is diffused when consumers are in the same buying mode. (2) Heavy senders and heavy receivers can be very important. Our e-card data confirmed the well known Pareto law of 20/80, as 20% subscribers sent 75% of the e-cards. The cross tabulation of heavy senders and heavy receivers showed that heavy senders also tended to be heavy receivers. (3) Heavy senders are less likely to exit the company than light senders. Cox-regression analysis showed the significant impact of the number of e-cards sent on the survival probability. This result was confirmed from two different subscriber cohorts starting in November and December 2003. However, the number of e-cards received showed a negative impact on likelihood to continue as a customer. This needs to be explored in future research.

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Stage Left, Stage Right? Position Effects on Perception of a Spokesperson

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Imagine that as you read reviews of a celebrity's TV appearances, you are struck by how the reviews differ. On *The Tonight Show* the celebrity is seen as a leader, steering the interview. However, on *Larry King Live* she is seen as passive and as if bullied by Larry King. Your first inclination is to attribute the effect to the respective hosts, however, might the differences be accounted for by the position of the celebrity - on the *Tonight Show* the celebrity appears to the left of Jay Leno and on *Larry King Live* to the right? The present research sought to investigate this question.

It is proposed that the specialization of the right hemisphere in processing faces (Gazzaniga 2000) and nonverbal behavior (Benowitz et al. 1983) mediates the effect of target position on observer perception. When an observer's attention is drawn to the left visual field, person perception processing in the right hemisphere is activated and leads to greater recall of visual information of the target (Taylor and Fiske 1975) and perception of the target as more instrumental in the interaction.

Experiments 1 and 2

Experiment 1 Method. Forty-eight participants were randomly assigned to sit on the left or the right while engaging in a puzzle (time 1) or discussion (time 2). Thirty-two observers rated 15-second clips from each of the interactions on 38 behavior variables ranging from "Friendly" to "Similarity in movement" which were combined to form Critical, Dominant, Interpersonally Skilled, Polite, and Tempo Setting.

Experiment 2 Method. To control for any position effects due to differences in target behavior, 29 observers in experiment 2 rated the mirror image of the target videos shown in experiment 1.

Given the similarities across experiments 1 and 2 a 2 (target position: left or right) x 2 (target task: puzzle or discussion) x 2 (partner presence: alone or with partner) x 2 (experiment: 1 or 2) repeated-measures ANOVA was calculated using target pair as the unit of analysis (Rosenthal 1991).

H1: Targets positioned to the observer's left will be seen as more instrumental in the interaction compared to targets positioned to the right.

H2: The effect of target position will be stronger when a target is viewed with a partner than when the partner is obscured.

H3: The effect of target position will be stronger when a target is viewed during an externally-focused, puzzle compared to an internally-focused, discussion interaction.

Consistent with the hypotheses, ratings were higher for targets on the left for Tempo Setting ($p < .001$), Interpersonally Skilled ($p < .001$), Critical ($p < .001$), and Dominant ($p < .001$) (H1) and this effect was stronger when the target was viewed with a partner for Tempo Setting ($p < .001$), Critical ($p < .01$), and Interpersonally Skilled ($p < .05$) (H2) and during an externally-focused puzzle interaction for Tempo Setting ($p < .01$), Critical ($p < .01$), and Dominant ($p < .01$) (H3).

Experiment 2 also examined the moderating role of gender.

H4: The effect of target position will be stronger for male observers than female observers.

Consistent with H4, when targets were observed by men the target position effect was stronger for Tempo Setting ($p < .001$) and Interpersonally Skilled ($p < .01$).

In sum, targets positioned to the left were seen as more instrumental in the interaction as suggested by higher ratings on Tempo Setting, Critical, Interpersonally Skilled and Dominant. Further, it appears that this effect was moderated by presence of a partner, type of task, and observer gender.

Experiment 3

In experiment 3, it is suggested that observers will be more persuaded by a target on the left and sought to explore recall as a mediator of observer judgment.

H5: Observers will indicate greater willingness to pay for products endorsed by targets positioned to the left.

H6: Observers will judge targets positioned to the left as more convincing than targets positioned to the right.

H7: Observers will recall more visual information about the target when the target is positioned to the left than when the target is positioned to the right.

The materials were virtually identical to those used in experiments 1 and 2. Sixteen participants viewed each of the videoclips and indicated the persuasiveness of the target as well as his/her memory for target attributes that contributed to their judgment (Fiske et al. 1982). Consistent with H5, participants indicated a greater Willingness to Pay for products when the target was positioned to the left ($p < .001$). However, contrary to H6, targets positioned to the right were judged as more Convincing ($p < .001$). Consistent with H7, more neutral and negative information was recalled for targets positioned to the left ($p < .001$ and $p < .01$, respectively), however, more positive information was recalled for targets positioned to the right ($p < .001$). Moreover, more positive, neutral, and negative information was recalled about targets positioned to the left when the observer was male as compared to when the observer was female ($p < .001$; $p < .001$ and $p < .001$, respectively).

Thus, it appears that the results from experiments 1 and 2 extend to observer judgments of Willingness to Pay. Interestingly, the results for judgments of Convincing appear moderated by gender. While men show no effect of target position on judgments of Convincing, women do. Moreover, women tend to judge the target to the right as more convincing. This may be related to the differential recall observed and valence-specific laterality in women (Rodway et al. 2003).

In conclusion, this study finds strong evidence for an effect of target position on the impression formed of a target individual and suggests a hemispheric specialization and recall interpretation of this result. The implications of such a result are both important and

far-reaching, opening a new window of insight into the complexity of consumer perception with applications to perceptions of spokespeople in advertising and salespeople in service settings.

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Music-Visual Congruency and its Impact on Two-sided Message Recall

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Two of the greatest challenges facing advertisers today are credibility and clutter (Marney 1996; Zanot, 1984)—both of which can negatively impact advertising recall. Thus, creative tactics that help to combat these problems are prevalent in today's advertising. For example, a two-sided message can help to increase credibility (Pechmann 1992; Swinyard 1981), whereas music can serve as an attention getting agent (Kroeber-Riel 1979). In this work we look at the impact of music-visual congruency on two-sided message recall.

Theoretical Foundation

Two-sided Advertising Messages

Two-sided advertising messages present both positive and negative information about a given product, service, or even situation (Hovland, Lumsdaine and Sheffield 1949). Extant research shows that two-sided advertising is viewed as more credible (Kamins and Assael 1987; Smith and Hunt 1978; Swinyard 1981). However, to date there has been minimal work which has evaluated processing biases related to two-side advertising. In this study we are interested not in the credibility of the claim, but in the viewer's ability to recall certain portions of the message. Thus, we present viewers with a list of five negatively correlated words (e.g., love/hate) imposed on an advertising image and then measure recall of these words across conditions of music-visual congruency and incongruency.

Music and Advertising

Music functions on many levels to positively influence advertised brands and their messages. From an elaboration likelihood perspective, music is viewed as a peripheral cue, which helps to gain attention for the brand and create positive affect. In fact much of the music and advertising literature focuses on music's ability to create a positive mood state (see Bruner 1990 for a review). There is substantial evidence that a positive mood state improves recall as encoding is more efficient (Isen 1993 and 1999). In this work we expect that the calm music will induce a more positive mood state than chaotic music or even the control condition where no music is present. Thus,

H1a: Calm music will lead to greater total word recall than chaotic music.

H1b: Chaotic music will diminish total word recall.

Further, mood congruency processing states that processing is selective and biased toward cognitions that are congruent with our mood state (Bower, Gilligan and Monteiro 1981; Parrott 1991). If we are in a positive mood (calm in this study), we are more likely to process information which is positive. Conversely, if we are in a negative mood state (chaotic in this study), we are more likely to process information which is negative. Thus,

H2a: Calm music will lead to greater word recall of positively valenced words than chaotic music.

H2b: Chaotic music will lead to greater word recall of negatively valenced words than calm music.

Further, we believe the mood state is intensified when the visual and musical cues are congruent. Thus,

H3a: Calm music-visual congruency will lead to greater recall of positively valenced words than calm music-visual incongruency.

H3b: Chaotic music-visual congruency will lead to greater recall of negatively valenced words than chaotic music-visual incongruency.

Divided attention and Incongruity

There is significant evidence that when attention is divided between two or more tasks (e.g., resolving the incongruity and processing words), recall is diminished (see Naveh-Benjamin, Guez and Marom 2003). Thus, total recall should be enhanced when music-visual congruency exists because cognitive resources are not expended trying to resolve the incongruity between the music and the visual image.

H4a: Music-visual congruency will increase total word recall.

Study

The study is a 3 (calm music, chaotic music and no music) by 2 (calm picture and chaotic picture) completely randomized between subjects design. The music selection (original guitar music) is consistent within the calm condition and within the chaotic condition, while there are two exemplars of calm (smiling baby and landscape) and chaotic (crying baby and exploding building) visual images.

Two hundred forty subjects participated in this study. Subjects were randomly assigned to an experimental condition and participated in the study via a blackboard site. Subjects logged onto the site where they accessed directions, their advertisement and a response form. Our primary dependent measure is word recall, including total recall, positive recall and negative word recall.

Results

Manipulation checks reveal that perceived congruency varies as expected ($M_{\text{incongruent}}=2.39$ and $M_{\text{congruent}}=6.16$, $F_{1,239}=1876.00$, $p<.0001$) and does not vary by example ($F_{1,239}=2.87$, $p>.26$). Further the images that are suppose to be chaotic or calm were perceived as such ($M_{\text{calm}}=5.06$, $M_{\text{chaotic}}=5.46$, $F_{(1,239)}<1$) as are the music selections ($M_{\text{calm}}=4.75$, $M_{\text{chaotic}}=5.02$, $F_{(1,239)}<1$.)

Music Effects. In support of H1a, total recall is greater for the calm music than the chaotic music ($M_{\text{scalm}}=6.312$, $M_{\text{schaotic}}=4.49$; $F_{(1, 159)}=51.697$, $p=.000$). Similarly, H1b is supported ($M_{\text{schaotic}}=4.49$, $M_{\text{scontrol}}=6.25$; $F_{(1, 159)}=47.082$, $p=.000$), indicating that the chaotic music diminish total word recall.

Mood congruency. As predicted by H2a, total positive word recall is greater when calm music is present than when chaotic music is present ($M_{\text{scalm}}=3.61$, $M_{\text{schaotic}}=2.12$; $F_{(1, 159)}=77.80$, $p=.000$). Contrary to our predictions, total negative word recall is not greater when chaotic music is present.

When we add the visual image to our analysis, we find strong support for H3a and marginal support H3b. Calm music-visual congruency leads to greater recall of positively valenced words than calm music-visual incongruency ($F_{(1,79)}=14.274$, $p=.000$). Chaotic music-visual congruency leads to marginally greater recall of negatively valenced words than chaotic music-visual incongruency ($F_{(1,79)}=5.149$, $p=.026$).

Incongruency and Divided Attention. We do not find support for H4, which predicts that music-visual congruity will lead to increased recall ($MS_{\text{congruent}}=5.55$, $MS_{\text{incongruent}}=5.25$; $F_{(1,159)}=1.06$, $p=.305$). What we do find is that total positive recall is increased in cases of music-visual congruency ($F_{(1,159)}=11.908$, $p=.001$).

Conclusions

These results suggest that temporary mood states can influence processing and are likely tied to underlying cognitions. These findings are important in that we are able to demonstrate how advertisers can potentially capitalize on processing biases of two-sided messages and mood-congruency. The pattern of recall results in this study, suggests that advertisers can present two-sided messages and bias processing beyond simple credibility effects.

“Now That’s What I Call Music!”

An Interpretive Approach to Music in Advertising

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ABSTRACT

Music is a fundamental feature of commercials. Despite its significance, advertising research into this area is underdeveloped; furthermore, it is fragmentary and contradictory. This paper puts it down to misunderstandings of how music works. Instead of reducing music to an affective stimulus, a socio-semiotic model of music as a cultural system with an expressive potential is developed, based on contemporary studies in musicology and popular music studies. The reference point is interpretive consumer and advertising research, that so far has focused on text and visuals. An interpretive approach is introduced that integrates music based on its specific socio-semiotic potential of making meaning possible.

INTRODUCTION

In 2001, the Wieden & Kennedy advertising agency developed the acclaimed “freestyle” commercial for Nike Inc. It featured basketball players showing off their moves. The sound editing constructs a steady beat made up with the sounds of squeaking shoes and the ball hitting the floor. Besides the acoustic link to hip-hop, the visual quotation of typical hip-hop dance moves intensified the close association. The longer version replaced the final “swoosh” logo with the typical music video credits for song title, musician and director. There were considerable discussions if the music video version could run as part of the programming or as a commercial (Elliott 2001). For most of the literature on music in advertising, this spot would not even be considered as “music”, as it misses such characteristics as harmony, melody or modality.

The purpose of this article is to advance research on music in advertising by proposing a new conceptualization of music as a cultural system with expressive potentials. As Scott (1990) criticized, studies on music in advertising are characterized by mechanistic stimulus-effect models, focusing on music as a nonsemantic affective stimulus. The implicit concept of music is based on 19th century psychoacoustic and psychophysiological music psychology, exemplified by scholars such as Helmholtz or Wundt and the empirical-experimental American music psychology of the beginning of the 20th century. The methodological procedures are still the same: musical reception is analyzed experimentally in laboratory environments; short acoustic stimuli are controlled and modified to detect a shared reaction pattern. Early on, Susanne Langer (1942, 211) noted the lack of knowledge gains with these approaches: “this approach has not taken us; it seems to be an essentially barren adventure.” The fragmentary and inconclusive research on music in advertising (Kellaris, Cox, and Cox, 1993, 114) proved Langer right. Here it is argued that the problem cannot be solved with improved measurement methods. Before one can decide *how* it is best to measure something, it should be clear *what* one is trying to measure. In that sense the music anthropologist Merriam (1964, 84) warns: „Without understanding of concepts, there is no real understanding of music.“

FALLACIES IN THE TRADITIONAL MUSIC CONCEPTUALIZATION

The conception of music in advertising research is stuck between adhering to classical music theory while focusing on popular music as the typical type of music in advertising. The lack of explicit definitions of music seems to be less bothersome, as it is assumed that popular music does not require much effort to define: it is pleasing and understood by ordinary people (Roehm 2001, 49). This view neglects the long and still much debated discussion about the definition of popular music (Middleton 1990, 4) and leads to theoretical misconceptions that can be described according to the following issues (see also Meyer 1956, 5; Scott 1990, 225f.).

Music as ahistorical

Advertising research is still using the Hevner and Rigg experiments from the 1930s to support links between musical elements and effects (e.g. Alpert and Alpert 1990; Bruner 1990; Kellaris and Rice 1993; Morris and Boone 1998). Instruments and their tunings, performance rituals, listening modes, everyday soundscapes, the availability of music and the media have all changed. However, research on music in advertising insists on universal reactions to timeless music elements. This attitude also becomes apparent in the common practice of referring to the utilized musical stimuli in publications as “pleasant” or “unpleasant” music. These musical stimuli are perceived differently today, and definitions and evaluations of “pleasant” “unpleasant,” “dissonant” or “consonant” are also changing (Attali, 1985, 35). In popular music genres such as “noisemusic,” the nerve-racking sound qualities even gain a special relevance for the enjoyment and symbolic valence of music (see also Gracyk 1996, 99ff.). This phenomenon is not unknown in consumer research. From an experiential point of view, Hirschman and Holbrook (1982, 96) explicitly mentioned the aesthetical pleasure of a confrontation with the unpleasant and discomforting in their hedonic consumption model.

Music as emotional engineering

One of the main qualities of music in advertising is often seen as triggering moods and emotions. This romantic notion of music as the language of the heart is deeply ingrained in Western civilization. It assigns music to the expression of subjective feelings, to the “objectless inner” (Hegel), and separates it from the external social world. In advertising research, this shared credo has the tendency to blur the differences between emotions represented and felt. Bruner (1990, 95) exemplifies this widespread confusion when he summarizes the research on rhythm and emotions as: „fast music *is considered* to be more happy (...) slow tempi tended to *evoke* tranquil (...) sorts of *description*; fast tempi *elicited responses* relating to exhilarating (...) sorts of *feelings* [emphasis by the author].“ But already the often cited Hevner (1935) and Rigg (1964) explicitly point out that their results refer to the identification of emotions and not to experienced emotions. Pratt (1931/1968, xxv) famously explained the confusion between description and experience by saying “Music sounds the way emotions feel.” We tend to describe musical elements with the same words as emotions, but they are still two separate processes. It is expected that we would identify deep sadness in Bessie Smith’s blues songs; even so,

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listening to them could deeply satisfy us and make us happy. As Tagg (1993) showed in his cross-cultural research, the musical articulation of emotions is based on conventions, rules and codes. This is also supported by neuro-physiological research, which refutes the old assumption of a direct affective impact of music without any cognitive involvement (Maeß, Kölsch, Gunter, and Friederici 2001). Cognitive processes are already relevant during the first unconscious acoustical perception in structuring sounds, comparing them with expectations, separating them from background noise and connecting them to learned schemata (Bregman 1990). So far, modern music psychology is rejecting the mechanistic assumption of directly manipulating emotions with music.

Music as acoustic stimuli

Other than research that codes music as absent/present (e.g. Gorn et al. 1991; Park and Young 1986; Stewart, Farmer and Stannard; Olsen 1995), the main approach is to examine the effects of structural musical elements (Alpert and Alpert, 1990, 115f.). Bruner (1990) grouped these studies according to time-related findings (e.g. tempo, rhythm, phrasing), pitch-related findings (e.g. modality, melody, harmony) and texture-related findings (e.g. orchestration, volume). As a research leitmotif he formulates "Music is not simply a generic sonic mass, but rather a complex chemistry of controllable elements." (Bruner 1990, 94). But already the interaction of two controllable elements like tempo and modality (Kellaris and Kent, 1991) exhibits a complexity that is hard to control and to interpret. While the control of all structural elements seems to be infeasible, it also appears to be futile. The music psychologist Serafine (1988, 53) rejects the atomistic approach in emphasizing the perceptual perspective: "Scales and chords do not exist in music." Structural elements are theoretical artifacts that are useful for analyzing intermusical structures, but for most recipients isolated structural elements will be understood as acoustic stimuli and not as music.

Music as an abstract artifact

To extract music from its context of production, transmission and consumption means to reduce music to an abstract, fictional, and theoretical entity. The possibility that the same music, heard in a laboratory, on an mp3-player, in a club or in a commercial, might be perceived differently is seldom mentioned (see as an exception Macklin 1988, 242). The separation of music from its context is based in the music theory tradition in which music as absolute music, expressing only itself and depleted from its social and cultural traces, became a regulative concept (Goehr 1992, 121). This ideological frame impedes research on music in advertising. Acoustic stimuli only become music in certain contexts: „by removing the bare score from its context in order to examine it as an autonomous organism, the analyst removes that organism from the ecology that sustains it.“ (Kerman 1985, 72). One example is the utilization of interpretive frames by listeners that differentiate between noise and musical experience. The same phrase, overheard from a practicing neighbor or attentively listened to in a concert hall, will be experienced in different ways. The interpretive frame applied to a song used in advertising can even totally reverse the musical experience. Favorite songs, listened to in an ad, can elicit the most negative feelings (McLaren 1998, 10).

A NEW CONCEPTUALIZATION OF MUSIC AS A SOCIO-CULTURAL PHENOMENON

Several authors have written about the obstacles encountered with the present conceptualization of music (Alpert and Alpert, 1991; Hung 2000; Murray and Murray 1996; Scott 1990). The basic

hope was to develop an approach that acknowledges music as a cultural and social phenomenon. Scott, as a reference point, mentions advances in the areas of visual and verbal rhetoric. However, a meaning based model for music in advertising is still missing. Here it is argued that the application of a verbally- or visually-biased methodology might not be appropriate for making sense of music. In the following section, a new interpretive framework is developed, using the assumption that music is a symbol system with its own specific qualities that has to be approached from a music point of view.

What is music?

When adolescent music aficionados have to defend their preferences from adults who roll their eyes and say "you call that music?", they might find a word of comfort in music ethnology. Cross-cultural research has shown that there is no single and universal concept of what music might be (Nattiez 1990, 55). What is called music differs in demarcations between environmental noise and music (Feld 1988), as well as in the context of rituals, social or behavioral functions that are responsible for the inclusion of sound into music or not (Blacking 1981). A general framework for music was developed by Merriam (1964, 32ff.) who suggested three necessary analytic levels: an acoustic, a behavioral and a conceptual one. In reference to this framework, music can be defined as the cultural and social structuring of sound, materialized in the process of composing, performing and listening. Besides personal elements, the shared reference to specific cultural conventions is necessary (see also Blacking 1973, 92; Moisala 1995, 17).

The expressive qualities of music

As an element of the Geertzian web of significance (Geertz 1973, 89), music as a cultural system incorporates expressive potentials. This resonates in the everyday understanding of music ("this music expresses exactly how I feel;" "this band articulates the zeitgeist of a whole generation") and has a long intellectual history. Our understanding of the sad minor key can be traced back to the ancient Greeks, for whom specific musical modes implied a certain ethos. The theory of affects in Baroque music constituted a further refinement. Music should represent affects, with close analogies between musical figures and rhetorical (verbal) principles (Blake 2001, 262). The rise of instrumental music in the second half of the 18th century challenged the tight connection between the verbal language and music. Music in itself was seen as a superior language, able to express the most subjective, transcendental and romantic sentiments (Motte-Haber 1994). While still connected with the Baroque ideas, romanticism indicates a vital shift away from the social coding of music. The interpretation of music as rhetoric was finally lifted with the move towards autonomous, absolute music, free from any extramusical implications. However, it is only a small step from the concept of music expressing the unspeakable to the idea of music as a pure interplay of "forms moved by sound" (Hanslick 1854, 32).

In music theory, this shift is reflected in the dominance of approaches focusing on intra- and intermusical meanings (Davies 1994). From this perspective, musical meanings refer only to the music itself. Whenever listeners incorporate their own extramusical associations into the music listening experience, their interpretations are discredited as "misunderstandings," as deviations from the "correct," analytic understanding of music (e.g. Lissa 1973, 221). This normative position is problematic not only for the analysis of popular music but especially for the analysis of music in advertising. Here, the commercial contextual setting triggers certain interpretive frames, similar to the concept of schemer schema (Friestad

and Wright, 1994), and the link to extramusical associations as "a grist of significance for the ad mill" (Williamson 1978, 19) is intentional. To conceptualize these meanings, a semiotic approach to music is developed.

The semiotics of music

Semiotics, understood as a "science that studies the life of signs within society" (Saussure 1966, 16), claims universal applicability. Only music, however, shows considerable resistance to becoming "readable." The semiotics of music, especially popular music, is one of the least developed fields in semiotics, without consensual terminology, approaches or even agreed on areas. It seems that "music and semiotics do not make comfortable bedfellows" (Gronow 1987, c7). The uniqueness of the musical signification process is identified as the main obstacle (Lidov 1986, 577). Different attempts to develop music sign typologies reached a dead end when the linguistic anchor of the iconic, indexical, and symbolic sign structure proved to be restraining (Stefani, 1973). A problem is the semantic vagueness of the musical sign. The more musical signs get meaningful, as in iconic sound imitations, the less they are able to stand as a foundation for a general meaning model. They are considered to be semantic enclaves.

There are two basic positions in music semiotics on how to approach the problem of vague musical meanings. One strategy is to further work on substantiating the meanings, while another strategy accepts the vagueness as the essence of the musical sign system.

Until the 1980s, the formal study of musical syntax was the dominant approach in music semiotics to further clarify musical meanings (Ruwet 1967). If music is the structuring of sound material, than the meaning should be located in this syntactical structure. In general, the syntactical approaches are technical, formalistic and focus only on the absolute, intramusical meanings. Closely following linguistic methods, the idea is to find musical equivalents to nouns, verbs, predicates and grammar (Bernstein 1976). Though recently changes have become visible, the syntactical approaches are criticized for their lack of incorporating music perception (Echard 1999, 8).

The second strategy is to qualify music as necessarily semantic vague (Monelle 1996). Especially in Germany, this position is linked with Adorno's aesthetic theory, that music as true art will always have an enigmatic quality, like an unsolvable riddle. As an ideological concept, this indissoluble quality also separates high art from "industrial products" like popular music. Theoretically more promising is the position that the concept of semantic vagueness in music stems from the reference point of verbal language. Langer (1942) especially tried to develop a "wordless" semantics that she labeled presentational symbolism in opposition to the discursive symbolism of the verbal language. However, a general difference between verbal and musical meaning does not necessarily imply a uniqueness of musical symbolism. From a semiotic point of view, meanings as mental concepts are part of the sign process, but they are not the same as words (Mick 1986, 198). In each sign system, verbalizations can work as proxies for meanings, which are again acoustic or visual signs. Furthermore, the definition of a musical meaning as something distinct from the definiteness of a verbal meaning misjudges the verbal sign system. The verbal language also has ambiguities and needs situational and contextual anchors. In a provocative way DeNora (1986, 90) even inverts the comparison: "it actually may be more appropriate to treat language 'as a species of music'."

In this paper, Langer's basic idea is adopted, without sharing her music philosophy. She coined the expression that music is the

"unconsummated symbol" (Langer 1942, 240). To consummate the musical sign system, it needs a contextual semiotic approach that acknowledges the social and cultural dimensions of music and the distinctiveness of popular music.

The socio-semiotics of popular music

The traditional analysis of music in advertising was criticized for referring to classical music theory, while trying to make sense of popular music. Likewise, almost any semiotic approach to music refers to classical music of the functional-tonal era. Here it is argued, that such a focus distorts, discredits and misjudges popular music by a) inadequate analytic methods and b) a false fixation on the written score as the primary text. To make sense of popular music, one has to focus on the lived experience of a dynamic sound space.

a) Traditional music theory has primarily emphasized pitch organization with the analysis of intervals, melody and harmony. This dismisses essential structuring principles of popular music genres such as blues, hip-hop or electronic music that prioritize rhythmic structures and repetition. In a traditional harmonic analysis these genres are indeed simplistic and almost meaningless. However, traditional music theory lacks the analytic tools necessary for perceiving the significance of irregular rhythms, poly-rhythms, deferred phrasings or overlapping rhythmic structures (Middleton 1993, 180f.). There is a prevailing illusion that elements that are not so easily classified or controlled, for instance a groove, must be irrational and irrelevant (McClary and Walser, 1990, 281). An example of this fallacy is the problematic understanding of lyrics in songs, when they are seen as the meaning vehicle, and analyzed using traditional content analysis. But in popular music, voice and lyrics work differently. Lyrics are words in performance, defined through the relation of the voice and words, dependent on specific genre conventions, and specified by the sound of the specific song. In popular music it is the "grain of the voice" (Barthes 1977, 157) with different timbral qualities and microtonal inflections that makes singer like Billie Holiday, Janis Joplin or Will Oldham so special.

b) A semiotic analysis starts with a text to identify potential meanings (McQuarrie and Mick, 1992). In traditional music semiotics, the text in question is the score. Written notation represents the core ideas, the intention of the composer and the musical meanings. But even in classical music, the authority and accuracy of the score is disputed. Gustav Mahler warned that the music is not in the notes. Here it is argued that notation is an ethnocentric language, appropriate to represent music based on scale systems of equal temperament and square metric systems (Tagg 1987, 281). For the music orally and aurally conceived, as in popular music and most non-European music, with improvised elements, distortions of pitch and flexible rhythms, written notation actually misses the music itself. The constructed text is not the text to which anyone else is listening. Rather, popular music is based on the materiality of sound as the primary text (Middleton 1990, 220ff.; Moore 2001). In the performance or in the studio recording, the essential sonic structure is created. The studio especially can be classified as one of the most important instruments in popular music (Frith 1996; 233). Recording defines a whole musical aesthetic and makes record producers like Sam Phillips, George Martin, Phil Spector, or Trevor Horn as famous as the musicians they produce. In most classical music, the recording works as an acoustic snapshot, trying to produce a realist, naturalist representation of an actual performance. In popular music, the sound of the recording defines the aural qualities of the music, which often are not even reproducible in a live performance.

The musical sign system as a nexus of inter- and extramusical references

In traditional music theory, the supposedly superiority of classical music is ascribed to the autonomy of society. This normative view is reflected in the positivist research on music in advertising in its tendency to isolate music from its social and cultural embeddedness. If we accept the resonating cultural meaningfulness of music, the decontextualization tends to eliminate exactly the specific qualities of music, especially popular music. Popular music is inherently socially mediated and formed through a dialogical process between the participants of the popular music system. Popular music is functional music in the sense that it is used by the listeners, for making everyday life more controllable, navigable and worth living, as well as refining a sense of collectivity. Because of this social and cultural charge of the popular sonic sphere, it tends to be more easily incorporated into the extended self (Belk 1988). The materiality of this sonic system is intensified by the "politics of jousiance" (Hawkins 2002, 28), the physical-affective pleasures of popular music. It is argued, that this charge of popular music is not a certain attitude or an interpretive frame brought onto music. Rather, it exemplifies a semiotic process in music in which the relevant musical text is an amalgam of inter- and extramusical signs.

In this sense, music per se does not have to be meaningful. Its main capacity is to make meaning possible. Actual music, that is alive and meaningful, is always integrated into a nexus of cues that are hints for the appropriate context in which to develop interpretations. Contrary to other semiotic systems, this contextuality does not reduce the multivocality of signs but is a prerequisite for meaning. Only in-between the cue nexus can music be experienced as meaningful. Verbal and visual contextualization cues (Gumperz 1982) are the most significant cues. *Verbal cues* can include the title of the song, program-notes, booklets, the performers name, lyrics, artist statements, liner notes, music criticism, and informal talks about the music. *Visual cues* can include record covers, music videos, performance imagery, visual hooks, corporate design of musicians, the appropriation of music in video games and movies, and associated fashion and body codes (see for a detailed discussion Bode 2004, 365ff.).

Consequences for advertising research

The basic idea of the proposed approach is that meaningful music cannot be limited to the acoustic sphere. As a sign system, it exists only in form of a multimedia nexus, with verbal and visual cues (Cook 1998). This has consequences for the analysis of music in advertising, especially for the research on the interaction of the acoustic, verbal and visual levels in a spot. This process cannot be understood as adding up several meanings, but as the emergence of a new meaning constellation based on a multi-level rhetoric. The conceptual equivalent for this process in traditional research on music in advertising is "fit" or "congruence." As it turned out in experimental research, the affective and cognitive impact of music depends on actual music-spot combinations. MacInnis and Park (1991, 162) define the fit as the "subjective perceptions of the music's relevance or appropriateness to the central ad message." But in using songs with lyrics, a verbal appropriateness for music and the spot was tested. Furthermore, why participants assumed a fit, on what levels and what that meant for them remained unclear. A refinement of fit is the congruence concept by Kellaris, Cox, and Cox (1993), who focus on the relation between pure musical information and the verbal ad message. However, the concept of musical information is not further developed, and the dimensions of congruence are reduced to binary oppositions as "yes" or "no."

To clarify these interactions, based on the musical sign system, it is important to distinguish the steps of a) coding, b) functionality and c) interaction.

a) *Codes* are socially shared rules of organizing single signs into sign systems (Hall 1980/1993, 98). To ensure the intended communicative effect of a text, an adjustment between the encoding and decoding practices is necessary. One adjustment refers to the appropriate coding level. A basic code model for music was developed by Middleton (1990, 174), who distinguished the levels from the most abstract codes with basic conventions to sub-norms, dialects, styles, genres, sub-genres and finally idiolects, the level of a concrete song. These codes structure the significance of certain parameters as well as the accompanying extramusical cues. For advertising, it is important to decide on what code level music is applied, e.g. on a stylistic level as a rock'n'roll song or on an idiolect code level of Elvis Presley's "Blue Suede Shoes." The code level does not only influence the rhetorical function of the music. In regard to different code competences (Stefani 1987) of target audiences, it also shapes the potential encoding and decoding overlaps. An example of this is the song "Respect" by Aretha Franklin, that when used in a beer spot, it was encoded primarily on a stylistic soul level, while in a spot for the UN Refugee Agency, the song was encoded on the idiolect level, referring to the feminist and civil rights movement's origin of the song. Therefore, typology and characterization of music in advertising go beyond music's intrinsic aspects to explain different impacts of the same music.

b) The *functionality* of music describes the basic way music is integrated within the visual level of a spot. The main categories are foregrounding and backgrounding. The background use resembles the techniques of film music. Here, music's function is primarily the emotional, social, and narrative framing of the image (Gorbman 1987). The background use leads to the musicalization of the image. Here, music works as a guide through the images, it helps to anchor basic interpretations of the image, without necessarily being listened to. The foreground use leads to a visualization of the music while the images guide through the music. Instead of a fit, here it is more appropriate to analyze the music-image relations along the diverse lines as illustrations, amplifications or resonance by incoherence (Goodwin 1993, 86ff.). A paradigmatic model for foregrounding is the music video format.

c) The *interaction* step is the primarily level for a meaning-oriented music analysis, as it is the music-spot context where the specific nexus of inter and extramusical references becomes fleshed out. Hung (2000) experimentally showed some basic interaction effects and the necessity to analyze the meaning potentials of the different modes not separately but through their interaction. Still, the conceptual framework was missing. The suggested model highlights the significance of a double interaction effect, once in-between the musical sign system and then in relation to the verbal, acoustic and visual elements of the spot. This can e.g. incorporate rhetorical elements already on the sound level, like a Hip-Hop song in a scratchy old gramophone sound or a heavy metal song played by a string quartet. In the interaction of the musical sign system and the spot, a multi-level rhetoric unfolds, based on stressing, accentuating and deferring diverse verbal and visual contextual cues of music. Here the work on resonance (McQuarrie and Mick, 1992) is important as a starting point to conceptualize not only the semantic consequences of the text-image interaction, but of the verbal, visual, and musical levels interaction in a spot.

Conclusion

Though estimations indicate that more than 70% of all commercials have music, neither traditional nor interpretive approaches

have dealt more in depth with music. The few empirical results are so far inconclusive about music's impact. Linda Scott (1990, 234) proposed a new way of approaching music, consistent "with the way we experience the phenomenon in everyday life." There might be a "spine-tingling sense of esthetic excitement" or an almost "shattering electric charge," as Holbrook (1981, 37) reminded consumer researchers in his aesthetic imperative. Those experiences are a far cry from the acoustic stimulus manipulation of traditional advertising research. Though most of the time an ad will not be able to elicit such responses, these potential experiences frame the phenomenon of music. Interpretive approaches to the question of "how music works" were also not pursued further. This paper has argued that in both paradigmatic research streams, the main problem was the faulty conceptualization of music. In traditional research, the problem is the decontextualized analysis of acoustic stimuli. In interpretive research, the problem is the focus on literary and visual methods. It is time to realize the expressive potentials of music and to apply methods that can conceive these specific musical qualities. This can make the difference between acoustical stimuli and meaningful music, as a sonic space embedded in a nexus of inter- and extramusical references. Therefore, the intention of the paper is not to call for research on a supplementary musical rhetoric. Instead it is necessary to develop an integrative approach to the verbal, visual and sonic world we live in.

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It Seems Factual, But Is It?

Effects of Using Sharp versus Round Numbers in Advertising Claims

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ABSTRACT

This paper compares sharp versus round numbers in advertising claims. Round numbers have a salient conceptual basis (e.g., 10 years are a decade). Sharp numbers do not (e.g., 11 years). Estimates tend to be expressed with round numbers. An experiment is described that examines whether consumers make the false assumption that claims using sharp numbers are less likely to be estimates (i.e., are more factual) than those using round numbers and, if so, whether this makes sharp-number claims more believable. The results demonstrate that such assumptions do occur, even for those consumers considered to be advertising skeptics.

INTRODUCTION

A newspaper advertisement for a career-training program highlighted the claim that their recent graduates were earning between \$43,000 and \$57,000 per year. This salary claim could have just as easily been expressed using the phrases such as, “are well-paid,” “earning around \$50,000,” or “earning from \$40,000 to \$60,000.” The advertising copywriter had to make a decision as to which wording would be best received. Current views of advertising effectiveness stress not just what the advertiser claims, but what inferences are made about these claims by the consumers (e.g., Kardes, Posavac, and Cronley 2004). The present paper explores one type of inference that consumers might make about an advertiser’s claim—that it is based on actual empirical data and not just on the advertiser’s general impressions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of persuasive communications has identified numerous factors that affect whether or not the audience accepts the information and recommendations offered in the message (e.g., MacInnis, Moorman, and Jaworski 1991). One relevant factor is the choice to present advertising claims in a numerical or verbal form. For example, research by Yalch and Elmore-Yalch (1984) established that numerical messages (“many people do 95% of their banking ...”) were better received than an equivalent verbal claim (“many people do virtually all of their banking...”) when attributed to expert sources but not when presented by nonexpert sources. Other research supports the finding of a numerical-superiority effect (Scammon 1977; Viswanathan and Narayan 1994). Childers and Viswanathan (2000) attribute some of this superiority to the fact that numerical evidence is processed at a surface level, making it faster to recognize and compare numerical information compared to the equivalent verbal information.

Related to the above discussion, Darley and Smith (1993) draw a distinction between objective and subjective claims. Objective claims are those that have an element of verifiability and cite specific factual information. On the other hand, subjective claims rely on emotions and impressions. Their manipulation of the presence of objective information consisted of the use of numerical descriptors (“Loom woven of a 75% acrylic and 25% wool blend for shape retention and softness”) versus only verbal descriptors (“Proudly woven with the very finest shape-retaining material; the

blanket is unusually soft and delightfully elegant”) for the subjective message. They found that objective claims were more persuasive than subjective claims, especially when based on factual evidence.

In thinking about numerical claims, we propose that there may be differences between numerical claims much as there are differences between numerical and verbal claims. In particular, we are interested in the distinction between round numbers and the other numbers, which could be called “sharp numbers” (Dehaene 1997, p. 108). Round numbers are those whose conceptual status gives them mental salience. For example, numbers such as 10, 20, and 30 receive salience by initiating decades in our base-ten number system, and numbers such as 15 and 25 receive salience by being midpoints of these decades (Dehaene and Mehler 1992; Schindler and Kirby 1997). Some numbers have salience, and thus roundness, only in certain contexts. For example, in time estimation, the period of seven days is salient because it represents a week (Huttenlocher, Hedges, and Bradburn 1990).

As a result of their salience, round numbers are the numbers that are most likely to come to mind when a person is trying to estimate a quantity that is uncertain. For example, in a variety of numerical estimation tasks, people show a strong tendency to produce 0- and 5-ending numbers (e.g., Hornik, Cherian, and Zakey 1994; Kaufman et al. 1949). This use of round numbers leads them to become indicators of the use of an estimation process rather than actual counting. Thus, if it is said that there are 100 people in a room, the use of the round number would lead listeners to interpret the statement as an approximation. The true number could be perhaps anywhere from 80 to 120 people. On the other hand, if it is said that there are 106 people in a room, the use of the sharp number would suggest that some counting has occurred.

It is interesting that the tendency to interpret a round number as a result of approximation is so pronounced that to communicate otherwise requires some additional wording. For example, if a count has determined that there are 100 persons in the room, one would have to say that there are *exactly* 100 individuals in the room to indicate that this is not an approximation (Dehaene 1997, p. 109).

Our research combines the round-versus-sharp-number distinction with Smith and Darley’s objective-versus-subjective distinction. We propose that sharp numbers are assumed by consumers to be objective and factually-based because they imply a high level of accuracy that could be achieved only through an empirical analysis. On the other hand, round numbers suggest an approximation that is likely to be a subjective estimate that may bear little relationship to reality. For example, a claim that a new allergy drug is 46% more effective than a popular competitor implies that the claim is based on some clinical research whereas the claim that it is 50% more effective indicates that the communicator lacks knowledge of the true level of differential effectiveness.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

On the basis of the preceding literature review, a series of research questions were developed related to the relative effectiveness of advertising claims expressed with sharp numbers compared to round numbers.

1) Are numerical claims judged differently than equivalent verbal claims? Prior research has established that numerical claims

¹The authors thank Hiralkumari Udawat for her assistance in the data collection for this study.

are superior to equivalent verbal claims, especially when used by high credible sources (Yalch and Elmore-Yalch 1984). As both sharp and round numbers are numerical, it was expected that they would be judged more believable than an equivalent verbal claim.

2) Are numerical claims judged differently when a sharp rather than a round number is used in the claim? The belief here is that consumers will infer that the advertiser's use of a sharp number is the result of an empirical analysis and not merely an approximation or a number that the advertiser has made up in order to impress the consumer. Consequently, it was expected that consumers would judge the sharp number as being more accurate and empirically-determined relative to the round-number claim.

3) If sharp numbers are assumed to be more empirically-based, will that make the overall claim more believable and persuasive? Prior research has shown that the use of objective evidence (claims based on empirical testing) enhances the persuasiveness of an advertising message (e.g., Darley and Smith 1993). However, this prior research used multiple verbal claims compared to multiple numerical claims as the objective evidence manipulation. No study has looked at the more subtle difference between round and sharp numbers in making a single claim. Here, there is a minimal implicit suggestion that one claim is more credible and persuasive than the other.

4) Does advertising skepticism, an individual difference in the overall belief in the honesty of advertising, moderate the effects of numerical-versus-verbal claims and of sharp-versus-round numerical claims? Prior research has established that consumers differ in their general skepticism toward advertising and advertising claims. Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998) developed a nine-item scale to measure consumers' tendencies to question advertising claims. Their research demonstrated substantial construct validity, with advertising skepticism being positively associated with unfavorable attitudes toward marketing and advertising in general. The scale developers speculated that high skeptics would reject testimonials and many other forms of advertising, such as demonstrations. However, it was not determined if they would reject all forms of advertising. We propose that because advertising claims expressed with sharp numbers are interpreted as being more likely to result from authentic empirical analysis than those using round numbers, that advertising skeptics may be less inclined to reject them than round-numbered claims. Consequently, we predicted an interaction between the type of number used in a claim and advertising skepticism. Specifically, we expected that high skeptics would be less likely than low skeptics to accept a round-number claim but equally likely to accept a sharp-number claim.

METHOD

The above-mentioned research questions were explored in an experimental study of consumer responses to paired advertisements. Subjects were asked to compare two color advertisements for the same product that differed only in the main claim made on behalf of the product. In all cases, one of the two advertisements used a verbal format. The second advertisement in the pair was varied such that one third of the subjects saw the claim expressed with a sharp number that was slightly lower than a round number, one-third saw the claim expressed with a sharp number that was slightly higher than the round number, and the remaining third saw the ad's claim expressed with the round number. After examining the pair of advertisements, the consumers responded to a three-page questionnaire.

Test Advertisements

We decided to use a fictitious body-spray deodorant as the advertised product, because the product category could plausibly

support an objective claim and because it is a category relevant to most people. The ad we constructed featured a young man and woman dancing on an outdoor deck. The key claim was that the brand, Amor, was a long-lasting body-spray deodorant. The claim using the verbal format was, "Lasts far longer than any other deodorant." The three numerical claims were, "Lasts [47%, 50%, or 53%] longer than any other deodorant." The claim was made in both the headline and the last line of the body text of the advertisement. The ads were presented side-by-side to facilitate comparisons. The verbal message was paired with one of the three numerical messages. Half of the time, the verbal message was on the left and half of the time on the right. Although hemispheric lateralization studies suggest that verbal and numeric information may be processed differently depending on the field of vision, an analysis revealed no position effect so the data were combined across the two positions.

Measures

Immediately below the two advertisements was a set of nine questions asking subjects to compare the two ads. These looked at two aspects – credibility and perceived accuracy. Credibility was assessed using four items (more true, more believable, more trustworthy, and more convincing). Perceived accuracy was assessed using four items (more accurate, more exaggerated, based on actual scientific evidence, and better documented). The last of the nine items asked which of the two ads in the pair made the subjects more interested in trying the product. All items were judged using 5-point scales with the labels Ad A definitely, Ad A probably, Both ads are about the same, Ad B probably, and Ad B definitely.

The second page of the questionnaire included the nine questions making up the Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998) ad skepticism scale. The items included statements such as "Advertising is generally truthful" and "I feel that I am accurately informed after viewing most advertisements." A 5-point response scale was used with the labels Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Somewhat disagree, and Strongly disagree.

The third page of the questionnaire asked about the subjects' interests in solving problems and thinking about situations. Neither proved useful in understanding the phenomenon of interest. The last item was an open-ended question regarding the purpose of the study. No subjects indicated that it involved sharp-versus-round numbers in claims. This is not surprising since no subject was exposed to both a sharp- and a round-number claim.

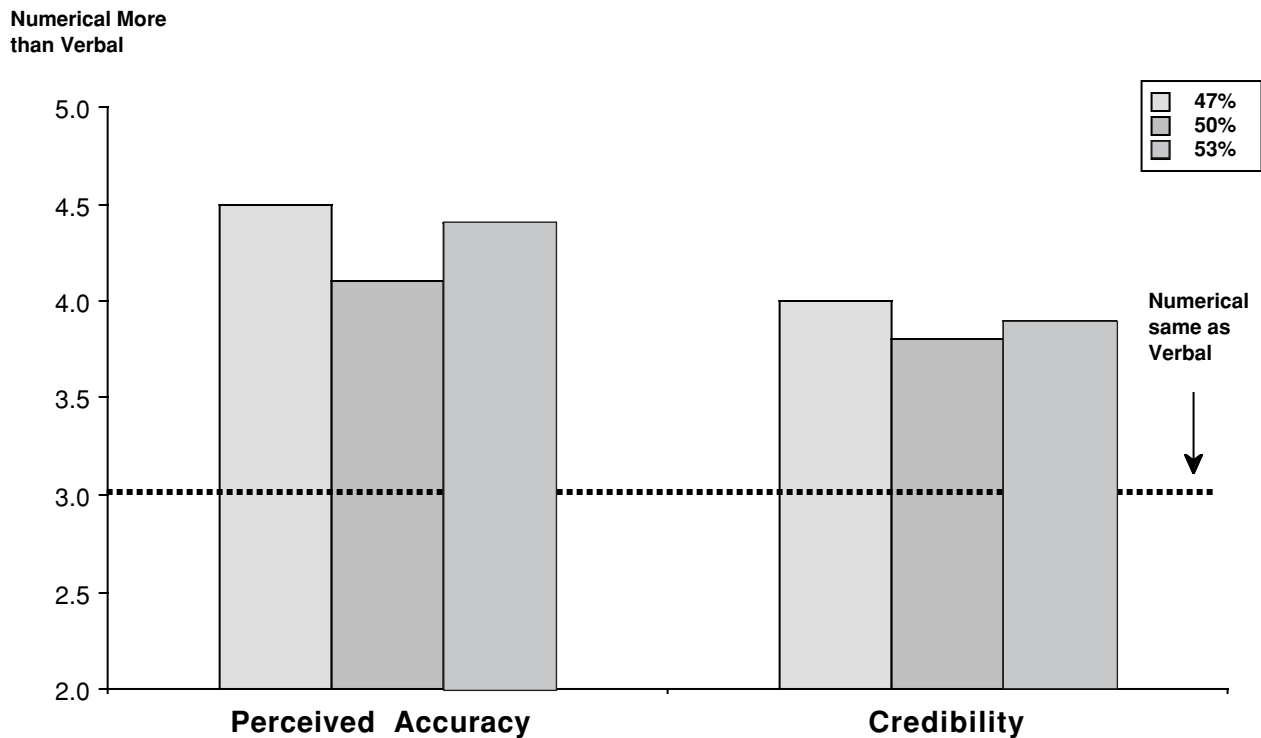
Subjects

One hundred and ninety-nine university students served as subjects in this study. They were recruited by campus advertising to report to a testing room where they completed the questionnaire for this study along with questionnaires for two unrelated studies. They were paid \$10 for their participation in the three studies.

RESULTS

The responses to the four items making up the determination of the ad's credibility were combined (Cronbach's $\alpha=.85$) to form a credibility scale, CREDIBILITY. Three of the other four items were combined to form the perceived accuracy scale, ACCURACY. The fourth item, more exaggerated, was deleted because the reverse wording appeared to confuse many subjects as they rated claims they considered more accurate, more likely based on scientific testing, and better documented as more, not less, exaggerated. Both a factor analysis and the reliability analysis argued for not including this item with the others. The reliability of the three-item scale was low (Cronbach's $\alpha=.52$), but still usable. The nine items related to ad skepticism were summed to form an overall advertising-skepticism score (Cronbach's $\alpha=.86$). A median

FIGURE 1
Message Evaluations by Ad Claim



split was made such that those scoring 3.25 or less were grouped and labeled low skeptics. Those scoring above 3.25 were labeled high skeptics.

Figure 1 shows the results for the perceived accuracy and credibility scales by the three message conditions. The first research question as to whether numerical claims are evaluated better than verbal claims was tested with a t-test of the perceived accuracy and credibility scores versus the null hypothesis value of 3 (equivalent to judging the numerical message the same as the verbal message). The results ($t=21.5$ for ACCURACY and $t=13.2$ for CREDIBILITY, both $p's < .001$, $n=199$) strongly support the view that numerical claims were judged to be more empirically-based and more credible than an equivalent verbal claim.

The second research question related to whether sharp numerical claims would be judged as being more accurate and empirically-determined than round numerical claims. A one-way ANOVA compared the three group means for the ACCURACY measure. The result was statistically significant ($F(2, 196)=7.48$, $p < .001$). A post hoc comparison of the means showed that the sharp-numbered claims (47% and 53%) were judged to be more likely based on empirical evidence than the round-numbered claim (50%), using a Student-Newman-Keuls test ($p < .05$). The difference between the two sharp-numbered claims was not significant, indicating that the inference that a sharp number was more likely to be empirically-based did not change when the comparison claim was rounded up or rounded down.

The third research question considered whether being seen as a claim that is more accurate without an explicit statement that this was the case would translate into greater credibility for the claim.

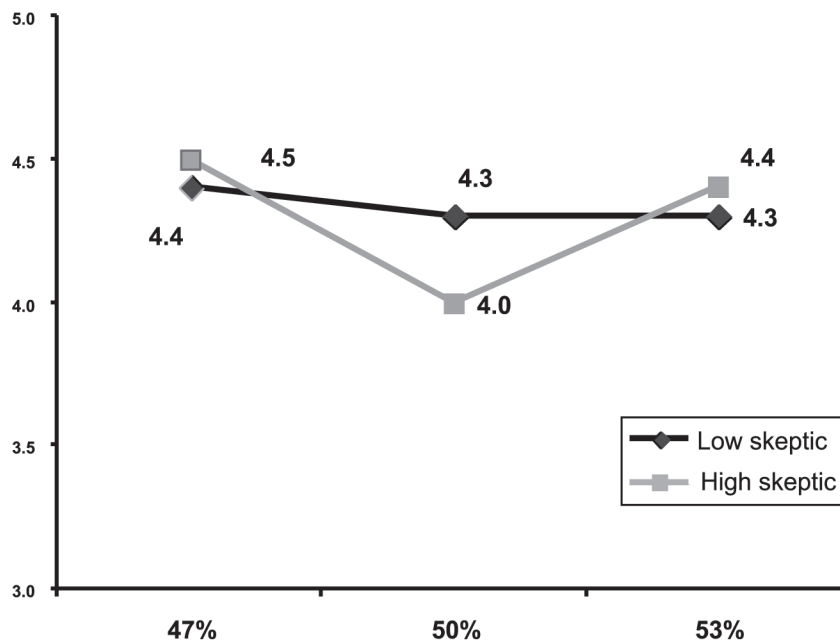
A one-way ANOVA compared the three group means for the CREDIBILITY measure. The differences were not statistically significant ($F(2,196) < 1$), indicating that the implicit belief that there was evidential support for the claim did not make the claim more believable. Similarly, there were no significant differences between the three groups in the subjects' interest in trying the advertised product.

The final research question concerned ad skepticism and whether or not it moderated the relationship between using sharp-numbered claims and judgments that these claims were based on empirical evidence. This question was addressed using a two-way ANOVA on the perceived accuracy measure. The independent variables were type of claim (47%, 50%, or 53%) and ad skepticism, with groups assigned on the basis of a median split of the subjects' self-reported beliefs about advertising. The results revealed a main effect of the type of claim ($F(2, 193)=5.98$, $p < .01$) and a marginally significant interaction of claim type with ad skepticism ($F(2, 193)=2.51$, $p < .09$). As shown in Figure 2, the cause of the interaction was the tendency of the high ad skeptics to doubt the evidential basis for the round-numbered claim relative to the low skeptics but to not do that for the sharp-numbered claims. However, as was true for the combined sample, the interaction effect between claim type and ad skepticism for perceived accuracy was not significant for claim credibility of the messages (claim type by ad skepticism, $F(2, 193)=1.67$, $p > .1$).

DISCUSSION

The results of this experiment support the conjecture that advertising claims stated in terms of sharp numbers are more likely

FIGURE 2
Perceived Accuracy for Claim by Ad Skepticism



to be judged by consumers as having originated from some empirical data and therefore are more accurate than equivalent round-numbered or verbal claims. The effect is particularly noteworthy in that it appears to be due primarily to those consumers who consider themselves to be highly skeptical of advertising claims. Although these high skeptics indeed showed a smaller advantage of numerical over verbal claims when round numbers were involved, they were just as likely as the low skeptics to make the unjustified inference that a sharp-number claim is empirically-based. This finding suggests that Obermiller and Spangenberg's (1998) view that advertising skeptics tend to be suspicious of advertising devices such as testimonials and demonstrations should be modified to state that ad skeptics are not more skeptical of everything advertisers do. This research shows that more subtle methods used in advertising may not be as readily rejected.

The evidence in this study that the use of sharp numbers suggests the involvement of detailed, empirical analysis may also be applied to our understanding of everyday verbal communication. Consider, for example, how you might perceive a friend if, rather than saying, "I'll be back in a half hour," the friend said, "I'll be back in 27 minutes." Santos, Leve, and Pratkanis (1994) found that a panhandler can get more money by asking for 17 or 37 cents rather than requesting a quarter. Although they explained this phenomenon by the attention-getting properties of the sharp numbers, the results of the present study would suggest an alternative explanation. It may be that when one is approached for 37 cents, the sharpness of the number suggests that there is a very specific need, say, that the requestor is only a few cents short of what he needs to buy a bus ticket home. By contrast, the request for a round amount of money might suggest that there is no specific need – rather, the requestor just wants money.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The present research is exploratory, and the conclusions must be judged tentative since only one ad with only one headlined claim was tested. Further, ads were compared directly against each other, making it likely that the subjects would focus on the numerical claim. As this should increase scrutiny of the numerical claim relative to a more natural exposure situation, this provides a strong test of the proposition that audiences infer an empirical basis for claims stated in terms of sharp numbers. In a more complex exposure situation, where consumers typically do not expend the resources to consider the possibility that the claim is being falsely stated to look like it was empirically-based, the possibility of such an unwarranted assumption should be greater.

Individuals concerned about truth in advertising should be heartened by the finding that the sharp-numbered claim was not judged to be highly persuasive. There may be a countervailing influence whereby consumers may be more suspicious of advertisers who use empirically-based claims such that the greater credibility of the claim is countered by a lowered trustworthiness. This could easily be tested by varying the perceived trustworthiness of the source to see if there is an interaction between source credibility and type of numerical claim.

It would also be useful to determine whether the effects are enhanced when consumers lack the resources or motivation to properly evaluate sharp-number claims. As noted by MacInnis et al. (1991), advertisers should recognize that there are tradeoffs such that an executional device designed to attract attention (sexy models or humor) may interfere with the processing of brand information. The mere fact that a numerically-stated claim appears more accurate and factual than a round-number claim because it is

assumed to be empirically-based may cause the audience to pay less attention to the message, thus reducing comprehension and storage of the information. It would be useful to determine whether there is a memorability difference between sharp and round numbers. Childers and Viswanathan's (2000) research comparing the representation of verbal and numerical information is a good reference for thinking about this issue.

CONCLUSIONS

Advertisers have used sharp numbers for many years. Proctor & Gamble's trademarked claim that Ivory soap is 99 and 44/100% pure dates to the 19th century and may be one of the best-known examples of a sharp-number claim. Interestingly, this claim is based on a chemist's analysis of a sample of the product (<http://www.ivory.com/history.htm>). Other advertisers use similar numerical claims that also appear highly precise but may not be based on scientific research. The present research shows that even in the absence of a clear reference to an empirical basis for the numerical claim, consumers are likely to assume that it is based on research when the claim is stated in terms of a sharp number rather than a round one.

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ROUNDTABLE
Philosophy and Consumption
Janet L. Borgerson, University of Exeter

This session's purpose was to survey recent efforts by consumer researchers to draw upon philosophical concepts and theories in accomplishing consumer research. Turning to philosophy can help clarify assumptions, theory, and methods within consumer research. Initial examples of areas that could benefit from such philosophical grounding included research on consumer objects—or material culture—as resources for consumer identity work (Marcoux 2005; Miller 1987); brands as resources in symbolic consumption (Holt 2002); and constituting consumer subjectivities, including gendered and racial identities, through interaction with marketing representations (Schroeder and Borgerson 2005; Borgerson and Schroeder 2004). Indeed, the roundtable gathered together over forty researchers engaged in philosophically informed consumer research; provided a platform for learning about attendees' ongoing projects; and pooled knowledge, offering suggestions regarding theoretical resources for future research.

Clearly, the concerns of philosophy and the marketplace intersect. Some of the most famous philosophers have backgrounds in economics and political theory. Historically, these writers engaged with labor, production, and value issues, and the economic interactions—broadly conceived—of individuals, particular cultures, and the world as a whole. Further, many theorists in economics, management, and finance look to, reflect on, and write documents based in philosophical concerns for global justice, human capabilities, and cultural practices. At a more pragmatic level, philosophical considerations and ethical investigations, and the ability to undertake both, allow for thoughtful, careful, and aware research, including an understanding of epistemological and ontological issues regarding, e.g. consumer identity, corporate social responsibility, and consumption generally.

Issues around agency and materiality provide but one illustrative example of the work philosophy does in consumer research (Borgerson 2005). One might ask, What do consumer researchers mean when they claim that consumer selves are “transformed”, “created”, “expressed”, or “emancipated” in relation to consumer objects and contexts, such as branding, in consumer culture? What are the relations between subjects and objects, or to put it another way, what versions of materiality are being proposed, called upon, or assumed in such consumer research? How does consumer research conceptualize the self? How much agency should be attributed to objects and subjects in becoming who and what they are?

Assumptions about who or what the consumer *is* matters. How consumer researchers conceptualize consumers, consumer identity, and consumer self crucially impacts upon appropriate research assumptions, contextual understandings, and potential insights and outcomes in consumer research: Yet, effects of agency and materiality-related assumptions often remain undertheorized, or simply absent, leading to conceptual confusion, inaccurate description, and simplifications rather than complexity even in sophisticated attempts to understand relationships between humans and life contexts.

This is not to claim that attending to the relation between philosophy and consumption leads only to a single version of subject constitution. Many theoretical conceptions exist; and these are drawn upon, often, in qualitative, interpretative research focused, for example, upon branding, retail environments, material culture, and research methodologies, especially that which is in-

formed by social sciences and humanities disciplines (e.g., Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989). The goal is to widen the conversation among scholars with a variety of interests and approaches, providing support and resources for interested researchers.

The researchers who attended the roundtable introduced themselves and briefly discussed a topic with which they were engaged and indicated how particular philosophers or philosophical notions and concepts helped them think through complexities, or made certain questions and insights possible. A number of philosophers were mentioned, from historical figures Plato, Hume, and Kant to twentieth century names, such as, Pierre Bourdieu, Michael Foucault, and Donna Haraway. One researcher suggested that contemporary philosopher Judith Butler's work *Bodies That Matter* (1993) helped her conceptualize the constitution of ‘consumers that matter’. Another researcher warned against looking only to long dead canonical or typical philosophers (the usual suspects, as it were), urging instead turning to plentiful contemporary sources of philosophical and ethical ideas and innovations. This means taking into account work in *feminist philosophy* (e.g., Oliver 1998; Young 1990) and *philosophy of race* (e.g., Goldberg 1993; Gordon 1997), as well.

Materiality, as mentioned above, and related concerns for co-creation, interrelationships, and intersubjectivity emerged as a topic of particular interest among several participants. Issues of meaning construction, aesthetics, mundane practices, and identity also sparked a turn to philosophy and philosophical thinkers. Further, philosophy sheds light on methodological concerns: moreover, philosophy questions, and thus adds rigor to, the coherence of arguments. Future roundtables will offer opportunities to focus in on particular topics or figures and extend this fruitful, yet often missing, conversation in consumer research.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Marketplace Motives and Consumer Meta-Skepticism

Barbara Bickart, Rutgers University-Camden

SESSION OVERVIEW

Over the last ten years, there has been increasing attention focused on understanding how consumers' beliefs about a firm's motives affect consumer response to marketers' actions. Much of this research has focused on beliefs about the persuasion process, or persuasion knowledge (Campbell and Kirmani 2000, Friestad and Wright 1994, 1995). Specifically, consumers often appear to question marketers' motives, resulting in diminished trust and skepticism about relationships with firms (Fournier, Dobscha, and Mick 2000). Fournier et. al (2000) suggest that in order for companies to build strong relationships with consumers, they must be honest about their motives. Further, a consumer's ability to accurately perceive a firm's motive and respond accordingly is important from a consumer welfare perspective.

The papers in this session examine how consumers' make inferences about a marketer's motives and how skepticism about such motives affects consumers' reactions to a firm's marketing efforts. Building on an idea suggested by Wright (2002), the research in this session investigates theoretically and empirically how meta-skepticism influences the manner in which the consumer interprets a firm's actions. In fact, the research presented in this session suggests that marketing tactics can have a very different impact depending on how the consumer views and interprets the motives of the influence agent.

The first paper, by Dan Ariely and Ayelet Gneezy establishes in a convincing way the extent of consumers' meta-skepticism about marketers' actions and statements. In three studies, they show that consumers' default view is to be skeptical about marketers' offers and to distrust statements made by companies. Importantly, this skepticism about marketers stands in contrast to peoples' inherent trust of others in interpersonal relations. Skepticism about a firm's motives can also influence how specific marketing tactics (i.e., changes in price) influence attitudes toward the company, as shown in the paper by Priya Raghurir and Meg Campbell. Their research shows that depending on the types of inferences consumers make about the marketer's motives, price increase announcements can result in either positive or negative attitudes toward the firm. The third paper, by Barbara Bickart, Mimi Morrin, and Ratti Ratneshwar, examines salesperson communications. They show that the effect of admitting a lack of knowledge to a consumer's question (versus obfuscation) depends on whether or not consumers question the salesperson's motives. They also show that the effects of persuasion knowledge operate not only through skepticism (that is, lack of trust in the salesperson), but also via feelings towards the salesperson (i.e., the likeability of the agent).

To summarize, we hope that by presenting these papers in a single session, we encouraged further dialogue on the role of meta-skepticism in consumer behavior. The session included a lively discussion led by Connie Pechmann.

SHORT ABSTRACTS:

“Truth and False in Marketing”

Dan Ariely, MIT

Ayelet Gneezy, University of Chicago

In social interaction it was shown that people first believe others, and disbelief is triggered only as a result of a correcting procedure. We hypothesize that, in contrast with the standard

finding from social interaction, consumers are primarily disbelieving and distrusting of information provided by marketers. One field study and two lab studies support this hypothesis. The results show that ambiguous (experiment 1) and unambiguous (experiment 2) statements that are endorsed by a firm are judged as false more frequently, and that when they are judged as true, they are judged more slowly.

“Benefit of Doubt or Betrayal? The Effect of Priors And Reasons on Response to Price Increases”

Priya Raghurir, University of California at Berkeley

Margaret C. Campbell, University of Colorado at Boulder

Four studies show that fee increases are ambiguous events that can be perceived as positive depending on the customer's inferences based on priors about the company and its competitors, and the reason provided for the fee increase. When reasons are perceived to be valid, then priors act as a buffer, allowing customers to give a company the benefit of the doubt. However, when the reasons appear to be an infraction, there is a feeling of betrayal. The fee amount has a limited downside, and a potential upside effect: with improved attitudes with higher fees for customers with a positive prior.

“Does it Pay to Beat Around the Bush? Salesperson Motives and the Effects of Obfuscation versus Honesty in Communications”

Barbara Bickart, Rutgers University-Camden

Maureen Morrin, Rutgers University-Camden

S. Ratneshwar, University of Missouri

Communication between a salesperson and a consumer plays an important role in how long-term relationships are developed and maintained. In two studies, we show that consumers' beliefs about a salesperson's motives affect how consumers' interpret communication with the agent. Specifically, when the salesperson's motive is to earn a commission (versus provide information), consumers believe the agent is more likely to obfuscate versus admit not knowing the answer to a question. Further, when the agent is on commission, behavioral intentions and satisfaction are significantly higher when the agent admits to not knowing an answer relative to obfuscating. We discuss these findings in the context of the Persuasion Knowledge Model (i.e., Friestad and Wright 1994, 1995).

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Emerging Perspectives on Self-Control

Ran Kivetz, Columbia University
Yuhuang Zheng, Fordham University

SESSION OVERVIEW

In their everyday lives, consumers face many self-control dilemmas between immediate pleasures and long-term interests. There is growing evidence that consumers often fail to exercise the appropriate level of self-control. However, despite the voluminous and interdisciplinary research on self-control, there is still much to be learned about how consumers could improve their self-control decisions. The present session introduces three current programs of research that offer emerging perspectives on consumer self-control. The three presentations highlight the key role of construal level, justification, and mood-regulation and together offer descriptive and prescriptive insights into self-control failures and their possible remedies.

In the first paper, Fujita, Trope, and Liberman propose a model of self-control based on the tenets of construal level theory (Trope & Liberman, 2003). The authors propose that decisions that result in increased self-control involve acting in accordance with high level, rather than low level, construal. Therefore, the authors argue that activation of high level construal (which captures the primary, central features of an event) should lead to greater self-control than activation of low level construal (which captures secondary, incidental features). The authors demonstrate across three experiments that priming high level construal leads to increased self-control in the form of decreased preferences for immediate over delayed outcomes, greater physical endurance, and less positive evaluations of temptations.

In the second paper, Kivetz and Zheng build on an alternative perspective that suggests that people also experience a reverse self-control problem, namely excessive farsightedness and over-control — in short, “hyperopia” (Kivetz & Simonson, 2002a; Kivetz & Keinan, forthcoming). The authors examine two major justification routes that consumers can employ to relax their self-control and enjoy the pleasures of life. Specifically, they propose an “entitlement” route that involves working hard or excelling and another complementary route that entails indulging without depleting income. Consistent with these two justification routes, a series of experiments with actual effort tasks and real choices demonstrate that higher effort or (bogus) excellence feedback enhances choices of vice over virtue; further, these effects are reversed when the interchangeability of effort and income is implied (by providing the effort’s typical, yet unavailable wage).

The third paper, by Zemack-Rugar, Bettman, and Fitzsimons, examines how consumers make self-control decisions in the service of mood-regulation and demonstrates several novel findings. The authors propose a strategic view of self-control, whereby self-control levels are increased or decreased in the service of emotion-regulation goals. As a result, contrary to the prevalent view that negative emotions lead to failures in self-control (e.g., Tice et al., 2001), it is demonstrated that negative emotions can sometimes lead to increases in self-control.

The papers presented in this session are unique in their conceptual treatment of consumer self-control. Overall, the session provides new insights into the key factors that affect consumer self-control and the mechanisms that consumers could employ to resolve such dilemmas more effectively. The session has both

theoretical and practical implications in that it presents new theories regarding the conditions in which consumers succeed or fail at self-control; such consumer failures (both myopia and hyperopia) have particularly detrimental societal implications.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACTS:

“Construal Levels and Self-Control”

Kentaro Fujita, New York University
Yaacov Trope, New York University
Nira Liberman, Tel-Aviv University

People often fail to do what they want to do, despite possessing the knowledge, opportunity, and skills required. Such self-control failures are pervasive and the focus of a multi-disciplinary research effort. Most models of self-control posit conflicts between automatic versus controlled psychological processes (e.g. Baumeister & Heatherton, 1992), long-term versus short-term motives (e.g. Ainslie & Haslam, 1992), or impulsive affect versus rational cognition (e.g. Loewenstein, 1996; Metcalfe & Mischel, 1999). We propose a general theoretical framework based on the tenets of construal level theory (Trope & Liberman, 2003), which builds upon and integrates these previous approaches.

Construal level theory posits individuals can represent the same event at multiple levels (Trope & Liberman, 2003). High level representations, or construals, capture the primary, global, central features of events, whereas low level construals capture the secondary, local, peripheral aspects. As the valence of high and low level features is independent, individuals’ evaluations, preferences, and decisions can change systematically as a function of construal level. More weight is given to high level features in preferences and decisions when high level construals are activated, whereas more weight is given to low level features when low level construals are activated. Empirical research has supported these theoretical assertions, demonstrating that high and low level construals are distinct, and that they predict different preferences and decisions (Trope & Liberman, 2003).

A construal level analysis of self-control suggests that self-control conflicts arise when the valence of high and low level construals motivate opposing action tendencies. Self-control is defined as making decisions and acting in accordance with high levels construals rather than low level construals. Failures of self-

control, on the other hand, occur when individuals make decisions and act in accordance with low level construals rather than high level construals.

One implication of this model is that the activation of high level construals should promote self-control. We present three experiments designed to test this hypothesis. In all three studies, we enhanced the tendency to construe events at high versus low levels using an experimental priming manipulation. We then observed the “carry over” effects that these primed construal levels had on subsequent self-control tasks. Importantly, high level construals were activated without activating more deliberate, “cool,” rational, and long-term thinking. These studies thus directly test the unique effect of construals on self-control. High level construals, however, are frequently associated with these factors, which are proposed as critical variables by other approaches, and we believe they represent instantiations of the more general model of self-control we propose.

In Study 1, we manipulated the tendency to construe events at high versus low levels by having research participants consider why or how they engaged in some activity. Previous research has demonstrated that considering why one engages in an activity activates a tendency to construe at high levels, whereas thinking about how one engages in an activity activates a tendency to construe at low levels (Freitas et al., 2004). As a measure of self-control, we then observed participants’ preferences for immediate over delayed outcomes. As predicted, participants primed to high levels of construal demonstrated a reduced tendency to prefer immediate over delayed outcomes, suggesting greater self-control.

Using a similar manipulation of construal levels, we replicated these results in Study 2 with a behavioral measure of physical endurance. After primed to high versus low levels, participants were asked to hold a handgrip, an exercise tool that taxes one’s physical endurance, while connected to a computer with electrodes, ostensibly to receive feedback about their personality via a new psycho-physiological measure. Participants were told that although uncomfortable, holding the handgrip for longer durations would lead to more accurate feedback from the computer. Results revealed that participants primed to high levels of construal demonstrated greater physical endurance, suggesting that they exerted greater self-control.

In Study 3, to manipulate construal levels, we had participants either generate category labels (high level representations) or exemplars (low level representations) for a series of common objects. Participants, who were all students, were then asked to evaluate a list of words, some of which were temptations that undermine the goal to study. Self-control would be revealed through less positive evaluations of temptations. We also had participants indicate how important the goal to study was for them, as the temptations we presented would represent self-control conflicts only to those who value studying. As expected, high levels of construal led to less positive evaluations of temptations (with no differences between levels on non-temptation words). Moreover, the effect was limited to those who experienced those temptations as self-control conflicts, i.e. those who valued studying. These results replicate the previous two studies, and provide evidence that impact of construal levels is indeed specific to self-control conflicts.

The results of these studies suggest that high level construals do lead to greater self-control. They provide preliminary support for a construal level analysis whereby self-control is defined as making decisions and acting in accordance with high level rather than low level construals. As factors that other models propose enhance self-control are often related to high level construals, whereas factors that impair self-control are often associated with

low level construals, a construal level analysis provides an integrative theoretical framework for understanding the critical variables in self-control proposed by previous approaches. Although often highly correlated, however, low level construals are not necessarily affective, visceral, short-term, and automatic, nor are high level construals always cool, rational, long-term, and controlled. Both high and low level construals can be affective and visceral (versus cognitive and rational) and automatic (versus controlled). Moreover, a construal level analysis can capture self-control conflicts for which time is not an issue. A construal level analysis therefore represents a new approach to studying and understanding when and why individuals fail to exert self-control.

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“Determinants of Justification and Self-Control”

Ran Kivetz, Columbia University
Yuhuang Zheng, Fordham University

Consumers often face a fundamental self-control dilemma between indulging and delaying gratification. How decision-makers resolve this dilemma is a central question in the voluminous and interdisciplinary literatures on self-control and time-inconsistency, which examine tradeoffs between immediate pleasures and long-term interests (vices versus virtues, respectively). Prior research and common sense suggest that people are more likely to relax their self-control and select vices when they have a compelling justification (e.g., Prelec & Herrnstein, 1991; Shafir, Simonson, & Tversky, 1993). However, a critical question that has not yet been studied is how such justifications are constructed. Accordingly, the main goal of the present research is to shed light on the antecedents of justification and their impact on self-control.

Building on prior analyses in the social sciences (e.g., Kivetz & Keinan, forthcoming; Kivetz & Simonson, 2002b; Maslow, 1970; Scitovsky, 1992; Thaler, 1985; Weber, 1958), we propose two complementary routes to justifying self-gratification: one through hard work or excellent performance (i.e., an entitlement or deservingness justification) and the second through the attainment of vices without the depletion of income. A synthesis of these two routes suggests that the preference for vice over virtue will increase with the expending of resources perceived as effort but will decrease with the expending of resources perceived as income or money. We test this and other related propositions in a series of studies with real effort activities (e.g., completing a computerized letter recognition task) and real choices between relative virtues and vices.

Studies 1a-1c show that perceiving oneself as having invested higher effort enhances the likelihood of choosing (a) to subsequently participate in a fun study with no delayed benefits rather than in a painful self-assessment study with long-term benefits; (b) lowbrow over highbrow movies; and (c) a delicious chocolate cake over a healthier fruit salad. Importantly, these self-control dilemmas were adopted from prior research on self-control (Fujita et al., in press; Read, Loewenstein, and Kalyanaraman, 1999; Mischel 1974; Shiv and Fedorikhin, 1999; Trope and Liberman, 2000; Trope and Neter, 1994). Studies 1a-1c also demonstrate that self-control choices are influenced by effort investment that is either absolute or relative (i.e., to the effort invested by others) and regardless of whether the effort activity and the self-control decision are related (as in effort-reward contingencies) or unrelated (as in two ostensibly separate studies). Further, consistent with the proposed conceptualization, higher effort is shown to have a stronger effect on people who perceive the choice as involving a conflict between short- and long-term interests.

In Study 2, we manipulate participants' guilt by asking them to recall either few or many instances of choosing vice or virtue (see Schwarz et al., 1991). We find that stronger emotions of guilt magnify the impact of effort on subsequent self-control decisions. This finding is consistent with the conceptual framework because it implies that a greater need to justify self-gratification sensitizes people to the presence of justification cues.

Studies 3a and 3b show that, although greater effort enhances the preference for vices, this effect is reversed when the interchangeability of effort and income is implied (by providing the effort's typical, yet unavailable wage). Study 4 extends the entitlement justification by demonstrating that participants who are led to believe that they excelled in an effort task are more likely to select vice compared to participants who are provided with mediocre or no performance feedback; we also re-examine the attenuating effect of alluding to the interchangeability of effort and income.

The last two studies investigate the implications of the two justification routes for willingness to expend different resources to attain either vices or virtues. In particular, Study 5 shows that people are willing to pay in effort more for luxury than for necessity but are willing to pay in money less for luxury less than for necessity. Study 6 generalizes this finding by holding constant the actual resource investment and framing it as either effort (solving anagrams) or income (by providing the typical, yet unavailable wage per anagram solution). Consistent with the results of Study 2, in which we manipulated guilt, throughout Studies 3-6 we find that the predicted effects are more pronounced among individuals who suffer from stronger chronic guilt. The final section highlights the unconscious nature of the two justification routes and their ability to explain the findings of prior research on self-control.

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"The Conscious and Nonconscious Use of Self-Control for Emotion-Regulation"

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Gavan J. Fitzsimons, Duke University

Although self-control is a critical foundation of social and personal functioning (Baumeister 1997; Mischel 1996), we often fail at it. Existing research shows that we most often fail at self-control when we are in a bad mood (Baumeister 1997; Bushman et al. 2001; Heatherton et al. 1998; Leith & Baumeister 1996; Tice et al. 2001). Theories as to why this occurs range from distraction, to intentional self-harm, to inability to reason or assess risk (Leith and Baumeister 1996).

In this paper we present a strategic view of self-control and argue that people strategically increase or decrease self-control based on their need to regulate (different) negative emotions. The present theory and findings add to existing literature in several respects. First, existing theories argue emotion-regulation and self-control goals are antithetical and cannot coexist; whenever emotion-regulation goals are present, self-control goals are overridden (Tice et al., 2001). The present theory argues emotion-regulation and self-control goals not only coexist, but also interact strategically. That is, individuals adjust their self-control levels depending on whether self-control is deemed useful for emotion-regulation.

This "adjustment" of self-control depends on individuals' beliefs regarding the degree to which self-control is useful for emotion-regulation. Our theory accounts for such beliefs regarding goal-achievement (Carver and Scheier 1998) and examines the moderators that affect both beliefs and behavior. A more nuanced picture of the effects of negative emotions on self-control is drawn by accounting for belief and behavior (self-control) moderators,

including emotion type, emotion strength, and individual coping characteristics.

Additionally, we demonstrate in 3 studies that individuals can either decrease or increase their self-control in negative emotional states. This finding is contrary to existing literature that argues self-control inevitably fails in negative emotions (Tice et al., 2001). Finally, in four additional studies we demonstrate that the use of self-control for emotion-regulation can be pursued automatically, without conscious awareness.

In our first study we vary the need to regulate emotion by using sad (salient emotion-regulation goal) vs. neutral (no emotion-regulation goal; Wilson et al. 2003) conditions. We then directly manipulate participants' belief regarding whether self-control will help/hurt their emotion. We find a significant interaction of Emotion*Belief. Neutral consumers' self-control is unaffected by self-control beliefs, as they have no active emotion-regulation goal. However, sad consumers increase or decrease self-control depending on whether they believe indulging (in a guilty-pleasure food item; Giner-Sorolla 2001) will help/hurt their emotion. Consequently, individuals in a sad mood who believe indulging will hurt their emotion show *higher* self-control than their neutral counterparts. These results support a strategic emotion-regulation view in which self-control is "recruited" to the service of emotion-regulation based on cognitions. Additionally, showing increased self-control in a negative emotion (i.e., sad) runs contrary to existing findings and theories.

In our second study we indirectly manipulate beliefs by eliciting two different negative emotions, sadness and guilt. In a pretest, we demonstrate that beliefs regarding the utility of self-control for emotion-regulation differ across these emotions. Consistent with these beliefs, guilty individuals indulged less than their sad and neutral counterparts (in a CD/DVD purchase coupon). As in study 1, individuals in a negative (guilty) mood show an *increase* in self-control as compared to the neutral baseline. Moreover, individuals in different negative moods espouse different cognitions regarding the utility of self-control for emotion-regulation, and these cognitions correspond to the level of self-control seen in those specific emotions.

In our third study we examine the moderating effect of emotion strength and individual coping characteristics. We examine guilty, sad, and neutral participants and measure guilt-proneness, an individual difference variable that measures coping with guilt (Tangney, Wagner, and Gramzow 1992). In this study, we induce a strong emotional state by requesting autobiographical stories for guilt and sadness. As predicted, we find an Emotion*Guilt-Proneness interaction for both beliefs and behaviors. Individuals low in guilt-proneness believe increasing self-control is useful for emotion-regulation and show increased self-control on a grim-necessity task (Boster et al. 1999; Bybee 1998; Estrada-Hollenbeck and Heatherton 1998; Giner-Sorolla 2001; Tangney 2001) compared to sad or neutral individuals. However, individuals high in guilt-proneness believe self-control will not help emotion-regulation and show less self-control than sad or neutral people. This backlash of high-guilt prone individuals is consistent with clinical literature suggesting that when high guilt-prone individuals experience acute guilt (as in this study), they tend to engage in denial and avoidance behaviors (Kubany and Watson 2003) and behave antisocially (Harder 1995; Harder and Lewis 1987) with low self-control. This backlash effect is neither predicted nor found in studies where guilt is milder, as presented next.

In four additional studies we demonstrate that the use of self-control for emotion-regulation can become automated. If individuals consistently enact the same behaviors in a given situation, the behavior can become automatic. We argue the emotion-behavior

link between specific negative emotions and self-control should be activated even when individuals are not fully aware of their emotion-regulation goal. We examine both guilty and sad emotions and we include a measure of guilt-proneness.

In these studies we subliminally prime either guilt or sadness and measure behavior on either a guilty-pleasure or grim-necessity self-control task. We find no conscious reporting of an emotion-regulation goal. Moreover, we find no differences in the conscious, subjective emotion reported across the sad vs. guilty conditions (Winkielman et al. 2005). However, we find predictable differences in self-control behaviors. Specifically, we find a consistent Emotion*Guilt-proneness interaction. Guilty individuals high in guilt-proneness, who repeatedly tend to associate guilt with self-control behavior, show higher self-control than individuals in all other conditions. These results persist even following the addition of a time delay, suggesting they are not purely semantically driven, but rather are driven by a goal (Bargh et al. 2001).

In sum, this research suggests consumers can use self-control as a tool for emotion-regulation based on what they *believe* will make them feel better. As a result, self-control can and does increase in negative emotions. Moreover, self-control varies across different negative emotions, their strength, and individual coping characteristics. Finally, these emotion-regulation strategies can become automated over time and can be elicited non-consciously.

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How Single and Married Women Organize to Get the Food on the Table Every Day: Strategies, Orientations, Outcomes and the Role of Convenience Foods

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ABSTRACT

How single and married mothers approach food preparation tasks was determined from reports of activities and attitudes around food preparation. The patterns of these activities and attitudes were used to develop meaningful typologies of food preparation orientations and strategies. These strategies and orientations were then explored in terms of their association with various work-family outcomes and convenience food use. There are many similarities in approaches used between single and married women, but also some differences. Work and family outcomes, such as role interference, stress, strain, and life satisfaction are related to several strategies and orientations, as is convenience food use. Clearly some approaches work better than others in terms of life balance.

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Even if employed full-time outside the home, women carry most of the family care responsibilities (see e.g., Cowan and Cowan 1999; Duxbury, Higgins, and Lee 1993). Probably the most difficult and time consuming tasks center around the constellation of activities involving food buying and preparation. Most studies have looked at parts of these linked tasks as isolated specific activities. However, it is likely there are underlying patterns among the food task activities reflective of strategic approaches, interests, and orientations to work and family. This study expands the knowledge of food-related task accomplishment by identifying and examining strategies in food preparation. It looks at the relationship of these strategies to food task orientations, to the use of convenience foods, and to demographic characteristics of the mothers and their households, the work patterns of the mothers, measures of work and family involvement, stress, strain, and life satisfaction. Further, it compares these across two family types, single and married mother households. The research contributes to theories of household task accomplishment and work-family balance, and informs marketers of convenience foods.

Numerous studies document that the difficulties faced by women in managing their personal and work lives generate time pressures, role conflict, role interference, role overload, stress, life dissatisfaction and affect performance both at work and at home (see for example, Duxbury, Higgins and Lee 1993; Gutek, Repetti and Silver 1988; Lewis and Cooper 1988). Emmons et al. (1990) suggested the pressures of managing multiple roles are greatest and the psychological benefits from employment are least when heavy family responsibilities involve younger children and less support from one's spouse. The management and performance of food preparation roles has been found to be a significant stressor for women in all work-family situations (Marshall, Duxbury and Heslop 1992). In particular, consumer researchers have taken the most interest in this area because of its direct relevance to consumption behaviors. Research has focused on three major subthemes of purchase of convenience foods (e.g., Jackson et al. 1985; Schaninger and Allen 1981; Strober and Weinberg 1980), food services (e.g., Bellante and Foster 1984; Nickols and Fox 1983), and durables (e.g., Bryant 1998; Weinberg and Winer 1983).

Wife's employment appears not to be a determinant of the purchase or ownership of labor-saving durables, the use of frozen

foods, grocery or clothes shopping behavior, or other types of purchases (see for example, Rubin, Riney and Molina 1990). Jackson et al. (1985) noted that working wives were more likely to dislike food shopping and cooking because of time pressures and to be less concerned with the impact of their food activities on other family members. Overall, research suggests working wives may respond in strategic ways to the stress of multiple role demands by disengaging from the tasks mentally and/or physically, e.g., by shifting tasks to other family members or downplaying the importance of the task. However, Strober and Chan (1999) noted women who preferred to do a task were not interested in bargaining it away to others. To some, cooking is a disliked chore; to others, it is a creative stress reliever (Hendrix and Qualls 1984).

Both Strober and Weinberg (1980) and Nickols and Fox (1983) proposed the individual decisions made by working wives may be guided by "global" time buying and time saving strategies, such as using capital equipment or the labor of others or reducing the work standards. Bird, Bird and Scruggs (1983) found this generalized strategy-based approach more insightful than individual product-use analysis to understanding the behavior of women who were or were not employed outside the home. Hermann and Warland (1990) studied organizing and planning practices and noted that orientations to the tasks of meal preparation, such as enjoyment and concern for aspects of the task, and feelings of time pressure did differ across the typologies they developed. These results support a relationship between orientations to the task and approaches to task performance. Finally, Carter (1990) found that households which did more in-home food preparation reported more enjoyment of cooking. Convenience food users were more likely to be in two-adult households and held more positive attitudes towards the quality of such foods.

There has been little research on single mothers and food tasks. Kushnir and Kasan (1993) report that single mothers believed their time is very limited and that they had less control over their lives because of limited resources. Sinkula (1984) (as reported in Ahuja and Walker, 1994) found an inverse relationship between the preplanning shopping efforts of single parents and their purchase of frozen foods. Both McCracken and Brandt (1990) and Burden (1986) found single employed mothers spent less time than married mothers on household tasks, especially food-related ones.

Methodology

Data were collected from a sample of 390 married and 91 single mothers who were employed full-time in five federal government departments and had one or more children under age 19 living at home. The questionnaire included sections on:

- 1) personal and household demographics—marital status, education, income, number and ages of children
- 2) hours spent in work and work status, broadly classified into two categories of professional/managerial career and technical, clerical and semi-skilled earner
- 3) work and family involvement—the former measured using the Lodahl and Kehner (1965) scale and the latter using the technique of Yogev and Brett (1985)

- 4) work interference-using the nine statement measure developed by Kopelman, Greenhaus and Connolly (1983) with such statements as, "My work schedule often conflicts with my family life,"
- 5) role overload-using the measure developed by Reilly (1982) with twelve scales such as: "There are too many demands on my time"; "Sometimes I feel as if there are not enough hours in the day"
- 6) stress-using the Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck and Mermelstein 1983). PSS scores of 2.8 or above are generally considered "high," levels of stress, and PSS scores of 1.5 or lower are considered "low" stress
- 7) time strain-using a measure of extent of being bothered by the adequacy of time available for eleven activities, including community involvement, spouse, children, sleep, friends
- 8) life satisfaction-using the 5-item Quinn and Staines (1979) measure
- 9) food preparation strategies-Based on the work noted above by Strober and Weinberg(1980), Nickols and Fox (1983) and additional approaches to this activity identified in depth interviews preceding the survey, a list of twelve food preparation behaviors and activities for single mothers and thirteen for married mothers were developed (the extra strategy involved delegating to spouse)
- 10) food preparation orientations-extent of agreement with ten scales for single mothers and twelve for married mothers, including "I like serving unusual dinners;" "I am a good cook;" "I have better ways to spend my time than cooking."

Principle Components Analysis with Varimax rotation, eigenvalue cutoffs of 1 and loadings of .4 was used to examine for patterns that would describe overall strategies and orientations for the last four measures.

RESULTS

Sample Description

The mean age of married women was 41 and of single women was 39. Although both families had an average of two children, the mean was statistically significantly higher for married women (2.1 vs. 1.8 for single mothers). A higher percentage of married women (26.5%) had completed university than single women (11%). There were no differences in the average weekly hours worked (39), occupation classification, or personal income (2/3rds earning \$30-60,000). However, 83% of single mothers vs. 39% of married women had family incomes of less than \$60,000. Stress levels of married women were slightly higher than those of single mothers, and single mothers rated considerably lower on overall life satisfaction.

Food Preparation Orientations and Strategies

To determine food preparation orientations and strategies, the responses to food preparation attitude scales and concerning the performance of several food preparation activities were analyzed using Principle Components Analysis to determine interrelated patterns of behaviors. Eigenvalue cutoffs were set at 1, and varimax rotation was used to clarify the loading patterns at .4 or above. For convenience of discussion, names were developed to reflect the patterns seen in each of these identified factors. Factor scores were developed for the orientations and strategies seen and correlations with demographic, work and family variables were used to search for associated life experiences.

Food preparation orientations. Ten statements for single mothers and twelve for married mothers about attitudes to food preparation were analyzed revealing two similar and two different factors for both groups as presented in Table 1. The extra scales for married women concern the role of the spouse. The first factor for both groups was a "Happy Cooker" orientation that featured interest in cooking and no interest in decreasing time spent. Also, both groups have a "Disengage" orientation of not worrying about food preparation or judging oneself on performance of this task. Also, for single mothers, preference for quick meals and feeling there are better ways to spend one's time loaded here. For single mothers, the two other food preparation orientations were labeled the "Family Focus" orientation, because family wishes are an important consideration, and "Cheap Gourmet," because it included high loadings on interest in serving unusual dinners but also concern for cost. For married women, the other two factors included one not available to single mothers, i.e., a spouse who enjoyed cooking and was good at it. The second involved concern for both cost and family preferences and was termed the "Carefilled."

Food preparation strategies. Twelve food preparation activities for single mothers and thirteen for married revealed four factors for the former and five for the latter. For single mothers, the first factor suggested a "Harried Juggler" strategy involving working hard, sleeping less, looking for time saving tips, and polychronic time use. The second factor depicts the "Do Less" strategy, including items of cooking simpler meals, lowering standards, and decreasing meal preparation time. This strategy is similar to the reduction of responsibility strategy discussed by Bird, Bird and Scruggs (1983) and the coping strategy classified by Nickols and Fox (1983) of reducing the quantity and quality of household production. The third factor was termed the "Organize" strategy, including planning meal preparation, organizing time to allow for cooking, and a secondary level loading for working harder. This strategy resembles the "organization" role management strategy addressed by Bird, Bird and Scruggs (1983). Finally, the last strategy was called "Food Bank" because it involves time shifting of work by stockpiling meals through weekend cooking and preparing in larger quantities.

For married mothers, two factors are the same as for single mothers, "Do Less" and "Food Bank." The second factor for married mothers includes the three scales of working hard, organizing and planning and has been called the "Do It All" strategy, in contrast to the "Do Less" approach. A pattern of polychronic time use has been labeled as "Crunch Time." The final factor for married mothers is a "Delegate" strategy, comparable to the "delegate" role management strategy discussed by Bird, Bird and Scruggs (1983) and the "substituting the labor of others" coping strategy of Nickols and Fox (1983). Interestingly, single mothers do not seem to use this strategy, in their case, not using the help of children. Married women have more options with another adult available in the household.

Food preparation orientations and life situations. Table 2 contains information on the correlations between factor scores of the orientations and demographics (education, personal and family income, number of children), work-family situation (work status, hours worked, work and family involvement) and outcomes (work interference, role overload, time strain, stress, life satisfaction). For single mothers, the "Happy Cooker" orientation was associated with higher personal incomes. Those with lower work involvement and work status but longer work hours were associated with the "Disengage" orientation, perhaps reflective of a less than fulfilling work experience. The "Cheap Gourmet" also had lower work involvement but more work interference and role overload, possibly reflecting a great involvement in household activities. For

TABLE 1
Principle Components Derived Food Preparation Orientations and Strategies

	Single				Married			
Orientation Label	Happy Cooker	Disengaged	Family Focus	Cheap Gourmet	Happy Cooker	Delegate	Carefilled	Disengaged
Attitude Statements Loading	Good cook	Don't judge worth on cooking	Family food likes important	Cost important	Enjoy cooking	Spouse is good cook	Family food likes important	Don't judge worth on cooking
	Enjoy cooking	Don't worry about food tasks	Worry about food tasks	Like to serve unusual dinners	Good cook		Cost important	Don't worry about food tasks
	Read for ideas	Prefer quick to cook			Read for ideas			
	Good way to spend time	Better ways to spend time			Like to serve unusual dinners			
	Don't prefer quick to cook	Don't like to serve unusual dinners			Good way to spend time			
					Don't prefer quick to cook			
% Variance Explained	32.4	13.2	12.0	11.7	27.3	15.0	10.5	9.1

	Single				Married				
Strategy Label	Harried Juggler	Do Less	Organize	Food Bank	Do less	Do all	Food Bank	Crunch Time	Delegate
Activities Loading	Sleep less	Simple meals	Organize to save time	Cook large quantities	Lower standards	Sleep less	Cook large quant.	Share time saving tips	Tell other family members
	Work hard	Decrease time	Plan food prep	Cook week-ends	Decrease time	Work hard	Cook week-ends	Think of other tasks	Discuss with spouse
	Share time saving tips			Don't delegate	Simple meals	Plan food prep'n			
	Think of other tasks					Organize to save time			
% Variance Explained	25.4	17.4	11.9	9.5	22.3	16.6	10.8	8.4	8.0

married mothers, the “Happy Cooker” orientation was positively correlated with higher education but also with work interference and role overload. Those who were good cooks and enjoyed looking for recipes and preparing interesting, new dishes did find difficulties juggling work and family time commitments. Delegating to a spouse who was good at food preparation tasks and enjoyed them was associated with lower levels of role overload, time strain and stress for the wife. Working mothers with higher hours in the labor force and high work involvement were more likely to disengage from the food preparation task. The “Carefilled” mother seems to be in the worst situation with lower income, work involvement, work status, more children and higher role overload. This seems to be a married mother with many conflicting demands but fewer economic resources, no spousal support, and lower life satisfaction.

Food preparation strategies and life situations. For single mothers, the “Harried Juggler” strategy is positively correlated to family involvement, work interference and role overload, suggesting that those using this strategy feel pressured from being highly involved with their families and finding work conflicts with family responsibilities. The “Do Less” strategists experience high work interference and role overloads but not family pressures, so their approach to food preparation reflects this lower concern for tasks of feeding the family. The “Organize” strategist has higher education levels and family involvement, suggesting the food preparation task will be demanding and her organizational skills are called to the fore to deal with them. For married mothers, the “Do Less” strategy appears to be adopted by those with higher education, incomes, work status, hours worked, work interference, role overload, time strain, and stress. The high performance job of this type of person is balanced by a minimalist food preparation task performance. The “Do It All” strategy is also positively correlated with work interference, role overload and time strain, but also life satisfaction. This type of mother has many stresses in her life but appears to be happy with a frantic work and home life pace. The “Food Banker” deals with high work interference by scheduling time for food preparation around her workweek. The “Crunch Time” strategy is associated with lower family incomes and lower role overload. Perhaps the time efficient strategies help best in the balancing of time demands in the lower income households. Those women who delegate to other family members and share food preparation with their spouse are more likely to have higher personal incomes, work involvement and hours worked. This willingness of other family members to share household tasks is more apparent where the wife’s work status is higher.

As indicated from the previous analysis, the “Happy Cooker” who tries to “Do It All” experiences very high stress, role overload, strain and work interference levels, but the food banking and time efficiency strategies are not associated with such problems. Similarly, those mothers who are highly concerned with controlling costs but keeping family members happy will find different strategies yield different results in terms of handling the multiple roles with ease. Given these women are working long hours, have high levels of work-family conflict and aren’t interested in food tasks, this is not a surprising outcome.

Strategies, orientations and convenience food use. Convenience food usage was measured by reports of frequency of use of five types of foods (baked goods, prepared mixes, prepared dinners, prepared meats, prepared/frozen vegetables) and also the use of convenience goods in recipes rather than on their own. Overall, there is considerable use of convenience foods. Prepared or frozen vegetables were used most frequently (45.5% of single and 51.2% of married), while mixes were used the least (48.9% of singles and 48.8% of married never used them). Prepared dinners were also relatively frequently used (40.0% of single and 36.2% of married

weekly or more) but baked goods much less often (56.7% of single and 51.3% of married). Many women did use convenience goods as recipe adjuncts more than once a week (25.5% of singles and 37.3% of married).

As seen in Table 2, no significant relationships were found between the food preparation orientations of married mothers and their use of convenience foods. However, for single mothers, the “Happy Cooker” orientation is negatively correlated with the use of prepared dinners and meats. In contrast, the “Cheap Gourmet” may feel that convenience foods are a good way to get inexpensive variety into the meals she prepares. This orientation is positively related to the use of convenience foods in recipes and with total convenience food use.

There were many significant correlations of the various types of convenience food use and strategies, particularly for married women. High usage of all types of convenience foods and total usage is found among the “Do Less” Strategy for both single and married women. Here convenience foods are alleviating work and helping in getting a job done that is seen as a waste of time. These women do not see anything special about the food preparation task. In contrast, the “Do It All” strategy is associated with lower usage of most products and total usage. The women using this strategy plan, organize and give up personal time to get the job done, rather than resort to using convenience foods. One other negative correlation was found between the use of prepared dinners and the “Food Bank” strategy where women using this approach would rather spend weekend time cooking than opt for grocery store meals.

In summary, single mothers who use a lot of convenience foods are likely to have low work involvement, lower family incomes, and dislike preparing food. For those who dislike and feel food preparation is a waste of time, convenience foods are found to be useful to meet their goals. However, those with quite a different food preparation approach, the “Cheap Gourmet,” may find convenience foods useful not so much to save time and work, but as an inexpensive way to enhance meals. For married mothers, total convenience food usage is highest among those who do not enjoy cooking and are experiencing work interference and stress and low life satisfaction. Married women with strategic approaches to doing less food preparation accomplish this through higher use of convenience foods. Others who have high commitments to doing food preparation themselves work harder and organize more and avoid convenience foods in their approaches. An alternate strategy only available to some women is to delegate the task to the husband who is handy in the kitchen.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that what women do in accomplishing food-related tasks can be identified as patterned around strategic approaches that are associated with orientations to the task and to work and family situations. The identification of these strategies is an important contribution of the research to the field of study. Moreover, it is important to note that there are many points of similarity in strategies used by single and married mothers. Both groups include those for whom food preparation is enjoyable and who are likely to cook in quantity to time-shift the daily food preparation chores. Both also have their disengaged members who work away from home more hours and do fewer food tasks, keeping things simple without worrying about it. The remaining groups of women are all highly engaged and trying many tactics to get a lot done. The “Harried Juggler” single mothers are very much like the “Crunch Time” married women, employing polychronic time use to balance work and family demands. However, the single mothers do not have the Do It All “Super-Mom” strategy seen among the married women. Perhaps, the single mothers are being more realis-

TABLE 2

Correlations of Strategies and Orientations with Demographic Characteristics, Convenience Food Use, Family and Work Situations and Outcomes

Marital Status	Strategy/ Orientation	Demographic	Work/Family Situation	Work-Family Outcomes	Convenience Food Use
Single	Orientation				
	Happy Cooker	Personal Income (.30)			dinners (-.25), meats (-.22)
	Disengage		Work status (.25), Hours (.26), Work involvement (-.22)		
	Family Focus				
	Cheap Gourmet		Work involvement (-.35)	Role overload (.30)	in recipes (.23), total (.21)
	Strategy				
	Harried Juggler		Family involvement (.29)	Work interference (.25), Role overload (.35)	
	Do Less			Work interference (.27) Role overload (.29)	vegs (.32), baked goods&meals (.22), total (.31)
	Organize		Family involvement (.25)		
	Food bank				
Married	Orientation				
	Happy Cooker	Education (.15)		Work interference (.13) Role overload (.15)	
	Spouse Cooks			Role overload (-.12), Time strain (-.11) Stress (-.11)	
	Carefilled	Personal & family income (-.25), Children (.22)	Work status (-.22) Work involvement (-.24)	Role overload (.11), Life satisfaction (-.17)	
	Disengage		Work involvement (.12) Hours (.10)		
	Strategy				
	Do Less	Education (.16), Personal (.14), family income (.17)	Work status (.13), Hours (.16)	Work interference (.27) Role Overload (.24), Time strain (.29), Stress (.21)	All categories (.12 - .31), total (.32)
	Do It All			Work interference (.14), Role Overload (.18), Time strain (.19), Life satisfaction (.12)	dinner (-.20), meats (-.19), in recipes (-.12), all (-.15)
	Food Bank			Work interference (.10)	dinners (-.13)
	Crunch Time	Family income (-.14)		Role overload (-.11)	
	Delegate	Personal income (.15)	Work involvement (.20) Hours (.16)		

tic here about what can be accomplished with one adult in the household. However, they do have their own high stressor strategies and orientations, including the Cheap Gourmet who wants great meals on a limited budget, and the Harried Juggler who works harder, sleeps less, and crunches time.

The research findings also suggest that some strategies are associated with different levels of stress and strain. High scores on work interference, role overload, and time strain were associated with several orientations and strategies. Since these are correlation measures, no direction of causation can be assured. However, in some cases, some speculation may be supportable. For single mothers, the "Harried Juggler" food preparation strategy has multiple associations with high stress levels. For married women, two apparently contrasting strategies, the "Do Less" and the "Do It All," were associated with high work interference, role overload, time strain, and stress. However, the latter was associated with high life satisfaction, suggesting a "Super Mom" typology who is satisfied with a "high octane" lifestyle. There were no negative correlations with any orientations or strategies for food preparation and shopping among single mothers. For married women, if the spouse takes on the food tasks and likes to cook, the wife feels significant reduction in all of the stressors and life satisfaction is higher. Interestingly, she may not actually delegate the food preparation to him, since this strategy was not associated with less stress, strain and overload. Rather, he may shop and they may cook together, or he may be involved in some other way with meal preparation.

For marketers of convenience foods, two disparate markets suggest themselves. Working women, whether married or single, do not rush to embrace convenience foods as a panacea. The most successful products in terms of frequency of use are those that completely eliminate most of the task of food preparation because they involve the whole meal. There is also a growing market for products that enhance the preparation of more complex dishes, making gourmet results easier and cheaper to obtain. This appeals to certain groups of women who are looking for unusual meals. Convenience food use is a way to decrease the task of food preparation among those who wish to do less and also by those who have a family focus. They are rejected by those who see themselves as high achiever "Super Moms" and by those who enjoy cooking. Positioning convenience foods as a means to increase time with family while still producing a high quality, high variety menu may remove some of the stigma that still appears to be associated with these products. However, it is clear that convenience foods are not the salvation for today's double-duty mother balancing work and family responsibilities.

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The Meanings of Family Dinners for Young, Affluent Families in Urban China

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

While in recent years the pace of life for urban Chinese families has become much busier, due to more competitive work and school, the family dinner remains a mainstay of daily family life (Veeck and Burns 2005). Exactly how do family dinners fit into modern life in China? In the face of hectic lives, why do family members continue to make time for family dinners and its associated tasks? To answer these questions, we conducted comprehensive, semi-structured interviews with a targeted sample of seventeen young, affluent families in Changchun, Jilin Province, P.R. China. Through these interviews, we hoped to illuminate the meaning of meals to family members and the role that home serves as a consumption site during times of change. by analyzing meals as family rituals.

Family rituals can be defined as patterned interactions among family members that are repeated over time and serve both an instrumental and a symbolic function (see Fiese et al. 2002 for a review). While rituals are naturally occurring events in family life, the extent to which rituals are practiced, as well as the manner in which they are conducted, have been found to be related to the health and well being of the family members. Rituals are influenced by changes that occur in the life course of families, such as changes in residences, work patterns, and family members (births, marriages, divorces, illnesses, deaths). In addition family rituals can be affected by forces external to the family, including social, political, and economic changes (Pleck 2000). During times of stress and transition, rituals can serve a central purpose in maintaining family relationships and roles (Bossard and Boll 1950). As such, studying family rituals is important for understanding how the home functions as a consumption site (Valentine 1999).

Family meals, in particular, can be viewed as ritualized, symbolic events that serve to reproduce social capital and reinforce family unity (Devault 1991; Douglas 1974). According to Wolin and Bennett's (1984) typology, family meals can be classified as "patterned family interactions," that serve to define the roles and responsibilities of family members and organize daily life. A number of important studies in the West have shown the importance of family meals in molding family identities and contributing to family unity. Further study is needed to investigate the role of family meals in maintaining family stability during times of stress and transition, created by both internal and external events.

Toward this end, we conducted semi-structured interviews with younger (parents <age 50), affluent (household annual income >30,000 yuan) families in Changchun. All seventeen of the interviews were conducted in the families' homes, to facilitate interviews of the entire family and to allow the research team to take photographs and collect observational data of the families' residences. The participants were asked a series of questions related to the routines, responsibilities, and affective responses that accompany their meals. The interviews were audio-taped, transcribed, and translated. To focus this inquiry, we analyzed family dinners as rituals, interpreting the data via the major components of rituals (see Fiese and Kline 1993).

The findings substantiated the importance of family meals in urban China today for fostering family identity, improving communication, facilitating socialization of children, and allowing the

transfer of social capital. We learned that family members view dinner as an important transitional time following work, allowing them a regular, defined period of time to relax in the stability of family life. Another important finding is that, even while the women perform most of the food tasks related to meals, men and women seem to place equal importance in the role of the family dinner for "producing family" (DeVault 1991). Men, in particular, often view regular attendance at family meals as a measure of the quality of a family. Finally, it should be noted that the smaller, three-member families common in urban China today allow for easier accommodation of all family members' schedules.

Food consumption patterns are an excellent window through which to view social change, in general, and family change, in particular (Mintz and DuBois 2002). In this study, the ritual of the family dinner serves to illuminate the routines and responsibilities of family members as they navigate between the outside world and home. The family members we interviewed continue to believe it is both their duty and their pleasure to convene as a family once a day and eat dinner together. However, as work and leisure activities continue to change in response to the socioeconomic environment, the patterns of the family dinner could be altered. As China continues to experience economic and social change, it will be worthwhile to monitor the status of the family dinner.

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Foodsigns on the Highway of Life: The Semiotics of the Diner

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ABSTRACT

This inquiry examines a long-running retail form - the diner - from multiple perspectives: historical evolution as a commercial response to industrialization, an icon of modernism, a nostalgic symbol of retro-marketing and a site of consumer communalism and personal transition. Historical documentation, popular culture texts, consumer interviews and participant observation are utilized for constructing the analysis.

"Now this golden age is all but gone.... The highways have fallen into disrepair, superceded by freeways with no recognizable character. Many diners have served their last special, and a large number of ma-and-pa hotels have been swallowed up into chains.... Small towns, with the whole of life encapsulated on Main Street, are a far cry from the soulless shopping malls of today. And the cars - oh those glorious, gas-guzzling monsters - have been replaced by sensible, compact, economical models with dull names" (Moss, 2000, p. 7, *Diners: American Retro*).

INTRODUCTION

In this brief passage, Moss (2000) places the retail form known as the *diner* in the nostalgic epoch of the Fifties, together with small town shopping streets, state highways (e.g., Route 66) and gas-guzzling, chrome-laden automobiles (Flink 1975, 1988). While it is certainly true that diners evoke that mythic near-past of post-World War II Americana, it is incorrect to view them as a vanished or even fading retail form. Indeed there are currently 5,000 diners in operation in the United States, and they are even being exported to Western and Eastern European countries seeking to patronize this retro retail icon (Baeder 1995; Gutman 1993).

Our present inquiry seeks to serve two agendas. First, we extend the retro-marketing thesis put forward by Brown, Kozinets and Sherry (2003) to a consideration of how retailing forms may also serve as nostalgic icons for consumers. Second, we seek to direct theory construction toward the contemplation of retail forms as carriers of deeply metaphoric cultural meaning, rather than solely as profit-generating business ventures. Investigating the semiotic qualities of the American diner should help us achieve both goals.

FROM WHENCE THEY CAME: DINER EVOLUTION

In their recent article, Brown, Kozinets and Sherry (2003) present a theory of retro branding and then instantiate it using the Volkswagen Beetle reissue and "Star Wars: Episode One" as exemplars. Drawing upon earlier work by marketing scholars such as Penaloza (2000) and Holbrook and Schindler (1989, 1994, 1996), as well as their own inquiries (Brown 1999, 2001; Sherry 1990), these researchers develop a conceptualization which describes the anchoring of revived or retro brands in consumers' memories of the past - memories which are almost always tinted with feelings of warmth, security, simplicity and authenticity. As Brown, Kozinets and Sherry propose, brands associated with the past - whether historically grounded (Volkswagen) or mythically imagined ("Star Wars") - benefit from our personal and cultural tendency to bathe them in a utopian glow (Davis 1979).

Perhaps no retailing form is better positioned by its historic evolution and utilization as a popular culture signifying device to

exemplify retro-retailing than the diner. In this section of our inquiry, we present a selective overview of diner history and develop the thesis that diners evolved both functionally and semiotically as *icons of modernity*. Ironically, or as B-K-S would put it, antinomically, it is postmodern nostalgia for modernity that now serves to enhance the diner's appeal, both as an actual retail presence and a cultural icon.

Diners are Born

Diners came into being as a direct result of America's rush into modernity at the turn of the century. Urban manufacturing centers in the Northeast had become electrified, permitting operations to be conducted twenty four hours a day. Night shift workers - offered no food services by their employers - had been bringing boxed meals to the plant. Sensing a marketing opportunity, a man named Walter Scott began selling sandwiches, boiled eggs, pies and coffee to factory workers on the night shift in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1872. His restaurant-on-wheels, termed a night lunch wagon, was the forerunner to the diner (Gutman 1993).

The standardization and mass production of early stage capitalism soon encompassed the late night lunch wagon business. By 1891, Charles Palmer had patented his design for a night lunch wagon that would be manufactured in a factory assembly line procedure; his new model restaurant had a kitchen section and a dining room section containing stools or chairs for patrons (Gutman 1993). Affirming modernity, the production and consumption of meals had been wrested from workers' homes and relocated at their place of work.

By the early 1900's industrialization had spread to such an extent that three companies came into existence whose sole purpose was to mass produce lunch wagons - now termed *diners*: the Tierney Company, the Worcester Lunch Car Company and the O'Mahoney Company (Witzel 1999). Reflecting the modern ethos of standardization and efficiency, these mass produced diners had a stereotypical appearance:

Within this category one finds the classic diner structures exemplified by respected industry manufacturers.... Of course, all these came to life as distinct, self-contained units in a factory. Workers assembled the majority of their interiors, exteriors, and structures ahead of time. A truck or a train hauled them to their intended site of business, where owners connected them to plumbing and utility lines and opened for business. All the proprietor had to do was add the utensils and foodstuffs....

These portable eateries feature at least one or more of the standard interior and exterior components characteristic of the diner stereotype. One of the most important elements is that the overall design and layout of the dining building follows the lead of a train car (short or stretched). Regarding the roof, only a barrel-style cover or monitor treatment qualifies. At the same time, it's important that the building feature a preponderance of windows and a generous application of stainless steel or porcelain-clad panel. Preferred details include a Formica counter, private dining booths, pedestal-style stools, table-top jukeboxes, and a dramatic application of neon lights (Witzel, p. 6).

And yet, despite their standardized structure, individual units could be, and were, made distinctive by their proprietors using exterior signage and decorative motifs and offering unique 'house specialty' menu items; a feature we term *standardized authenticity*. In Brown, Kozinets and Sherry's (2003) retro terminology, this phenomenon of distinctiveness within conformity would serve as an example of antinomy.

By the 1920's and the emergence of middle-stage capitalism, the diner had come to signify not only standardization but also the embrace of technological innovation: it was an icon of modernism. As Gutman (1993, pp. 62-63) reports: "In interior appointments, innovation was the rule. A new emphasis on cleanliness and ease of operation was touted.... White tile floors were predominant. Countertops were often of white marble or white opalite, an opaque glass. Some... even had white metal ceilings. Behind the counter, all manufacturers offered a built-in refrigerator, steam table, gas stove, grill, dessert display cases, coffee urn and exhaust hoods fabricated of gleaming German silver, an alloy that was the precursor to stainless steel."

The 1920's - perhaps the core decade of American modernism - also witnessed the widespread adoption of the automobile and the construction of coast-to-coast and border-to-border road systems. The new national highway system was accompanied by motels, service stations and diners, all of which were intended to assist the modernist rush to personal mobility: social, geographic, and economic. Diners served 'home cooked food' hundreds, or even thousands, of miles from one's home (Gutman 1993).

The 1930's witnessed the introduction of aerodynamics into both popular culture and national ideology. Futuristic designs inspired by the possibility of space travel (e.g., Buck Rogers) and the reality of intercontinental air carriers and diesel locomotives led to widespread design mimicry in automobiles and, ultimately, diners. "By the end of the thirties, surfaces and textures were brushed, polished, rounded or wrapped (Gutman 1993, p. 113.)"

Materials generated by advances in technology and chemistry were quickly incorporated in diner design to further signify their status as icons of modernism; most important among these were Formica and stainless steel. The aesthetic effect was one of ultimate smoothness and glistening functionality. Art Deco was celebrated in many diner interiors as a series of stripes and circles of complementary colors; surfaces were sleek, unadorned and contoured.

By the 1950's, economic prosperity enabled families to dine out more frequently and to travel great distances on annual family vacations (Jewell 1966). Diners actively sought out family patronage by featuring 'children's menus' and offering more women and child-friendly interiors. Indirect lighting was used, Naugahyde cushioned booths were introduced, mirrors along the walls created a greater sense of spaciousness, and terrazzo floors replaced the tile floors of a decade earlier. Pastel color schemes softened and feminized the interiors, creating a more 'family friendly' aesthetic. Wood-grain Formica was used to create table and counter accents (Gutman 1993).

The Death of the Diner and Rebirth as Retro-Chic

By the close of the 1950's, however, the era of Aerodynamic Moderne with its commercial beacon, the diner, was coming to a close. Two intertwined events led to this demise. The first was the birth of fast food, carryout restaurants; the second was the institution of the interstate highway system. McDonalds served as the fulcrum of this retailing transformation (Love 1986). Mac and Maurice McDonald had been operating a successful drive-in restaurant on Route 66 in Arcadia, California. Following consumer preference for faster, more efficient forms of retailing, such as the

emerging use of self-service gasoline stations and express checkout grocery lanes, the McDonald brothers created a novel restaurant format which they termed the "Speedy Service System" (Luxenberg 1985). This was premised upon the same assembly line manufacturing process, emphasizing standardization and uniformity, that had birthed the industrial revolution and brought diners into being. Yet now, ironically, diners were made obsolescent by the ultimate expression of industrialization in the food service business. Further, unlike the individually owned and operated diners, fast food restaurants such as McDonalds and its competitors Burger King, Hardees and, later, Wendy's, were corporate chains, able to expand their assembly-line, standardized units nationally (Luxenberg 1985).

Concurrent with the advent of the fast food restaurant chain was a second key event - the Interstate Highway Program which was formalized in 1956 and called for "40,000 miles of widened, four-lane routes that would link together 90 percent of major US cities (Wirtzel 1999)." By their primary completion in the late 1960's, the interstate highway system had effectively created retail conformity from coast to coast, as interstates led travelers around downtown areas and toward the standardized off-ramp offerings of fast food restaurants, filling stations and regional shopping malls (Lewis 1980; Luxenberg 1985; Marling 1984).

In decline as a retail form during the 1970's, the diner re-emerged as a symbol of nostalgia for, of all things, *modernism*, during the 1980's and beyond. As one observer (Genovese 2002) noted, the 1950's became imbued with the "golden glow of yesterday," for despite their Cold War, atomic bomb, mass conformity dimensions, they were an era "when we lived in blissful ignorance; we just didn't know any better..."

Diners, because of their close association with modernism and its utopian sense of the perfectibility of the world, "came to signify something unique in the twentieth century. Through their unusual form and distinctive appearance, they had earned a special place in the hearts of the public. When you drove up to a diner, you knew what to expect: good, home-cooked food and plenty of it at a good price. Though a stranger, you immediately felt at home when seated at the counter alongside one of the regulars. Diners could bear a strong resemblance to each other and at the same time possess personalities of their own. The families that operated them... invariably put their own imprints on the food, the décor and the conversation (Gutman 1993, p. 170)." Or as Moss (2000) put it, diners meant "good and wholesome food, always (p. 23)...", "and the *whole* of society can be found in a small town diner (p. 50)," implying that the *soul* of society could be found in a small town diner, as well.

Even minute aspects of diner furnishings became imbued with a comforting, protective, home-like ambience. Kittel (1998, p. 5) writes: "The sense of comfort and cheer that any good diner radiates is an amalgam of the actualities of the diner itself - the blunt faces of the salt and pepper shakers, the menus above the grill with their square, white capital letters, the steam rising from the coffee urn, the clunk of cheap, solid china being slapped down on Formica - and of memory." The melancholy, luminous and utterly precise vision of Americana that only a diner can signify.

DINERS AS POPULAR CULTURE SIGNS

The second part of our inquiry deals specifically with diners as signs. We have argued that this retail form evolved to signify a certain epoch of American history; that of Twentieth Century modernism with its ethos of mechanized progress. Yet, with an ironic turn of meaning, it was the bypassing of diner modernism, with its small town and highway trappings, by the turbocharged innovations of fast food restaurants and interstate superhighways

that triggered the recasting of diners as a nostalgic relic of a 'bygone' (for thirty years) imagined age of innocence and simplicity. "Diners came to signify the time when apple pie - no longer home cooked by Mom, but baked even more deliciously at the local diner - could be had in the company of friends and companions, while lingering over a second, or even third, cup of percolated coffee (Kittel 1998, p. 32)." It was the place which was always safe, warm and inviting; where personal-favorite omelettes could be ordered twenty four hours a day; where the booth seats were comfortable and snug and there was no pressing urgency to be on one's way to somewhere else (Everett 2002).

This retro view of the diner - so at odds with diner origins and evolution as a modern retailing form - was (and is) encoded in multiple popular culture representations (Everett 2002). From television shows such as 'Happy Days' to 'NYPD Blue' to 'The Sopranos', diners are cast in key roles as cultural anchors and emotional touchstones (Everett 2002). Advertisers, as Genovese (2002) comments, have been quick to incorporate diners as contextualizers in commercials ranging from heartburn remedies to health insurance. But it is perhaps in motion pictures that their essence has been used most evocatively. For example, organized-crime films from 'Good Fellas' to 'Donnie Brasco' to 'Pulp Fiction' have called upon diners to create a blue-collar, urban ambience in which violence can be planned and even enacted.

Yet, more prominently, diners are cast in motion pictures such as "What's Love Got to Do With It" and "City Hall" as locales in which characters can meet and discuss deeply personal issues. They are used as safe havens and places of social intimacy. Let us briefly consider perhaps the centerpiece of the diner film genre: *Diner* (1982). Directed by Barry Levinson, *Diner* featured performances by the (then) unknown actors Kevin Bacon, Mickey Rourke, Steve Guttenberg, Daniel Stern, Timothy Daly and Ellen Barkin (Silverman 1989). The narrative was set at Christmastime 1959 in Baltimore, MD. Pointedly, Levinson placed his story at the close of the modern era, just as America was making its uneasy transition to the Sixties, that semi-mythical time when many social groups - Blacks, women, Gays, Chicanos - so long submerged beneath the Formica-clad surface of Fifties conformity - burst forth with their revolutionary agendas, challenging America's suddenly quaint and self-deluded view of itself as a 'fair and open' society.

Yet here at the fictitious Fells' Point diner, Levinson shows us a modernist microcosm collected together for the last time before entering the Sixties abyss. A group of five, sometimes six, white guys have graduated from high school and gone on their separate paths to adulthood. Six months have now passed and they have recollected at 'their' diner, in 'their' booth, and attempt to recapture their teenaged selves over coffee and French fries covered in gravy. Levinson presents the semiotics of diner-dom brilliantly: cigarettes are smoked (smoking was legal then); ketchup bottles are refilled by middle-aged waitresses clad in light green uniforms who write orders in pencil on white pads. The Greek diner owner wears a black suit and skinny necktie, yells at his non-English speaking cooking staff, and rings up customers on a manual cash register.

The interior and exterior features of the diner also are accurately evoked: the red, flickering neon sign, the crunchy gravel parking lot filled with streamlined Fords and Chevys, the brilliantly lit interior with its plastic-clad booths and sleek countertops, refrigerated dessert and salad cases, pale orange Naugahyde benches, thick, sturdy glass sugar pourers and heavy white crockery. Late at night, as the film shows, this was primarily a man's world. Businessmen and clumps of teenage boys gather in booths and at the counters, "not ready to go home yet," as one says. The diner was a refuge *from* responsibility, a haven *from* home, a place to go when

jobs, parents, spouses and children were too demanding. The diner provided a simultaneously communal, yet liminal, space. The characters communicated to us that this was only a temporary respite on their way to adulthood, yet we understood very well why they wanted tarry there a little longer.

As the film documented, the world outside the diner required a lot: adult sexuality, paying bills, making and then keeping commitments. How much better it was to hang out with one's pals, discussing which girls in high school were "easy," handicapping local sports teams, mooching food and reading the newspaper. And as was true for the Fifties, in general not much of note happens in the film - just regular people leading regular lives; life went on.

CURRENT CONSUMER UNDERSTANDINGS OF DINERS

Thus far our inquiry has considered the meaning of diners as seen by historians and creators of popular culture. From these sources we have gained insights regarding the economic and social evolution of the diner as a cultural signifier. Yet we are missing a central voice regarding diner semiotics - that of the consumer. How are diners seen, experienced and remembered by those who patronize them? What roles have diners played in their lives, if any? How do current customers utilize diners vis a vis available competitors such as fast food restaurants? What distinctions are seen as characterizing diners? To learn this, we conducted interviews with seven diner patrons, ranging in age from 11 to 51 and including four men and three women. The interviews were conducted at the informant's place of residence, audiotaped and transcribed under conditions of informed consent.

We supplemented these materials with visits to three local diners conducted over a two-week period and including day and evening, weekend and weekday visits. Here is what we gleaned *from* and *as* consumers.

The Diner as Cornucopia of 'Home Cooking'

Perhaps one of the great ironies - or antinomies - of the diner is that it is viewed by customers as a favorite locale for out-of-the-house 'home cooking.' This metaphor was expressed by informants in a variety of ways: "It's like going to grandma's house to eat, only better," "It's like they take normal meals and they make them special somehow." The home cooking available at the diner, however, was seen as superior to that actually available at home, or even at grandmother's, for several reasons. First, the normal rules of breakfast, lunch and dinner 'appropriate' foods were suspended. One could, for example, have dessert or eggs or waffles or spaghetti "anytime" - often 24 hours a day. So, diners were ideal for assuaging food 'cravings' or 'moods.' "I guess for breakfast I'll take a Spanish omelette with cheese usually, maybe a steak sandwich sometimes, whatever I'm in the mood for" (Jason, 22). "I get strawberry pancakes with fresh strawberries" (Ralph, age 51). "For breakfast... I had a cream cheese bagel and a Belgian waffle... for lunch I always have some kind of sandwich and dessert; I just pig out on dessert, ha, ha!" (Tommy, 11).

A second desirable trait of diner cuisine, according to our informants, was the sense that normal food quantity rules are also suspended. Diners serve very large portions and consumers seem to experience little guilt in eating the entire serving. "I can fill myself up for a max of \$15.... [At] a diner you get more of that homey quality meal thing" (Jason, 22).

One informant claimed hyperbolically that diners had "thousands of items on the menu;" she was overstating the matter, but not by much. It is the enormity of the selection combined with an emphasis on 'comfort foods' such as cheeseburgers, milkshakes,

pies and starches that contributes to diners' hedonic appeal. Although some informants reported that the typical diner menu was a prime example of confusing overchoice, most experienced the selection as delightful; an opportunity (like at the proverbial grandmother's house) to indulge whims, be spoiled and overeat in a guilt-free atmosphere.

Closing out our discussion of this theme is one final point. Not only were mealtime rules suspended, but a lenient, casual attitude toward customer dress and behavior prevailed as well. As 11-year-old Tommy put it, "I don't have to get dressed up or act stupid and fancy. I can just be myself... people don't care how I act at a diner. It's more comfortable." Emily, 25, elaborated on this same idea, "Employees at a diner are more lenient. At restaurants there seem to be more rules to follow. Like at a library, you have to be quiet. At a diner not every time do people order food. Many times people just go there to hang out and that is accepted.... Restaurants are more of a business." Significant here is the distinction that Emily draws between diners - which are accepting, relaxed and indulgent toward customers - versus 'restaurants' which she views as more formal, ordered and business-like. As we shall see in the next section, diners are seen to act in loco parentis for adolescents and teens making their transition from childhood-home to adulthood-public life.

Diners as Rite of Passage

As discussed earlier, the motion picture *Diner* (1982) portrayed the transformation of six self-indulgent 'boys' into responsible men; serving as the central set-piece, the eponymous diner of the film acted as the fulcrum for each set of moral challenges confronting the main characters. It was at their regular booth, over piles of food, that each dilemma would be communally addressed and mulled over. Although in the narrative occasional emotional trauma and even violence marred the characters' lives, within the safe stainless steel walls and beneath the bright fluorescent lights of the diner interior, no ill could befall them. It was a haven, a clubhouse, hideout and launching pad simultaneously.

Similarly, our informants expressed the same sentimentality regarding their favorite diners' role in their own lives. In essence, they viewed the diner as a home away from home: the indulgent middle-aged waitresses were Mom; the usually-ethnic, middle-aged, always-rushed owner/manager was Dad, and their 'crew' or 'posse' of friends were siblings.

"So how often do you go out to diners?"

Jason (22), "Well probably I end up there about twice a month now, but back in high school me and my boys would go at least three times a week.... [We] usually go really late at night - when nothing else is open.... The atmosphere is cool ... you can dress how you want, but still get good food."

Lorraine (50) recalls going to diners with her girlfriends in high school as "an important part of growing up for kids. All kids go to diners to hang out at one point in their lives.... It's almost like they [diners] are a part of the culture.... When I go there now, I look at all of the kids and remember when I was 20."

Often, in part because of these nostalgic recollections, customers would continue to return to "their" diner throughout adulthood:

"Do you ever think you'll stop going to the diner?"

Ralph (51), "Not unless all my friends stopped. I don't wanna go there by myself. But I think no matter how old I am, I will always have someone to go to the diner with...."

Diners are sites where intimacy is constructed in a public place. They encode a particular time in a given individual's life when she or he is venturing into the world, but does not yet want to fly solo. Diners also provide exposure to some of the ills and dangers of the outside world, yet in inoculating doses that strengthen, rather than sicken, the young adventurer.

Several informants spoke of occasionally seeing "drunks" or "scumbags" or "sleazy people" at their diner. Especially during late night hours, the flickering red and blue neon signs of the diner seemed to serve as a beacon to transients, cross-country truckers, deadbeats and drunks seeking a place to eat, rest, or sober up. The presence of such persons was seen as undesirable by adult patrons, but provided some sense of tantalizing voyeurism to the clusters of teenagers we observed. Intriguingly, cops and firefighters, coming off duty, would also arrive in the late night hours at the same diner as the vagabonds. Yet no hostilities broke out; it was as if everyone was taking a "time out" from their regular roles. The teenaged groups also engaged in some quasi-nefarious activities of their own. The most common of these was underage cigarette smoking. Stoked by contraband tobacco and legal cups of caffeinated coffee, heavily sugared milkshakes and desserts, the teenagers could linger for hours, their conversations intermittently exploding with loud laughter.

Diner Topography

Our observations of diners and their patrons also led to some insights regarding their topography, or internal space usage patterns. As shown in Diagram One, most modern-day diners have a distinctive layout.¹ First, from the exterior, they face the highway, their large neon signs calling to drivers-by. The door is placed at the center of a long, one-story building that has banks of windows along the front and side walls. A vestige of their origins as wheeled lunch wagons, even contemporary diners have small porches that must be accessed via steps in front of the entry door.

As one enters, generally the right side of the diner has booths and a counter with a row of stools/chairs. The counter service area is nearest the kitchen and generally floored in terrazzo or ceramic tile for easy cleaning. Smoking, if it is allowed, and drinking, if alcohol is served, usually occurs in the booth area immediately adjacent to the counter and stools. This high traffic area can be easily cleaned after a night of cigarettes and drinks before the morning breakfast crowd arrives. The counter stools are usually most heavily occupied at night and in the early mornings as truckers, cops and workmen stop in to grab a quick meal. The booths are most heavily used late at night by clusters of teens and college students who arrive en masse, eat large quantities of food and may linger for one or more hours.

Most modern diners are now "double-wide," providing room for a partition and a carpeted area with tables near the windows. Couples, senior citizens, mothers with children, and empty nesters generally choose to sit here. Perhaps visually the service may seem quicker, since these tables are within eyesight of the kitchen - as well as the dessert and salad display cases.

On the side left of the entry door is a "new" (circa 1970's) addition to the diner. This is a carpeted, less glaringly lit family area that features small and large tables (some circular) at which family groups can sit and enjoy an away-from-home home-cooked meal. These extended family gatherings usually occurred on weekends. Empty nest couples and business colleagues out for a working lunch would sit in this section, as well. In all the various seating areas,

¹Older, mass-manufactured diners have only a kitchen, counter service and booths.

however, the tables were clad in neutral or wood grain Formica, and the chairs were deeply cushioned Naugahyde. A distinctly postmodern addition at one of the diners was a salad bar located in the aisle separating the family seating area from the booth seating area. Though clad in 'diner-correct' stainless steel, the inclusion of a salad bar is a competitive response to chain restaurants that uniformly provide such an offering to consumers.

Yet, despite this nod to conformity, most diners still retain several of their distinctive features. Those we visited all were equipped with table-mounted jukeboxes in the booth-and-table area; available songs ranged from Fifties doo-wop to Billy Joel to Britney Spears. There were no hip-hop or hard rock offerings; likely these musical genres were not popular with the clientele. Two of the three diners visited still prepared soda drinks (e.g., milkshakes) and egg dishes directly behind the counter, permitting customers to see their food 'being made', especially if they were seated in a booth or at the counter. This feature adds to the homeyness of the diner, as it seems to make it more kitchen-like.

A final distinctive topographical feature of diners is their placemats. Once seated, each patron, regardless of where s/he is sitting, is issued a paper placemat. These 1940's-era accoutrements usually feature a pen-and-ink or photographic image of the particular diner in the center and have a border composed of small print advertisements for other local places of business (e.g., service stations). At each of the four corners of the placemats are tear-off coupons for, say, photo processing, dry cleaning, and so forth. Essentially, these seem to constitute a banding-together of small, independently owned, personally operated businesses in the area. Again, this reifies the iconic position of the diner as a hold-over from an earlier era in which small towns and their local businesses were seen as the core of American economic life.

What Diners Are Not

Finally, from our interviews and observations we gained some notions of what diners are not; or more pointedly, how they are believed to differ from other types of restaurants. For example, as one informant put it: "A diner is not Burger King," when pressed on this, he added, "'cause a diner has waitresses... people come, they get their coffee; they have plates and silverware. The feeling is just different... I love its (the diner's) variety and the way it smells... the coffee, the kitchen. Diners are diners."

A second informant characterized fast food restaurants, such as Burger King and McDonalds, as "shitty food that's dirt cheap; whereas at a diner you get more of a homey quality meal..." However, this same informant also made it clear that he did often eat fast food: "It's still food, and my ultimate goal is not to be hungry."

This same informant also contrasted diners with corporate chain restaurants, saying "[diners have] that community feeling; people I guess like the purity aspect - you know, it's not some big chain like Applebees or Bennigans.... It's more like going to someone's house for dinner, only you have a full menu to choose from.... You go to a diner for the experience, the chill feeling you get there."

Still, diners were often contrasted negatively to what informants termed "real" or "good" restaurants, i.e., those that were privately-owned and served excellent specialty foods. Though requiring more formality and adherence to stricter rules of behavior and dress, "good" restaurants were those chosen for special events, such as anniversaries, birthday parties and graduations. Diners were deemed inappropriate for such exalted occasions because they were, in fact, too home-like and therefore mundane.

DISCUSSION

Sherry's (1990) article on flea markets proposes a retail marketplace structure made manifest along two continua: formal/informal and economic/festive. He locates flea markets in the festive/informal area of this structure. Diners would be positioned within this same structural locale, as they are seen as casual and communal gathering places. What is also striking is that some of Sherry's (1990) informants voiced descriptions of the flea market that echo sentiments expressed by our informants about diners. One said, "The flea market is not as *sterile* as a mall. You don't get the same franchises over and over again. There's lots of different people around the flea market - it's more of a *social* atmosphere..." (Sherry 1990, p. 17)." And also echoing our informants' perceptions, Sherry's interviewees found some customers of the flea market to be "a sleazy element... people on the shady side (p. 17)." In essence, both diners and flea markets appear more representative of 'real life' with its oddities, authenticities, risks and rewards. The sterilized monotony and predictability of the shopping mall and fast food restaurant - with all their standardized perfection - offer only cookie-cutter experiences.

In keeping with Arnold and Reynolds' (2003) article on hedonic shopping, diners also seem to provide "enter-tailing" to consumers. That is, they provide "higher levels of service, highly-trained staff and an entertaining and fun retailing environment (p. 77)." With regard to the hedonic motivations identified by Arnold and Reynolds (2003),² diners would appear to be capable of satisfying the desire for *socializing* (spending time with friends and family members) and also for *self-gratification* (to relieve stress, improve a bad mood, treat oneself).

But perhaps most profoundly, the diner represents *retro-retailing*. Likely the longest running exemplar of modernism in retailing, the diner has now - in the era of postmodernism - become a simultaneously iconic and ironic statement of commercialized homeyness, of replicated authenticity, of multiplied uniqueness. Each diner is idiosyncratic, individually owned, personally named and carries a (somewhat) distinctive lineup of foodstuffs; yet because of their mass-manufactured format, their standardized aesthetic and their uniform meaning in the minds of consumers, each diner signifies "the" diner. As Brown, Kozinets and Sherry (2003) remind us, diners are among that select group of commercial entities that have a "vital essence" and "have existed as an important icon during a specific developmental stage for a particular generation or cohort (p. 30)." Diners have served as places of passage for generations of American consumers since the early 1900's; they will likely continue to carry on this role as long as there are teenagers to claim them, and adults to reminisce.

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²And see also Babin, Darden and Griddi (1994); Batra and Ahtola (1991); Berlyne 1969; Bloch, Ridgway and Dawson (1994); Dawson, Bloch and Ridgway (1990); Hirshman and Holbrook (1982); Holbrook and Hirschman (1982); Tauber (1972).

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Consuming, Studying, and Regulating Genetically Modified Foods: A Case for Transformative Consumer Research

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ABSTRACT

ACR 2005 North American Conference calls for Transformative Consumer Research (TCR). Based on the principles of TCR, the objective of this paper is to provide a platform to involve consumers more directly with public policy issues related to food biotechnologies, so that this technology can actually make positive impacts on consumers' lives, both present and future generations. More specifically, through an iterative and rigorous multi-stage research design, we aim to provide valuable insights for consumers, for the academic community, and for public policy makers with respect to genetically modified foods.

INTRODUCTION

ACR 2005 North American Conference calls for Transformative Consumer Research, TCR. TCR aims to "make a positive difference in the lives of consumers, both present and future generations, through the chosen focus and conduct of specific research, and in the communicating of its implications and usefulness" (ACR 2005). An ideal TCR is one that both scientifically rigorous and practically useful to consumers. In addition, TCR aims a heightened relevance and value related to consumer research to business executives and public policy administrators (ACR 2005). Based on the principles of TCR, the objective of this paper is to provide a platform that involves consumers more directly with public policy issues related to food biotechnologies, so that this technology can actually make positive impacts on consumers' lives, both present and future generations. More specifically, through an iterative and rigorous multi-stage research design, we aim to provide valuable insights for consumers, for the academic community, and for public policy makers with respect to genetically modified foods (GMF).

This paper clarifies consumers' perceptions of the food system and particular elements of the system with respect to food safety in general and food biotechnologies in particular, and provides consumer input for the policy issues surrounding the future of genetically modified foods. Understanding consumer perceptions of this technology can have important global ramifications. Agriculture and food applications of biotechnology promise solutions for feeding an ever-growing global population. This promise may particularly be important to underdeveloped countries where there is an immediate need not only for increasing productivity in agricultural output but also for nutrition-rich food. Consumers' views in developed countries (where most biotechnology research is conducted) are likely to affect the extent to which public and private organizations commit to biotech research. For example, consumer reactions toward GMF in many European countries have reduced funding for biotech research over the last two years (ISIS Press Release, 2001). Private organizations conduct and therefore control most biotechnology research and its outputs (including various consumer products). Even though many underdeveloped countries look favorably upon food and agriculture applications of biotechnology, it will still be in the hands of consumers in developed countries to encourage or discourage biotechnology research. Results of this study can provide much needed consumer voice in the biotechnology policy debate, and in the long run our findings can contribute to regulation and communication efforts.

The policy issues (e.g. communication, education, and regulation) of GMF can be seen as a problem of the government, biotech researchers, seed/chemical companies, farmers, food producers, retailers, environmental groups, and mainstream consumers. We argue in this paper that in the heart of all these interest groups lie ordinary consumers. Once consumers' problems are identified and addressed then other interest groups' problems may be addressed adequately and fairly. Further, treating the issue as a problem of mainstream consumers would have advantages to remain "neutral."

When identifying and addressing policy problems (of consumers in this case) there seem to be two fundamentally different approaches. Those who favor the "engineering model" view social science as a means of providing technocratic solutions to problems. A problem—whether pollution, poverty, alcohol, or tobacco—can be safely agreed to be a "bad" thing by all, and the social scientist is then brought in to treat the problem in the manner that the doctor diagnoses illness. The employment of such engineering models can be disconcerting and perhaps dangerous if the social scientist points out the "right" course of action when there are conflicting interests, lack of consensus, social cleavage, and (international) political conflicts surrounding the problem (like in the case of GMF). In such cases, the "enlightenment model" can accommodate better in establishing the role of researcher who attempts to provide an intellectual background of the problem using the domain of his/her discipline.

Morris Janowitz argues that the social scientist is part of the process which he or she is studying, not outside it. In other words, under the enlightenment model it is assumed that the social scientist recognizes that he/she is interacting with his subject and a variety of publics to which he must be responsible. His work has an impact on himself, and his findings influence his subjects and his public in an ongoing fashion. The enlightenment model assumes the overriding importance of the social context, and focuses on developing various types of knowledge that can be utilized by policy-makers and professionals. "While it seeks specific answers its emphasis is on creating the intellectual conditions for problem solving" (Janowitz 1972, p5-6). Research (of enlightenment model) provides the intellectual background of concepts, orientations, and etc. that inform policy. It is used to orient decision-makers to problems, to think about and specify the problematic elements in a situation, and to get new ideas. Policy-makers use research to formulate problems and to set agendas for future policy actions. Much of this use is not direct, but a result of long-term infiltration of social science concepts, theories and findings with the general intellectual culture of a society.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

As stated earlier, the broad objective of this study is to investigate consumers' views of and expectations from various key social institutions of the food system with respect to food safety and food biotechnologies in order to provide background information and insights to public policy makers with respect to the regulation efforts of food biotechnologies. These social institutions include regulatory agencies, food manufacturers, farmers, the scientific community, consumer activist groups, and media. Since we are following the footsteps of Janowitz (1972) and adapting the enlight-

ement model for social knowledge, we first seek to obtain information about the “background” of consumers. Table 1 provides information about the specific objectives of this paper.

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Our research is based on focus groups and in-depth interviews with consumers on topics surrounding GMF. 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 three-stage data collection process. The first stage involved seven depth-interviews with consumers in a Midwestern state on their awareness, beliefs and attitudes toward 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 2001 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 17 depth-interviews and four focus groups conducted in four different cities in Western and Midwestern states to understand in detail consumers’ view of food safety and their expectations from various institutions they see as responsible for food safety. The third stage was conducted in 2002 and involved 10 depth interviews focusing 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; Spiggle 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

The data gathered throughout the course of this research are exhaustive. Findings we report here, however, due to page limitations, will be an abbreviated version of the data. We intend to summarize the data mostly using tables and save the space for discussion.

Stage 1

Our specific objective in stage 1 was to identify consumers’ knowledge, conceptualizations, overall views, and concerns about these products. We have identified more than twenty categories of the findings, however; due to page limitation, in this section we focus on the following a few themes.

- a. Even though consumer knowledge and awareness of GMF is very limited, they still speculate, guess, and make assumptions as to how genetic modification of foods could be done.
- b. Consumers don’t seem to have well articulated preferences for GMF products. As a result consumers do not

have clear categories of these foods. They are ambivalent and confused. This confusion seems to affect consumers’ potential concerns about various types and applications GMF products.

- c. GMF products create ambiguous consumer experiences (both in terms of product attributes and information environment) and consumers seem to use various types of analogies in making sense of their ambiguous experiences. This tells us several very interesting things about how consumers draw inferences to novel product categories (Mick and Fournier 1998) as well as their constructive choice processes (Bettman, Luce and Payne 1998). Like Mary Douglas’ penetrating discussion of food that is dirty or clean (see Douglas 1966) and Levi-Strauss’ (1975) classic distinction between raw and cooked food, our respondents seem to have constructs about food and food safety that they use in making decisions about this new food category.
- d. Consumer education may not result in behavior change. One may argue that through provision of verbal information consumer can be “taught” about the facts of GMF and this education could benefit the providers in the long term. However, as we found out, consumers tend to link attributes of GMF to some (intended or unintended) consequences, and further linked these consequences to deeply held and enduring personal values. When these personal values “disagree” with the providers’ intention, it seems very difficult (if not impossible) to make any change in consumers’ beliefs and attitudes toward such food applications.

Stage 2

The findings of the first stage suggested that a more comprehensive and holistic look at the potential public policy issues surrounding these products may be beneficial. For example, the finding that consumer know very little (if not nothing) about GMF makes it very difficult to identify specific regulation (such as labeling) questions. When level of awareness and knowledge is very limited, consumers seem to use their experiences in other technology and/or food products and transferring this existing knowledge to this new yet unknown domain (a type of analogical learning). In order to provide a more detailed information environment for policy decision maker, one should try to understand these broader associations and linkages consumers make with GMF products. Therefore, the specific objective of the second study is to understand consumer background not particularly on GMF but on other related issues. These issues are numerous. However, based on the findings of the first study, we focus on consumers’ overall food purchasing concerns, and consumers’ views on food safety.

Consumers’ Food Shopping Concerns:

Table 2 is the summarized version of responses consumers provided as their most important concerns in food shopping. Identifying consumers’ food shopping concerns can provide insight into priorities consumers have when they purchase food products. We can have a general understanding regarding what consumers are looking for when they purchase food.

Consumers’ Concerns about Food Safety:

Although Table 2 offered some insights into the degree to which consumers are concerned about their food supply, we could still know little if we don’t look at the elaborated responses to consumers’ view on food safety. In other words, Table 2 suggests that consumers didn’t seem to worry too much about health and safety aspects of the food they purchase. However, there is still

TABLE 1
Summary of 3-Stage Research Design

	Stage 1 Study 1: Depth Interviews (7 respondents)	Stage 2 Study 2: Depth Interviews (17 respondents)	Stage 2 Study 3: Focus Groups (4 focus groups in 4 cities)	Stage 3 Study 4: Depth Interviews (10 respondents)
Objectives	<p>To gain initial understanding of consumer knowledge and awareness of GMF</p> <p>Understanding consumer views as well as factors affecting consumer views of GMF.</p>	<p>Understanding consumer view of food safety</p> <p>Explore, in detail, consumer trust and expectations from social institutions they see as responsible for food safety</p>	<p>Explore, in detail, consumer trust and distrust in social institutions in terms of consumer expectations</p> <p>Understand the interactions between social institutions in the food system (perceived by consumers)</p> <p>Understand the role of system trust in food safety and GMF safety perceptions</p>	<p>Explore, in detail, consumer trust and distrust in social institutions in terms of consumer expectations</p> <p>Understand the interactions between social institutions in the food system (perceived by consumers)</p> <p>Understand the role of system trust in food safety and GMF safety perceptions</p>
Sampling	<p>Convenience sampling. A relatively educated respondents were selected for this initial study (with a minimum of bachelor's degree)</p>	<p>Four categories of consumers were interviewed in Study 2: Married w/children Married w/o children Vegetarian consumers Living alone</p> <p>Four focus groups were conducted in four cities based on following sampling Organic food buyers Living alone Married w and w/o child</p>	<p>Four categories of consumers were interviewed in Study 2: Married w/children Married w/o children Vegetarian consumers Living alone</p> <p>Consumers indicated both trust and distrust toward the same institution. Simultaneous occurrence of trust and distrust may be key to understanding consumers' view of GMF</p>	<p>Maximum variation sampling: High/low involvement with food (based on dietary practices) Urban/rural background</p>
Key findings and implications for next study	<p>Trust in farmers, government, food manufacturers plays roles in consumers view of GMF.</p> <p>Safety (perceived physical risks) of food and GM food appears to be a key issue for consumer reactions to GMF.</p> <p>Responses and views of GM and food safety appeared to differ based on family life cycle stages, living arrangements, and dietary practices</p>	<p>Consumers indicated both trust and distrust toward the same institution. Simultaneous occurrence of trust and distrust may be key to understanding consumers' view of GMF</p> <p>Evidence for positive and negative synergetic interactions among social institutions (perceived by consumers) begin to emerge. It is possible, for example, that trust in government may offset consumer distrust in food manufacturers.</p> <p>Consumers' assessment of food safety through the interactions between some of the institutions may suggest a system view for the food safety</p> <p>A fourth social institution, consumer activist groups, appeared to play important roles in food safety</p>	<p>Consumers indicated both trust and distrust toward the same institution. Simultaneous occurrence of trust and distrust may be key to understanding consumers' view of GMF</p> <p>Evidence for positive and negative synergetic interactions among social institutions (perceived by consumers) begin to emerge. It is possible, for example, that trust in government may offset consumer distrust in food manufacturers.</p> <p>Consumers' assessment of food safety through the interactions between some of the institutions may suggest a system view for the food safety</p> <p>A fourth social institution, consumer activist groups, appeared to play important roles in food safety</p>	<p>Findings and implications for consumers, researchers, and public policy makers are discussed in the paper</p>

TABLE 2
Consumer Food Shopping Concerns

Resp.	Concern #1	Concern #2	Concern #3
1	Cost	Fat content	
2	Price	Brand name	
3	Quality		
4	No animal in it	Cruelty free	
5	Good taste (salty/hot/steak)		
6	Price	Nutritional content	variety
7	Value (best deal)		
8	Buy the things are on sale		
9	Good variety (for the family)	Fresh (in season)	
10	Buy what hungry for		
11	Price	Freshness	Quality
12	Price	Quality	Safety
13	Healthy food	Inexpensive	
14	Won' t spoil	Easy/quick to prepare	Half way healthy
15	Price	Taste	Freshness
16	Price	Taste	Healthy
17	NA	NA	NA

merit in examining consumers particular food safety concerns. Such an examination can provide information regarding the sources of consumers' suspicion and/or confidence about the food they purchase and consume.

Stage 3

The objective of stage three was to explore in detail consumer trust and distrust in social institution and in the food system. In this section, we first report our findings related to consumer trust and distrust in social institutions¹ and then we report consumers' views of the food system.

Trust in Social Institutions: The analysis of data reveals that trust in social institutions can be categorized mainly into two: confident beliefs that are based on competence/assurance (CA), and the beliefs that are based on faith and hope (FH) in particular institution. The CA aspect of trust can be characterized as knowledge and experience-based trust and therefore, more to do with consumers' own (and perhaps direct) experiences with the target of trust (e.g. manufacturers). In other words, buying (using) particular brands for years gives informants a first hand experience/reason to trust the manufacturers of these brands. Similarly, knowing that government enforces rules (such as limits on chemicals use or crop

rotation) once again gives the informant a first hand reason to trust government. FH-based trust, on the other hand, is characterized as more perception-driven, indirect experience and generalized expectations with the target of trust. For example, informants can trust farmers based on the perception that farmers would not see food as a commodity and care more about the land, the earth and ultimately about consumers. Table 4 provides details about the types and sources of consumer trust in social institutions.

Distrust in Social Institutions: Coding and analysis of data reveal that there are mainly three categorizes of distrust: skepticism/cynicism-inducing distrust (SC); fear-inducing distrust; and vigilance/ watchfulness-inducing distrust (WW). Similar to those of sources of trust, informants' distrust in social institutions is mainly direct and indirect experience-based. For example, the source of distrust in media can come from direct experiences (e.g. watching inconsistent health reports in the news media for years). At the same time, consumers can have perception driven distrust (e.g. believing that most research in universities is done through grants provided by "big business" and therefore biased). Our data analysis revealed that the informants develop a number of coping mechanisms in the presence of distrust (regardless of whether based on direct or indirect experiences). We categorize these strategies (consequences of distrust) into three: skepticism/cynicism (SC), fear, and, vigilance/watchfulness (VW). Fear-inducing distrust is conceptualized as repeated and long-term experiences of suspicion that leads to great concern about the safety of food supply. When a respondent's distrust is fear-inducing, he/she intends to completely

¹Due to page limitation, only a general framework for the findings of institutional trust and distrust is presented here. Detailed excerpts for each category and code listed in Table 4 and Table 5 are available upon request.

TABLE 3
Concerns About Food Safety

Resp.	Worry about food safety?	Rationale
1	Yes: things at home in the fridge No: things in grocery store	
2	No	Check the dates, Everything is safe
3	No	Pick, wash, cook properly
4	Yes	Not natural, insecticides
5	Yes: things in the fridge No	Stays long time (e.g. mayonnaise) Cook really good, don't eat rare.
6	Yes: when there is a scare No: (mostly meats)	Buy fresh
7	Yes: things sitting out too long	Can spoil
8	No	Have faith in supermarkets, government, and I know how food is prepared
9	Yes: when hear on the news	
10	Yes: things at home for long time No, in general	May past expiration date
11	Yes: (meat and milk)	May past expiration data
12	No	Trust supermarkets
13	No	Usually eat healthy
14	Yes No in general	When I cook the food
15	Yes (meat) No	Texture, smell, fat, the blood, all gross Don't eat meat
16	No	" I" buy and store my food, know where its been
17	No	Trust people to make food correctly

disregard information that comes from the target of distrust. The difference between SC and VW is that with VW-inducing distrust, informants are able to provide particular methods/strategies that help them deal with the distrust-creating situation. In other words, when distrust is VW-inducing, informant becomes active (i.e. they take an action) to overcome the situation that created distrust in the first place. For example, when an informant believes that a big food manufacturer should be distrusted because they are unable to prevent bacterial contamination (coded as VW-inducing distrust) then she takes an action and decides to buy ground beef from the grocery stores who grind their own meat, instead of buying as already grounded from big meat manufacturers. Table 5 provides more details about various types and sources of consumer distrust in social institutions.

Trust in the Food System: With respect to food system beliefs, 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. Table 6 provides a summary of the types of informants who rely (or not) trust and

distrust for food safety. As can be seen in Table 6, 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 6, 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.

DISCUSSION

Our objective in this paper is to utilize a multiple-stage *Transformative Consumer Research* to provide insights for consumer, for consumer researchers and for public policy makers. In the following sections we offer some concluding remarks about our findings.

TABLE 4
Trust in Social Institutions

Target of Trust	Type of Trust	Sources of Trust
Manufacturers	Competence/Assurance	Competence through brand names and expertise Through inspection of products through packaging: packages product, inspected product Accountability Confidence through product testing
	Hope/Faith	Fiduciary obligations Benevolence Reputation to hold (perceived check and balance) Their business to take care
Government	Competence/Assurance	Enforcement of rules Sufficient regulations Overseeing industry operations, watching the companies Enforce recalls of problem products Government research process Motive is ensuring public safety (no profit motives)
Scientific Community	Faith/Hope	Intentions are good (to make food safer) Technology is both for producer and for consumers
Consumer Groups	Competence/Assurance	Objective, consumer oriented motives, non-profit nature Credible source of information Public education efforts
Farmers	Faith/Hope	They see food not just as commodity (closer to production, different meaning to farmers) It is their business to keep (by offering healthy products) Won't produce things that are harmful to consumers) Doing their best for humanity
Media	Faith/Hope	Relies on press to be a watchdog Reliance (making food news available)

For Consumers:

In spite of their low awareness and limited knowledge on the issue, our informants are able to make elaborate distinctions among various genetically modified foods. In the case of GMF products, consumers do not have well articulated preferences and therefore, they construct their own categories that can help them identify their preferences. This is consistent with explications of constructive consumer choice processes (Bettman, Luce, and Payne 1998; Coupey 1994). Due to a lack of cognitive resources to generate well-defined preferences consumers tend to “construct” categories and identify preferences based on these “constructed categories of preferences” (Bettman et al. 1998, p. 187). Consumers are most likely to have well articulated preferences when they are familiar and experienced with the preference object, and the rational choice theory (Wright 1975) is most applicable in such situations.

At the very aggregate level, consumers see differences (make categorizations) between genetically modified meat and genetically modified plants. This categorization is important because, it appears that consumers use such categorization to assess how and to what extent they would be concerned about the fact that the food is genetically modified. They raise both health and moral issues as the bases for their categorization. It is also apparent that consumers use these categories to shape their GMF behaviors.

As evident from our interviews, consumers with very little knowledge of GMF products draw on existing categories to con-

sider how to respond to these foods. This tells us several very interesting things about how consumers draw inferences to novel product categories (Mick and Fournier 1998) as well as their constructive choice processes (Bettman et al. 1998). Like Mary Douglas' penetrating discussion of food that is dirty or clean (see Douglas 1966) and Levi-Strauss' (1975) classic distinction between raw and cooked food, American consumers have meaningful categories about food and food safety that they use in making decisions about this new category of GMF products.

One interesting distinction of several of our informants parallels Mary Douglas' (1966), but expands her categories to include “junk food.” American food that is labeled junk food has the peculiar characteristic of making consumers indifferent about the actual ingredients of the food. That is, once consumers view a food category as “already polluted” like junk food (the hygienic component of the pollution theory), then they might perceive that category as less threatening even if the foods within that category include genetically modified ingredients. This is an interesting finding considering some “junk food” producing companies like Frito-Lay and MacDonald's have recently elected to cut their “bio-tech” corn and potato suppliers assuming that consumers would be concerned about the ingredients of their products.

One of the most interesting aspects of our study was to uncover consumers' reactions to GMF products when they find out that they have been consuming GM foods for a long time. The basic informa-

TABLE 5
Distrust in Social Institutions

Target of Distrust	Consequences of Distrust	Sources of Distrust
Manufacturers	SC-inducing	Unjustified practices (e.g. the use of antibiotics)
	Fear-inducing	Hide information from consumers, cover things up Motivated by greed Immoral motives
	VW-inducing	Big operations can get out of hand out of control Insufficient prevention of contaminations
Government	SC-inducing	Setting low standards for food safety Setting wrong farm/food policies Surface treatment of problems (not creating real solution to problems)
	VW-inducing	Insufficient inspection of food products on the market Slow responding to reality Non regulated areas of food production
Scientific Community	SC-inducing	Creates suspicion about food quality (limiting consumer choice) Questionable findings (one-sided research) Arrogant scientists (some scientists have blinders) Research funded by big business (results skewed)
Consumer Groups	SC-inducing	Sometimes deal with unimportant issues They can create misinformation which is damaging for society Overdo things (overreact to things)
Farmers	VW-inducing	The use of potentially damaging substances in food production Overdosing chemicals (financial pressures, profit motives)
Media	SC-inducing	Irresponsible reporting (can be more damaging to society)
	Fear-inducing	Too many reports on food/health (not worthy of attention)

TABLE 6
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
Pam Terri	Larry Susan	George	Dorothy Simon	Amanda Willie	Nina

tion that we provided to the informants midway through the interview was that the majority of grocery items are already genetically modified. The responses to this additional information can be summarized in one word: “surprise.” As indicated earlier, most consumers believed that they weren’t eating any GMF products. More elaborate response categories to the new information are “ignorance,” “irritation,” and “making peace with the current condition.” Overall, our informants didn’t indicate a resistance to the current situation. They provided various reasons why they would continue buying these foods even though now they know these foods are most likely genetically modified. These reasons (we call them “sources of comfort”) are “the practice of food safety,” “maladaptive behavior,” and “trust in systems or social trust.”

For Academicians:

We believe that approaching policy research through the enlightenment model can lead to the discovery of various important questions of social sciences. More specifically, we believe that our findings are closely linked to various fundamental consumer behavior concepts and theories, and therefore can open up perspectives and newer ways of thinking about these concepts.

First, as indicated earlier, GMF consumption creates ambiguous experiences. Literature on ambiguous experiences suggests that when there is ambiguous evidence about the product performance consumers rely on advertising (ad-induced expectations) in making consumption decisions (Deighton 1984; Hoch and Ha 1986). Similarly, providers of these technology (food) products have mainly relied on traditional means (advertising and opinion leaders) of “reaching” consumer. For example, advertising campaigns in UK and in the US aimed at “teaching” consumers various benefits of and “easing” consumers’ possible concerns with these products. Ever growing concerns about these food products (both in UK and recently in the US) may suggest a different process consumers go through when they learn and make decisions about such products.

Second, we argue that the adoption decisions surrounding these products pose challenges for innovation researchers. The innovation-decision model (Rogers 1995), and correspondingly most innovation research, is grounded in the assumption that individuals seek for information, go through persuasion, and make adoption or rejection decision about the innovation before any kind of experience with the innovation/product. The innovation-decision process seems to overlook the individual’s potential “unconscious” experiences with the innovation *during* the knowledge, persuasion, and decision stages. Since these GMF products have already replaced the existing ones (according to a USDA survey, approximately 70 per cent of all food in grocery stores are already genetically modified) and hence consumers have already been consuming (have unconsciously adopted) them, the decision-making regarding further adoption (continuation) or disadoption (discontinuation) may be different. We believe that studying consumer of GMF would provide an understanding to these direct experience-based innovation-decision making processes.

Third, as the findings suggested, consumers seem to go through an analogical learning when they try to deal with GMF products. Our conceptual understanding of analogical learning has been limited to technologically complex and less fundamental product categories (e.g. Gregan-Paxton and Roedder-John 1997). However, when we deal with learning about products that are not only technologically complex (making most consumers novices and naives) but also its consequences are ambiguous (the “true” consequences cannot be determined), the frameworks such as Gregan-Paxton and John (1997) might not be sufficient. Further, genetically modified “food” is a prime example of a socially and culturally

fundamental product category. We argue, in such situations, there is scope for studying consumer learning in its broader context to include social and cultural impacts.

Our findings offer valuable insights about the concept of trust and distrust. The findings suggest that public trust in various social institutions may be conceptually different, coming from different domains. For example, when an informant says “I trust government” this, according to the findings, is not exactly same as when he/she says “I trust farmers.” In other words, trust in government and trust in farmers may come from two different directions, while the source of trust in government is mostly confidence based (and therefore, based mainly on direct experiences), trust in farmers is largely faith based (based on indirect experiences, perceptions, and inferential beliefs). This finding is important and should have implications for research that aims at “measuring” public trust in social institutions.

Further, the finding that informants trust various social institutions based on different domains may suggest different strategies for these institutions to reinforce public trust. For example, since trust in government has been mainly identified as confidence based (and therefore, based on direct experience and exposure with the government’s activities), it may become crucial for governmental agencies to have direct and clear communication with the public in policy design and implementations. Encouraging the public’s direct participation during the policy debates, and communicating the results of enforcements with the public (in the form of product recall, bans, and so forth) appear to be effective strategies government agencies can use to enhance public trust.

The findings with respect to distrust in social institutions are important for many reasons. First, as argued earlier very little attention has been paid to the concept of distrust. In addition, most research has treated trust and distrust as mutually exclusive constructs (conceptualize distrust as the negative of trust and assumed low levels of trust would indicate distrust). Our findings suggest that this notion in fact may not be correct and individuals can have both trust and distrust toward the same target at the same time. The idea of simultaneous existence of trust and distrust has been conceptualized (e.g. Lewicki et al 1998; Luhmann 1979), but relatively little empirical evidence had been produced in its favor.

We believe this study is one of the first empirical studies that deals with the concept of distrust. The qualitative nature of the study makes it even more useful in that it empirically identifies three dimensions (in the form of consequences) of distrust within which social institutions of the food system can be viewed. From a practical point of view, identification of these dimensions could potentially help design strategies to reduce citizens’ distrust in various institutions.

For Public Policy Makers:

Some of the broad public policy implications of the study has been implied in the preceding (“for consumers”) section. First, from the public policy point of view, consumers’ meaning making about GMF products seems alarming. Consumers tend to think that such food safety practices as cooking and washing can take care of potential negative health consequences of consuming these products. Similarly, it appears that consumers are making analogies between GMF and other food categories (e.g. junk foods). Parallel to Douglas’ (1966) account of dirty vs. clean food, consumers seem to believe that such food categories as “junk foods” are already “polluted.” Therefore, marginal (potential) danger of GMF seems ignorable.

When we connect the findings of stage 1 and stage 2, we observe that consumers’ views on GMF products are closely related to broader issues such as how they view food safety, technology,

and the interaction between food and technology. From the policy point of view, it is imperative to identify such linkages and focus on the impact of such linkages to consumer learning, unlearning, and fail to learning.

Further, stage 2 suggests that consumers are preoccupied with the cost of the food and rely (and trust) heavily on the integrity of the providers and regulators of these products. This further suggests that consumers expect a well-integrated and open communication among various types of providers and regulators to ensure the safety of GMF products. Consumers seem to extend a time credit to providers and policy makers in order for them to act in the best interest of the consumers.

Now, we would like to conclude this paper with a few specific implications of 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.

Perhaps the most important implication for public policy of GMF comes from the finding that, as opposed to the existing views on the subject, 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 failure of trust among the American public 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.

In addition, more research should be funded by the federal government. As one of our respondents (Pam) suggested, she would have 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 in her recent article, 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. I 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.

Finally, our study suggested that informants see "industry" as the key player of their perceptions of negative synergetic interaction (distrust reinforcing properties) among the component 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 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 surrounding biotechnologies" and applauded even by the opponents of the biotechnologies (McCullum 2001)

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Culture and Cognition: The Case of Irrational Beliefs about Luck

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SESSION OVERVIEW

*Fortune is merry,
And in this mood will give us anything.
- William Shakespeare*

People often attribute life's vicissitudes to luck. Such attributions are particularly common among certain Asian cultures where fortuitous events are regularly attributed to luck or fate. Even if an event occurs randomly, individuals' implicit beliefs about luck might lead them to contradict the claim that this event occurred purely by chance. Further, anecdotal evidence suggests that people are also irrational in their interpretations of situations involving luck or chance. For example, some poker players talk to the dice before throwing it (Hayano 1978) perhaps believing that they can influence the outcome. Yet, the systematic investigation of why people behave in these ways has received scant attention from researchers.

Beliefs about luck play an important role in a number of consumption situations. For example, shoppers in Hong Kong pay very high prices for license plates that are considered lucky (Vanhonacker 2004) and a large number of retailers use the lucky number "8" in the prices and phone numbers. More importantly, both retailers and manufacturers in China use luck-based promotional games and events to boost sales, and many marketers depend on such tactics for their promotional strategies. An understanding of how consumers interpret these luck-related offers has obvious implications for consumer welfare. In addition to the typical consumption situations described here, luck-related behaviors have a dark side. In several other countries, addiction to gambling is a social problem that affects large sections of the population. Many such addictive behaviors result from a lack of self-control and irrational beliefs that the next attempt at the wheel will be lucky. As large sections of the population in several countries succumb to the gambling addictions and various "come-ons" that lure them into thinking that today will be their "lucky day", policy makers need to be aware of tactics that are used to exploit vulnerable sections of the population. To be fair, however, beliefs in luck are not necessarily always bad for the individual. In some cases they might serve as a sort of positive illusion (Darke and Freedman 1997), an important source of optimism for people in their daily lives and, therefore, might be functional to a degree.

Our session provides a theoretical understanding of luck-related phenomena using existing models of information processing. The first paper in the session by Valenzuela, Darke and Briley investigates whether cultures with different control orientations (American vs. Chinese) differ in their sensitivity to luck. Beliefs in luck and personal self-esteem are relied on differentially in these cultures and this difference might influence the extent to which they rely on luck in opting for a risky choice. The paper reports findings from two cross cultural studies and shows that people from cultures that have an internal locus of control are likely to engage in more risky decision-making when self-esteem is enhanced. On the other hand, cultures with an external locus of control make more risky choices when they feel lucky.

The second paper by Jiang, Cho and Adaval provides a different perspective on how luck might have an impact on behavior. According to this research, objects and symbols can be associated with luck and this association might exist in memory around

the concept "luck". Once this concept is activated, it can influence our behavior regardless of our individual beliefs about luck. Thus, within Asian cultures, the symbolism associated with lucky and unlucky numbers can prime luck related concepts in memory. Once activated, this primed luck concept can influence a) people's subjective feeling of how lucky they are and the positive affect they experience, b) their interpretation of situations, c) motivation and performance on a cognitive task and d) product choices.

The fact that numbers can be used to prime luck related concepts suggests that beliefs about luck and events or objects associated with luck are represented in memory in some form and can be selectively retrieved. The third paper by Cowley and Farrell identifies how such luck related events might be stored and retrieved from memory. This paper identifies how people who believe in luck remember different things relative to those who don't believe in luck. A large study using data from real gamblers provides insight into the memories of these luck or chance oriented gamblers and shows that they remember different aspects of the experience. Some focus on peak wins and losses while others focus on the last experience.

Collectively, these papers provide a coherent message about how chronic and temporarily activated beliefs about luck have an impact on memory, motivation, decision making and performance.

"The Effects of Luck and Self-Esteem: Cultural Differences in Risky Decision-Making"

Ana Valenzuela, Baruch College

Peter Darke, University of British Columbia

Donnel Briley, University of Sydney

Previous literature has found that lucky experiences have a paradoxical effect on expectations of future performance (Darke and Freedman 1997). Subjects who thought luck was a personal, stable factor reacted to a lucky event with higher expectations for performance, while those who perceived luck as completely random had lower expectations following initial luck. As a consequence, beliefs in good luck may buffer people from feelings of uncertainty and enhance risk taking. These results are quite similar to findings in the self-esteem literature concerning ego-threat (e.g. Baumeister et al. 1993). In fact, self-esteem has been shown to predict risk-taking particularly in the domain of gains (Josephs, Larrick, Steele and Nisbett 1992). However, respondents' cultural identity is expected to moderate these effects. People have implicit theories about whether behavior is driven merely by an individual's ability (internal locus of control) or by situational forces (external locus of control). Individual responses to success or failure are likely to differ depending on the theory to which they subscribe (Rotter 1966). Individuals that believe in external locus of control may be more likely to shift their expectations for future performance depending on whether they are lucky or not (Hong and Chiu 1988). Research by Weisz, Rothbaum and Blackburn (1984) indicates that East Asians tend to exhibit more external locus of control than North Americans. Additionally, Heine and Lehman (1997) also identified cultural differences in self-esteem maintenance for Japanese vs. North Americans. They found that many self-esteem related effects such as post-decisional dissonance occur with North Americans but not with Japanese. As a consequence, we expect that individuals who subscribe to different implicit theories of behavior (North American vs. Chinese) will differ in their sensitivity to luck

and self-esteem in risky decision-making. In other words, people seem to use important dimensions of their self-concept as a buffer against different kinds of threats—in this case the risk of getting no money when taking a chance on winning a larger sum of money. Self-affirmation on the dimension of ability should be more effective in buffering the risk of the gamble in western cultures while self-affirmation on personal luck should be more effective in buffering risk in the eastern cultures. Three studies investigate this proposition.

In Study 1, we use a risky decision task (e.g. Tversky and Kahneman 1981) to analyze whether cultures differ in their sensitivity to luck and self-esteem. Subjects were asked to choose between an option with a certain outcome and another option (or prospect) with a probabilistic outcome. Despite differences in the level of risk involved, the expected outcomes were the same for both options. In addition, decisions pertained to either gains or losses, depending on the decision frame. For example, positively framed decisions gave subjects a choice between a sure gain of \$30 and an 85 percent chance to gain \$45. Whereas, subjects chose between a sure loss of \$30 and an 85 percent chance of losing \$45 when the decision was framed negatively. We ran the study using undergraduate students from both Canada and Hong Kong. Subjects completed a set of 10 decisions (5 with a gain frame and 5 with a loss frame) presented on a computer screen. The order was randomized by subject. The alternatives in each decision differed only in terms of the amount of risk involved. When subjects chose a risky option, the final outcome was determined using a lottery procedure. There was also an initial luck manipulation: Half of the subjects got \$5 from the start while half had to participate in a lottery to win it (although everyone won). We measured Beliefs in Good Luck (Darke and Freedman 1997) and self-esteem (Rosenberg 1965).

Results show that neither self-esteem nor beliefs in luck affect behavior in loss domains for either culture. People seem to be so averse to losses that individual differences are just not that important. In other words, loss aversion seems to be universally felt, though gain pursuit was not. In the gain domain, Canadian (but not Hong Kong) respondents chose the risky option more often when they rated high on self-esteem. Also in the gain domain, Hong Kong (but not Canadian) respondents chose more risky options when they had stronger beliefs in good luck. Only in Canada did the initial luck manipulation interact with self esteem: High self-esteem subjects took more risks after winning the initial lottery. In the case of Hong Kong, the initial luck manipulation did not interact with individual's beliefs in good luck. Instead, those who believed in luck tended to take more risks regardless of context induced by initial luck.

Study 2 replicated Study 1's design (without the initial luck manipulation) and added a between-subjects priming manipulation. U.S. Caucasian and Hong Kong undergraduate students were primed to think either about their good luck or their strong ability by describing a situation in which they were either lucky or skillful. The results showed that U.S. Caucasian respondents that were primed to think about their skill tended to choose more risky options than those that were primed about luck. Respondents that had to describe a skill-based situation felt that they were describing something more important about themselves than those that described a high ability situation. In the case of Hong Kong students, luck-beliefs priming did not enhance the effect of individual's beliefs in good luck, which again support the idea that beliefs in good luck are not as context-dependent as individual self-esteem.

In sum, our results support the idea that cultures differ in the way people deal with uncertainty in everyday life (Weisz, Rothbaum and Blackburn 1984). North Americans tend to believe in their own capability to control the situation. As a consequence, they are

willing to make more risky decisions when a positive event enhances their self-esteem. In contrast, Asian cultures tend to assess the favorability of the situation and take more risk when they believe their personal good luck will put the situation in their favor. In addition, the effects of self-esteem on risk taking seem to be more context-dependent than beliefs in good luck. Further study in risky domains that are skill-based instead of luck-based would bring more light to this research question.

“Priming Lucky Numbers: Effects on Attributions and Performance”

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Social psychologists have typically considered luck as an external, unstable factor in explaining social events (Rotter, 1966; Weiner et al., 1987). Those who attribute an event to luck are asserting that they were not responsible for it and that it has no implications for similar events in the future. Nevertheless, this definition of luck is not universally agreed on (Meyer 1980; Meyer & Koelbl 1982) and people's own perception of luck differs from that of researchers. Fischhoff (1976) suggests that this disagreement arises because of the tendency to confuse luck with chance. While chance is more consistent with the notion of an external, unstable factor, luck might or might not fit into this classification. For example, when people think about luck, they might be referring either to attributions about the person (e.g., he is an unlucky person) in which case luck is seen as stable or, they might be referring to an event (an external, unstable factor caused his house to burn down).

Although chronic beliefs about how lucky one is are widely held (Darke and Freedman 1997) we suggest that in addition to these chronic beliefs, people might be influenced by transient factors that make luck salient. Our conception of luck is therefore somewhat different. While we agree that people might have chronic beliefs about luck, we also believe that luck exists as a concept in memory. Like any other concept, it is associated with luck-related objects (e.g., lucky numbers, a four-leaf clover) and events (e.g., situations in which a person was lucky) in addition to individual beliefs about how lucky one is. If luck exists as a concept in memory, it can be made more or less accessible through standard priming techniques (or situational factors). Thus, even though people may vary in the degree to which they hold chronic beliefs about how lucky they are, they might be influenced by objects and events around them that prime luck related concepts and make them more accessible.

We expected that when luck is made salient, people will expect lucky events to occur in the immediate future and will be less protective of their resources, and slower to exercise cognitive effort in tasks. Further, their interpretation of events (with positive or negative outcomes) might also reveal a bias towards luck related attributions. To examine these general hypotheses, we primed individuals with lucky or unlucky numbers. It is worth noting that there is ample anecdotal and some empirical evidence that numbers in Chinese cultures symbolize luck. (For example, numbers such as 8, 88, etc. are considered to be lucky, and are consequently believed to bring good luck whereas numbers such as 4, 44, etc. are considered unlucky and ostensibly bring misfortune. The sale of lucky license plates and use of lucky prices suggests that people acquire these goods with the belief that these objects will bring them additional luck (Vanhonacker, 2004).)

In the first study, we subliminally primed research participants with the lucky number “8”; the unlucky number “4”; the word “lucky”; the word “unlucky” or meaningless symbols “~”, and

asked them to indicate how lucky they felt and how happy they felt. Participants who were primed with a lucky number or a lucky word felt luckier and happier than those primed with unlucky numbers and words. Further, there were no differences between the priming of numbers or words and between control and unlucky prime conditions. It is important to note that perceptions of luck and positive affect that resulted as a consequence of priming were independent of each other.

In the second study, we primed research participants with lucky numbers, unlucky numbers or neutral numbers and provided them with scenarios where the protagonist of a story either succeeded or failed in a task. Participants were asked to attribute success or failure to personal effort or external factors. When the luck concept was activated (by priming either lucky numbers or unlucky ones), participants tended to attribute positive outcomes to external factors (e.g., the person was lucky) and negative outcomes to internal factors (e.g., the person did not work hard). The latter finding is intriguing because it suggests that even though luck was salient, people attributed negative outcomes to personal effort—perhaps because they felt the person did not succeed despite having luck on their side.

In a third experiment, we examined how priming luck would influence participants' actual task performance. We found that exposing participants to either lucky or unlucky numbers decreased their performance on a subsequent anagram-solving task especially when the anagrams were difficult. Thus, activating concepts about luck stimulated participants to believe that performance outcomes were out of their control and, therefore, they did not try as hard as they might have otherwise.

Studies 2 and 3 did not show a difference between lucky and unlucky numbers (i.e., both types of numbers made the luck dimension salient). However, a difference emerged when the numbers pertained to price. For example, in Hong Kong, a price of HK\$74 is considered unlucky, whereas a price of HK\$88 is considered lucky. In our fourth experiment, research participants were given two size options of the same brand of ice cream. One option had a lucky price HK\$88 (for a 600ml pack); the other had an unlucky price HK\$74 (550ml). In some conditions, we provided participants with the unit price while in other conditions this information was not provided. Further, we asked participants to make a choice either for themselves (self-relevant) or for their office (not self-relevant). We observed that when the choice is difficult to make (unit prices were not given) or the purchase is not self-relevant (i.e., participants are told to choose one option for their office) they were more likely to pick the lucky priced option. This finding is consistent with study 3 and suggests that priming luck might influence people's motivation and might lead to greater use of the lucky price as a heuristic in decision-making.

In sum, our four studies suggest that luck related concepts are stored in memory and may be activated through simple priming tasks. Their accessibility relative to other concepts can influence not only how people interpret situations but also their motivation to perform in a cognitive task and their purchasing choice in the consumer domain.

“Retrospective Evaluations: Will Chance versus Luck Oriented Individuals Select Different Moments of an Experience?”

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People's evaluations of past experiences, such as liking and disliking, guide their decisions about the future. A recollection of the pleasure or pain felt during an experience could be retrieved directly from memory if the to-be-remembered event was a precise

instant, but typically people consider affective episodes, not single moments. To remember how much we enjoyed an experience, we need to recall how we felt during the target episode, which consists of many moments, and summarize those feelings. Retrospective evaluations of an experience draw on select moments of the experience. The peak-end rule predicts that the most influential moments will be the most extreme moment and the final moment (Fredrickson and Kahneman, 1993; Redelmeier and Kahneman, 1996). People also tend to prefer an improving trend or a happy ending (Ross and Simonson, 1991).

Most of the research investigating retrospective evaluations examines the disliking of painful situations (Ariely, 1998; Kahneman *et al.*, 1993; Kahneman *et al.*, 1997; Redelmeier and Kahneman, 1996; Schreiber and Kahneman, 2000). Although many of our experiences are a mixture of pleasant and painful moments, little is known about how people summarize feelings for mixed episodes. The experience examined here is a gambling session which includes wins and losses. We look at two 'types' of gamblers; luck-oriented gamblers (LGs) and chance-oriented gamblers (CGs). Our proposition is that gamblers with different orientations will draw on different moments of the experience when constructing retrospective evaluations.

What is the difference between luck and chance? Luck is a causal category used to explain successes and failures that cannot be attributed to ability, effort, or task difficulty (Weiner *et al.*, 1987). Chance distributes events fairly and evenly, producing all possible outcomes with equal frequencies in the short and long term (Wagenaar, 1989; Wagenaar and Keren, 1988; Keren, 1994; Friedland, 1998).

Luck Orientation. LGs expect carryover from one random or independent event to another. LGs often believe they have an advantage when betting because they are lucky. Given that being lucky is an enviable quality and interrupting a lucky streak is brings bad luck (Wagenaar, 1989), we expect LGs to remember when outcomes indicate they are lucky and the moment a 'lucky streak' is interrupted.

Chance Orientation. CGs believe that outcomes will be the same regardless of the person involved. CGs 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). CGs have also been found to believe that there is no reliable process for predicting the outcome of uncertain events (Darke and Freedman, 1997). Since CGs believe outcomes are due to chance, CGs should remember a more positive experience when there is a happy ending as most people like to save the best for last.

To investigate this issue, one hundred and two gamblers were recruited via posters displayed in a gambling establishment. Participants were given \$75 of tokens to bet 22 times. Their winnings were converted to club membership points.

Five items were used to measure a participant's retrospective evaluation. All statements about the experience (gave me pleasure, gave me a sense of excitement, brought me happiness, made me feel delighted, made me feel good) were answered with Likert scales ($r=0.79$). Four items were used to assess remembered irritation. Again, all items (made me feel angry, gave me a sense of frustration, gave me a feeling of dissatisfaction, brought me disappointment) were answered with Likert scales ($r=.81$).

After gambling and completing the dependent measures, participants assessed four chance/luck scenarios adapted from Friedland (1992; 1998) to determine their LG or CG status. Participants distributed 100 points between luck and chance to indicate the cause of each outcome. This categorization was used as an independent variable in the results described below.

Remembered Liking (Retrospective Evaluation). Remembered liking for LGs and CGs was tested with separate regressions including the value of the peak win and peak loss, the slope of moments for the session, the value of the final bet, and the final cash position. Remembered liking for LGs was determined by the peak win only ($F(1, 40)=2.55, p<0.05$): the larger the win, the more positive the retrospective evaluation. The memory of liking for CGs was determined by the slope ($F(1, 50)=3.13, p<0.01$): the more lucrative the ending, the more positive the memory. Importantly, the final cash position was not significant for either LGs or CGs. All moments are not weighted equally in the construction of a retrospective evaluation.

Remembered Disliking (Irritation). Consistent with previous research asserting that positive and negative responses to the same event are independent and distinct responses (Cacioppo and Bernston, 1994; Eagly and Chaiken, 1998; Herr and Page, 2004), liking and disliking were not significantly negatively correlated for LGs ($r=-.01, ns.$). The final bet was the only significant variable for remembered irritation ($F(1, 40)=3.43, p<0.01$): the larger the win on the final bet, the greater the reported irritation. This suggests that LGs felt irritated given that the session ended just as their luck turned. Irritation felt because they did not have a chance to benefit from the lucky streak as it just began is consistent with previous research by Wagenaar (1989). The remembered irritation for CGs was determined by the slope ($F(1, 50)=-2.49, p<0.05$). This is interesting because it suggests that liking and disliking may not be independent for this group ($r=-.31, p<.05$).

The results indicate that LGs and CGs select different moments of a mixed experience to reconstruct retrospective evaluations. LGs enjoy an experience that reinforces their *luckiness*, but become irritated by having a lucky streak interrupted. CGs remember more happiness when things get better at the end of the experience. For CGs, the outcome is due to chance, so the best case scenario is that the best is saved for last. It is also interesting that CGs use the same moments to remember liking and irritation while LGs use two very different moments in their retrospective evaluation.

Discussion

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People's perceptions of luck are certainly one of the more interesting topics in both psychology and consumer research. This interest was stimulated in part by Weiner's typology of the explanations that people give for their own and others' behavior. In particular, he classified the outcomes of performance in terms of both stability and agency, and assumed that luck was an unstable factor that was externally determined. Although this characterization of luck is intuitively reasonable, however, it does not always correspond to people's actual perceptions.

For example, many people believe that certain individuals are inherently lucky whereas others are chronically unlucky. That is, they perceive luck to be a stable dispositional determinant of behavioral outcomes. Several examples of people's illusions of control over chance events are provided by Langer (1975). The research reported in this symposium has similar implications. Cowley and Farrell, for example, also identified chronic individual differences in gamblers' belief that luck is at least temporarily stable. Thus, individuals often believe that their wins and losses over a series of trials are not independent. Rather, they perceive their outcomes to be guided by winning and losing streaks and base their bets accordingly.

In this regard, people may acquire implicit theories about the antecedents of their own and others' behavior that they apply when making judgments and decisions (cf. Ross, 1989; Dweck, Chiu, &

Hong, 1995; Wyer, 2004). Indeed, they may have several such theories, the application of which may be influenced by the theories' accessibility in memory and, therefore, the likelihood that they come to mind at the time a decision is made. For example, people may have both a skill related theory ("I am skilled, and so I will be successful") and a luck-related theory ("I am lucky, and so I will be successful"). The application of these theories may depend on both individual differences in their chronic accessibility and situational factors that make them temporarily salient.

Valenzuela et al.'s research exemplifies this possibility. Their results suggest that although skill-related and luck-related theories may exist to different degrees in Americans and Asians, they differ in their chronic accessibility. Americans are more likely to have a skill-related theory accessible in memory than a luck-related theory. Consequently, Americans with high self-esteem, who believe they are skillful, are likely to infer they will succeed on a task and are more likely to take risks than are those with low self-esteem. Although these individuals may also have a luck-related implicit theory, it is not highly accessible in memory, and so their beliefs in luck typically have little impact on their decisions.

In the case of Hong Kong Chinese, however, a luck-related theory may be more chronically accessible in memory than a skill-related theory. Thus, individual differences in these individuals' beliefs that they are lucky predict their risk-taking behavior whereas their beliefs in their skillfulness, do not.

As I've speculated, however, both types of theories may coexist in memory, and the cultural differences identified by Valenzuela et al. may only reflect differences in their chronic accessibility. If this is so, situational factors that influence the relative salience of the two theories could often override the differences they detected.

The research by Jiang, Cho and Adaval provides evidence that situational factors can, in fact, influence the extent to which implicit theories about luck are applied. Their research is particularly interesting in that it identifies motivational influences of these theories. Briefly, they show that activating concepts about luck in one situation can influence not only individuals' beliefs that others' outcomes are due to luck but also their own behavior and judgments. For example, priming luck-related concepts, which may activate an implicit theory that behavioral outcomes are not under one's control, decreases the effort that participants expend in achievement-related activity. Correspondingly, it increases the tendency to use heuristics in judgment task rather than expending the effort necessary to make a more reliable judgment.

However, the fact that these effects are influenced by situational factors emphasizes the fact that luck-related implicit theories may not be applied unless situational factors call them to people's attention. Jiang et al.'s work was done using Hong Kong subjects who are typically bicultural. As Valenzuela et al.'s findings also indicate, these individuals are more likely than Westerners to have luck-related theories chronically accessible in memory. Nevertheless, the chronic accessibility of these theories do not always guarantee their use when situational conditions make other bases for judgments and decisions more salient.

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Affective Underpinnings of Decision Heuristics

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This research investigates the role of affective- versus cognitive-priming upon the decision-maker's subsequent use of choice heuristics (Attraction and Compromise Effect and Anchoring & adjustment).

While there is ample evidence which shows that most of us are fallible to such choice heuristics and biases like the representativeness bias or the availability heuristic, our understanding of why we are thus is limited. It is likely that several of these heuristics and biases have an evolutionary origin. It has been suggested that, given our limited cognitive abilities, several choice and judgment heuristics which provided us reasonably accurate solutions in most situations without having to expend a significant amount of effort were ingrained into our decision making-system, much like the anatomical and physiological adaptations which enhance an organism's inclusive fitness are adopted. This research explores the evolutionarily ingrained mechanisms responsible for the operation of simplifying heuristics, and the role that emotions play in the elicitation of these simplifying heuristics. In doing so, we not only expand on the role that internally-rooted affective reactions play on the use of such heuristics, but also show how manipulating the external environment's affective content can significantly influence our reliance on such heuristics.

Thus far, dual-process theories of cognition have proposed that the choices and judgments that we make are a result of a complex interplay of two systems—one a deliberate, reasoning-driven cognitive system and the other an automatic intuitive system. Related research has also suggested that several of the simplifying choice and judgment heuristics reside in the intuitive system, and are often brought forth with the help of “feelings”. This is because the intuitive system is a feelings- or emotions-based system. Several recent neuroscience studies suggest that humans often use affective cues in making decisions and judgments, and the momentary feelings elicited upon exposure to a choice option may be a very good determinant of its eventual probability of choice. This is indicative of the fact that over the course of our evolutionarily past we have encoded several kinds of ecologically rational simplifying heuristics in our intuitive system and whenever we are engaged in a choice task, these heuristics express themselves as an affective response which informs us about the qualitative suitability of a choice option. This mechanism is what explains our gut reactions to choice options even when we are hard pressed to rationally explain our positive or negative attitudes towards these options. Since emotions play such a crucial role in the operationalization of the intuitive system, it is likely that priming people into an emotional problem-solving mode, or perhaps just making the environment affect-rich is likely to result in the intuitive system becoming more accessible to the decision-maker at the expense of the analytical system. This line of reasoning suggests that humans would display a greater reliance on the intuitive system, and hence the use of simplifying choice and judgment heuristics in affect-rich environments.

We investigate the above hypothesis by setting up a series of between-subjects experiments. One group of participants is primed into a cognition-based problem-solving mode, while the other group is primed into an affect-based problem-solving mode. Following this they are tested for their susceptibility to two forms of common context-dependent choice biases (attraction effect and compromise effect) and a common judgment bias (anchoring &

adjustment). The results show that when people are affectively primed, they are more likely to be fallible to the attraction and the compromise effect, and anchoring & adjustment, versus when they are cognitively primed. These findings expand upon the “dual process theory” interpretation of the use of choice heuristics. Emotions seem to play a key role in our use of heuristics in decision-making situation.

This view is an alternative to the “cognitive miser” or the “adaptive-decision maker” view of heuristics and biases. That view suggests that heuristics are strategies that people often use, deliberately or automatically, to solve choice or judgment tasks that would otherwise be either too complex to solve given our limited cognitive capabilities, or too trivial to afford costly cognitive deliberation. This suggests that people would only deploy heuristic use when the need-for accuracy is low (like a low stakes decision) and/or cognitive resource availability is low (like time pressure). However, in our studies, none of these situational variables differed across the two groups and yet the affectively primed participants displayed a greater degree of heuristic use. Further investigations of this phenomenon are in progress.

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Does Nostalgia Depend on Valence of Past Experience? An Empirical Analysis of the Discontinuity Hypothesis

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Nostalgia, related to the judgment of the past relative to the future, helps individuals construct a sense of identity and social connectedness by facilitating continuity across time, especially in the face of existential disruptions. Davis (1979) captures this phenomenon in his "discontinuity hypothesis" to envisage that people who experience disruption in their lives tend to cling to the past more than those who experience continuity. Contemporary research on nostalgia has found weak support for this hypothesis (Best and Nelson 1985; Batcho 1995).

One of the issues not deliberated in earlier studies is the valence of the reservoir of past experiences invoked in nostalgic thoughts. In their evaluation of whether people connect to the past for shelter in the face of a potentially dreadful future, past studies have treated the reservoir of memories and recollections as unipolar. But not everyone has an identical experience of the past or has similar perceptions and interpretations of those experiences. That is, individuals have available both positive and negative experiences when they look to their past. According to Zimbardo and Boyd (1999), the recalled past may be positive or it may be aversive and negative. Consequently, past tests of the discontinuity hypothesis may be compromised by the assumption of homogeneity of thoughts, experiences and perceptions.

It is suggested in the present research that the valence of the accessible past experiences that are invoked in nostalgic thoughts moderates the degree to which nostalgia is used to cushion individuals from discontinuities in their lives introduced by threats of a strained future. When confronted with discontinuity, people with a predominantly positive past will tend to be nostalgic. On the other hand, people who have experienced a predominantly negative past will tend to avoid the past because a depressing past does not offer mental sustenance and is best discarded. As a result, such people would not be nostalgic.

Two aspects of the discontinuity hypothesis were tested in an experiment. First, a scenario portraying the dread of the future was compared with a situation depicting a bright future. The main stimulus consisted of a one page fictitious news editorial which was designed to provide either good or bad news about the economic outlook for college seniors seeking employment upon graduation. Thus, as the first independent variable, the nature of the future outlook pertaining to the participants was manipulated. Next, the hypothesis was extended by incorporating the individual differences in the valence of past experiences using Zimbardo and Boyd's (1999) time-perspective inventory as an individual-differences metric to measure the nature of participants' alignment to the past. Participants responded to items from the time-perspective inventory and were asked to describe how characteristic they thought each statement was in describing how they felt about their past. To introduce a second independent variable, two groups were created based on whether participants had predominantly positive or negative thoughts of the past. Holbrook's (1993) nostalgia proneness scale was used as a control variable to ensure that any differences in nostalgia could be confidently attributed to the variables of interest, namely future outlook and past experiences. Following the stimulus participants responded to an inventory of adjectives (borrowed from the Positive and Negative Affect Scales, Watson, Clark, and Tellegen 1988) measuring their affective state in re-

sponse to the manipulation. This served as the manipulation check to ensure that the "future outlook" manipulation successfully introduced "discontinuity" among participants in the condition with the negative outlook. Finally, participants responded to a twenty item nostalgia inventory designed and tested by Batcho (1995, 1998), which comprised the dependent variable.

Compared to the response of the participants assigned to the positive future outlook condition, the participants assigned to the negative future outlook condition scored higher on the set of negative adjectives. Further, participants assigned to the positive future condition scored higher than participants in the negative future outlook condition on the set of positive adjectives, showing successful manipulation check. A standardized overall score for positive and negative past experiences served as the second independent variable.

Analysis using Batcho's Nostalgia Index as the dependent variable showed significant results. A two-way interaction between future outlook and valence of past experience was significant. The main effect of future outlook was not statistically significant, thus rejecting the original form of the discontinuity hypothesis. The main effect of valence of past experience was statistically significant but it was interpreted in light of the significant two-way interaction.

Planned contrasts showed that participants with a predominantly positive past expressed more nostalgia when they faced a bleak outlook for the future than when they encountered a positive outlook for the future. This finding provides partial support for the discontinuity hypothesis which suggests that nostalgia is triggered by dread of a negative future. When faced with a negative outlook for the future those with a predominantly positive past were more nostalgic than those with a predominantly negative past. Taken together, it is suggested that a bright outlook for the future did not trigger nostalgia whereas a bleak outlook for the future triggered nostalgia. Moreover, when faced with a bleak outlook for the future, those with a predominantly positive past expressed more nostalgia than those with a predominantly negative past. Based on these findings we conclude that there is support for our proposed extension of the discontinuity hypothesis which considers valence of past experience as a moderator of the degree to which one seeks solace in nostalgia when confronted with a threatening future.

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How Far Do Feelings Go? How Attachments Influence Brand Extensions

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Today, most new product introductions are brand extensions (Aaker, 1990). Hence, this area is of paramount importance for both marketing practitioners and academics. Academic research in marketing has looked at a number of important factors determining the success (or failure) of extensions (Broniarczyk & Alba, 1994). Research has suggested that the perceived fit or conceptual similarity between a parent and extended brand is a major factor driving the evaluation of brand extensions (Park, Milberg & Lawson, 1991).

Research also indicates that when consumers have favorable attitudes toward parent brands, they tend to evaluate extensions positively as well (Boush & Loken, 1991). That is, while brand extension researchers have previously studied the role of affect, the focus has been on affect either as a component of attitude (Boush & Loken, 1991; Broniarczyk & Alba, 1994) or as mood (Barone, Miniard, & Romeo, 2000). In these cases, affect as attitude is understood as a relatively less potent or "cold" (Cohen & Areni, 1991) form of affect, while mood is also a relatively mild affective state that is often not directly traceable to a specific reason or stimulus.

In the current paper, we introduce the attachment construct into the brand extension literature and suggest that it acts as a powerful determinant of consumers' reactions to brand extensions that could help marketers overcome a lack of fit. Unlike previous research on the effects of attitude in brand extension research, attachment is a "hot" stimulus-induced affect that describes certain emotionally-laden relationships between consumers and brands (Ball & Tasaki, 1992). We argue that attachment to the parent brand goes beyond both fit/similarity and attitude in determining brand extension success.

Attachment is a relationship-based construct that reflects the emotional bond connecting an individual with a specific target object (Bowlby, 1979). High attachment to a particular target (i.e. object, person) induces a state of emotion-laden mental readiness that influences one's allocation of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral resources towards the object of attachment (Holmes, 2000). It is evidenced, among other things, by such psychological and behavioral outcomes as proximity-seeking behaviors, separation distress, a sense that the attachment object offers a safe haven, and mourning of its loss (Bowlby, 1979).

The first study examined the attachment construct using a fictitious brand through manipulations of both the fit between a parent and extended brand (low, medium, or high) and the attachment (low or high) to the parent brand. Attachment was manipulated by invoking separation distress that accompanies high levels of attachment. As hypothesized, participants in the high attachment condition showed higher purchase intentions towards ($M=4.41$) and willingness to pay ($M=94$) for the extensions as opposed to those in the low attachment condition (3.52 and 84 respectively). The effect was pronounced at the high (sneakers and shorts) and medium (sneakers and sunglasses) levels of fit (for high fit, $PI: 5.35$ vs. 4.10, willingness to pay: 114 vs. 98; for medium fit, $PI: 4.50$ vs. 3.61, and willingness to pay: 98 vs. 78). When the fit was low, as in the case of sneakers and grills, even the strong emotional bond implied by high attachment did not help.

The second study replicated the above results in the context of real brands to which participants were strongly or weakly attached.

Different product categories were used for both the parent brand and the extension (jeans vs. casual shirts, sandals, or desk lamps). We also measured attitude strength and included it as a covariate, to make sure the attachment construct had an effect above and beyond attitude. Furthermore, the effect of attachment on evaluations of the extended brand was partially mediated by brand commitment.

In summary, this paper introduces an important variable of consumer attachment to the brand extension literature, and adds to the emotional richness of this important area of consumer research. Drawing from two studies employing real and fictitious brands, this paper shows that emotional attachment has a positive effect on consumer reactions to brand extensions, even when controlling for the effect of attitude favorability and strength.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

New Advances in Mental Accounting: Underlying Mechanisms and Resultant Biases

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Vicki G. Morwitz, New York University

SESSION OVERVIEW

The purpose of this session was to present recent research on mental accounting in consumer research. Together these papers demonstrate the scope and consequences of mental accounting effects and provide evidence for different processes underlying these effects. The session brought together three papers that address different aspects, and provide distinct perspectives reflecting on the biases that result from mental accounting practices in consumer behavior. The first two papers adopt a consumer's point of view, whereas the third paper takes a managerial approach.

The literature on mental accounting refers to mental accounts at different levels of generality (Kahneman and Tversky, 1984). Consumers can have transaction-specific accounts (Prelec and Loewenstein 1998) or expenditure type accounts (Heath and Soll, 1996). Transaction-specific accounts link specific acts of consumption and corresponding payments, whereas expenditure type accounts group similar expenditures together under a single budget. While all three papers examine mental accounts, the Zhang and Hsee paper considers transaction-specific accounts, the Ülkümen, Thomas and Morwitz paper and the Cheema and Soman paper look at expenditure type accounts.

Mental accounting is essentially a beneficial practice that consumers use strategically to simplify cognitive calculations (Schelling 1992; Shefrin and Thaler 1988) and to self-regulate expenses (Thaler 1999). Nevertheless, biases introduced by mental accounting practices have been widely documented (Arkes and Blumer 1985; Heath 1995; Heath and Soll 1996). The three papers add to this stream of literature by identifying further mechanisms through which mental accounts can have biasing effects on consumption decisions and subsequent utility.

Consumers' evaluation of an expense may depend on certain by-products of mental accounting in addition to the product price and benefit accrued from consuming it. The Ülkümen et al. paper shows that budget limits consumers set for their mental accounts are susceptible to temporal framing effects. The same expense, then, could be evaluated more or less favorably depending on how the budget period is framed and ensuing perceptions of account surplus. Cheema and Soman find that willingness to spend from an account depends not only on the amount of surplus in an account, but also on the transgression costs associated with the account. Zhang and Hsee demonstrate that the temporal pattern in prices, along with the current price of a product can affect contentment with the price and product evaluations. In sum, different aspects of mental accounts can systematically alter consumers' willingness to spend, and introduce biases in evaluations.

The papers in this session also shed light on a relatively under-researched but crucial aspect in the area of mental accounting: the temporal dynamics of mental accounts. Specifically, they demonstrate that when an annual frame is salient, or when an account has been newly transgressed into (consumers have spent from a hitherto protected account), or with a specific temporal pattern of prices, consumers may have more favorable evaluations of a target expense, and may be more likely to purchase, as compared to when they are provided a monthly frame, face an unopened account, or encounter an unfavorable temporal pattern of prices, respectively.

ABSTRACTS

"Biasing Effects of Temporal Framing on Budget Estimates"

Gülden Ülkümen, New York University

Manoj Thomas, New York University

Vicki G. Morwitz, New York University

In this paper, we uncover a temporal framing bias in budget estimates such that the estimates provided by participants considering their budgets for the next year were three times as high as the comparable estimates provided by those considering their budgets for the next month. We investigate this bias through a series of four studies.

Study 1

Study 1 aims to demonstrate this temporal framing bias. We had four between subjects conditions. In the Next Year/Next Month condition, participants considered their expenses during the next year/next month. In addition to these two main conditions, we had Typical Month and Month Next Year (a month, starting one year from now) conditions. We asked all participants to list different accounts they consider when they are budgeting for the next month/next year/typical month/month next year. Next, participants indicated their budget for the corresponding period.

Our primary expectation was that the budget estimates for the next year and the next month would be significantly different. We did not expect Month Next Year and Typical Month to be different from Next Month; they serve to test several explanations for the effect.

We converted all estimates to a common, monthly basis by dividing annual estimates by 12. The results suggest that the budget for the Next Year was significantly higher than that for the Next Month ($M_{\text{nextyear}} = \$1,773$, $M_{\text{nextmonth}} = \$576$). There was no difference between the Next Month and the two additional month conditions. We counted the number of expense categories listed and calculated per category budget by dividing indicated budget by number of categories. The average size of expense categories in the Next Year was higher than that in the Next Month ($M_{\text{nextyear}} = \$243$, $M_{\text{nextmonth}} = \$114$).

Study 1 was designed to test several alternative accounts of this substantial discrepancy in budget estimates. For all DV's, the three month conditions were significantly different from the Next Year condition but not from each other. These findings indicate that the observed effect cannot be qualified by expenses unique to the month following the experiment, temporal construal effects or optimism about one's financial future. Part of the reason for this discrepancy is that a greater number of expense categories are considered for the next year than for the next month. However, this alone can not account for our results, since there is a significant difference between the average size of budgets between conditions.

Study 2

Would the framing bias still manifest when the number of expense categories is held constant across conditions? To find out, we asked participants in study 2 to estimate only their food and entertainment budgets. We also wanted to see which frame lead to

more accurate estimates. The discrepancy could be due to underestimation in the Next Month condition or overestimation in the Next Year condition. In order to compare estimates to actual expenditures, we asked the participants to keep a diary.

The design was a 2 (Time frame: Next Month, Next Year) x 2 (Category: Food, Entertainment) x 2 (Order: Food first, Entertainment first) mixed design. The study consisted of three stages. In the first stage, all participants estimated their food and entertainment budgets, either for the next month, or next year. Then they kept a diary of their food and entertainment expenses for one week. One week later, they again estimated their budgets for the next month/next year. We also asked them to recall how much they actually spent during the diary period.

We replicated the temporal framing bias on total budget estimates. The combined food and entertainment estimate for the Next Year was significantly higher than that for the Next Month ($M_{\text{nextyear}} = \$612$, $M_{\text{nextmonth}} = \$441$). Participants in the Next Year condition provided accurate estimates, whereas those in the Next Month condition underestimated their actual expenditures. Even after keeping a diary of their expenses for a week, the magnitude of this underestimation did not diminish in the Next Month condition. All participants could accurately recall their expenses; however, participants in the Next Month condition did not seem to use this knowledge appropriately in their estimates.

So then what is causing the difference between estimates across frames? Debriefings from study 1 suggest that participants in the Next Year condition come up with an initial intuitive estimate, on which they add a lump sum amount. While estimating their budget for the next year, they were not confident that they included everything that they needed to, so they adjusted their estimate up by a certain amount. In studies 2 and 3, we examine this possibility.

Study 3

We asked the participants to estimate their monthly or annual budgets, and we recorded their response time. If indeed people are not confident and adjust their estimates up in the year condition, this should be reflected in their longer response latency.

We replicated the temporal framing bias; the budget estimate for the next year was higher than that for the next month ($M_{\text{nextyear}} = \$1,983$, $M_{\text{nextmonth}} = \$812$). More importantly, participants took longer to provide their estimates for the next year than for the next month ($M_{\text{nextyear}} = 20.00\text{sec}$, $M_{\text{nextmonth}} = 13.03\text{sec}$). This process evidence is consistent with an adjustment account.

Study 4

In order to better understand the role of confidence in the observed effects, in study 4, we manipulated participants' confidence in their estimates, along with the time frame. Participants were told that the majority of students who did this task before were quite accurate/inaccurate. Participants then estimated their budget for the next month/next year.

The results indicate that the discrepancy between budget estimates for the next month and next year are moderated by confidence in these estimates. In the Next Month condition, there was no difference between estimates across low and high confidence cells. However, in the Next Year condition, estimates made under low confidence were much higher than those made under high confidence.

The temporal framing bias we observe across four studies, which manifests itself as a large discrepancy between budget estimates made under month and year frames, is driven by the high estimates provided by the participants in the year condition, who do

not feel confident about their initial estimates, and feel the need to adjust them up.

“Breaking Open a Pot of Money: The Effect of Transgression Costs on Spending From Open and Closed Pots”

Amar Cheema, Washington University in Saint Louis

Dilip Soman, University of Toronto

We propose that consumers may incur a psychological transgression cost to break open a pot of money and spend from it. Thus, high transgression costs may deter spending. However, once a consumer incurs a transgression cost, subsequent spending from the pot may be easier. Bracketing one large pot of money into several smaller pots affects transgression costs and spending patterns. Consequences of transgression costs are demonstrated for purchase decisions with gift cards, for gambles with monetary implications, and for prepaid calling-card use. A transgression-related guilt measure and the moderating role of bracket artificiality provide additional support for the hypothesized process.

“Happiness Pump”

Yan Zhang, The University of Chicago Graduate School of Business

Christopher K. Hsee, The University of Chicago Graduate School of Business

Previous research on temporal trend (e.g., Hsee & Abelson, 1991; Loewenstein & Prelec, 1993; Ariely and Zauberman, 2003) suggests that consumers are happier with prices that decrease over time than with prices that remain unchanged or prices that increase over time. To attract and retain consumers, companies are adopting different marketing strategies. One frequently used strategy is to decrease price. However, in order to make a profit, a company cannot decrease the price indefinitely. At some point, the price will have to go back up. One possible solution is to introduce a product with a relatively high price, then decrease the price gradually, then suddenly increase the price, then gradually decrease it again, and so on and so forth. See Figure 1 below:

A problem with this strategy is, when the price jumps back up, consumers will be unhappy. And due to loss aversion, the unhappiness from the price increase may even outweigh the happiness from the price decrease.

In order to keep consumers happy and yet not to let prices decrease forever, we propose a marketing strategy in which the marketer first introduces a product with a relatively high price. Then he/she gradually decreases the price so as to make consumers happy. Then the marketer replaces the target product with a filler product. After that the marketer introduces the target product again with its higher price, and then decreases its price again. See Figure 2 below:

A key of this strategy is the insertion of filler products. The filler product will reduce the accessibility of the low ending price of the target product in a consumer's memory, and hence will lower the likelihood that the consumer will compare the high starting price of the target product in a new cycle to the low ending price of the target product in its previous cycle. If a consumer no longer remembers the lower ending price of the target product in the previous cycle, then the consumer will not be unhappy when the price of the target product returns to its higher initial level in the new cycle.

We tested this idea in a laboratory experiment that involved a 2 (trend of the target price: decreasing vs. flat) x 2 (accessibility of the target price in the previous cycle: high vs. low) design. Participants were asked to imagine that they bought fruits once a week from a local store, and that the local store featured only one type of fruit each month.

FIGURE 1

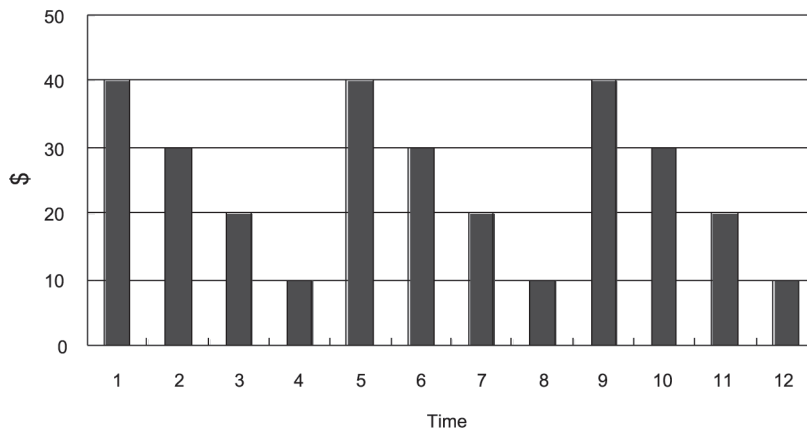
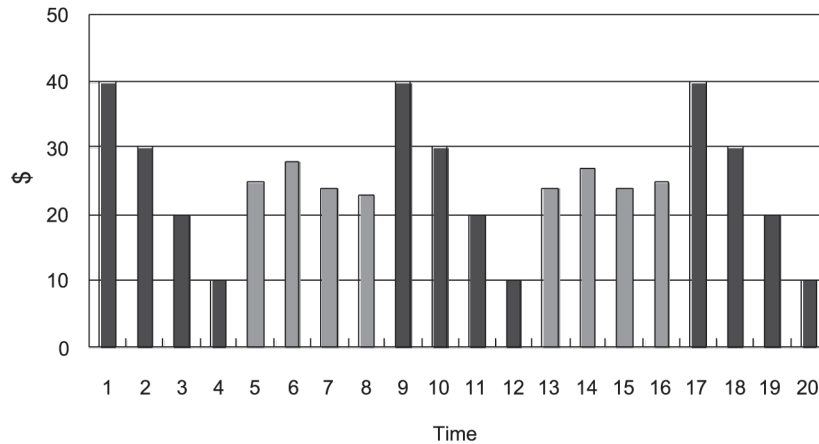


FIGURE 2



In each month, the price of the featured fruit could vary in each of the four weeks. In the month when strawberries appeared, the price in the four weeks was either (a) \$2.13/lb, \$1.75/lb, \$1.27/lb, or \$0.99/lb, respectively in the decreasing price condition, or (b) constantly \$1.535/lb in the flat price condition (with small random variations). Prices for the other (filler) fruits ranged from \$0.61/lb to \$2.29/lb (also with small random variations).

Accessibility referred to the extent to which the price of the target product in its previous cycle was accessible to consumers in their memory when they encounter the target product in a new cycle. In the high accessibility condition, the experiment simulated 3 months during which the store only featured strawberries. Because the price cycles are next to each other, the low ending price of strawberries in one month is highly accessible to people when they experience the high starting price in the next month. In the low accessibility condition, the experiment simulated 15 months in which filler fruits were inserted. From month 1 to month 15, the fruits featured were as follows: cherries, strawberries, peaches, grapes, apples, oranges, apples, strawberries, oranges, grapes, apples, cherries, strawberries, peaches, and grapes. Among all the featured fruits, strawberry was chosen as the target fruit and others as filler fruits. Due to the insertion of filler products, the low ending price of strawberries in the previous cycle is less accessible to consumers when the store featured strawberries again.

Participants were asked to rate their happiness with the price of the fruit each week. We were interested in consumer’s happiness ratings for the target fruits—strawberries.

We predicted price pattern x accessibility interaction and greater happiness in the decreasing-price/low-accessibility condition than any other three conditions. The results confirmed our predictions. It suggests that both a decreasing price pattern and low accessibility of memory when the price rises again are necessary to make consumers happy.

However, the presence of filler fruits may exert other effects than what we wanted. What we wanted is for the filler fruits to block respondents’ memory of the price of the target price. But filler fruits would introduce other confounding effects: for example, the type or the price of the filler fruits may enhance or lower respondents’ happiness with the target fruit. To remove the confounding effects of filler fruits, we replaced the no-filler conditions with another two conditions where the store also offered filler fruits but we provided reminders of the prices of each type of fruits in their previous cycles when the fruits come out next time. This is as if the filler fruits did not exist.

Comparing the two added condition with the two conditions where filler fruits were featured but the reminders about the prices of each type of fruits were not offered, the experiment results also showed the price pattern x accessibility interaction and greater

happiness in the decreasing-price/low-accessibility condition than any other three conditions.

As importantly, the mean happiness rating for all the fruits also followed this pattern. It suggests that our strategy increased happiness with the prices of the target fruits, and did not decrease happiness with the prices of the filler fruits.

This research yields important marketing implications. Marketers can tacitly arrange the price of a product so that consumers are happy when the price decreases but not unhappy when the price increases.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Pushing the Frontiers of Decision Making Neuroscience to Help Consumers Adopt Healthy Lifestyle in Our Modern Society of Plenty

Laurette Dubé, McGill University
Antoine Bechara, University of Iowa

SESSION OVERVIEW

The program was anchored in an emerging body of work in decision neuroscience that recognizes that human biology, including lower and higher level brain functions, has evolved over millions of years in response to an environment that differs dramatically from those of the modern society of plenty, placing demands on self-control that individuals may be neurobiologically ill-prepared to meet. A prime example is the struggle many consumers engage into to make healthy food choices in a world that simultaneously values a slim body image and makes food cheap and ubiquitous. From this perspective, eating behavior may be influenced by neurobiologically-driven and culturally-reinforced impulses toward food, pitted against cognitively-driven efforts to restrain. There is abundant evidence from decision neuroscience that these processes are mediated by distinct neural systems: The appetitive drive toward food relies on basic limbic and reward-related circuits that specialize in well-learned affective associations, while the prefrontal cortex plays crucial roles in mechanisms of self-control. Presentations in this session all focused on the prefrontal cortex.

Jerome Busemeyer, Julie C. Stout, and Eldad Yechiam presented results from a series of studies that had examined individuals with different neuropsychological disorders using the Iowa gambling task (IGT). This task assesses decision making deficits tied to dysfunction in a neural circuitry in which the orbitofrontal/ventromedial prefrontal cortex is a critical component. This dysfunction translates into a poor ability to consider future outcomes. The authors presented a cognitive model which distills gambling performance into three different psychological components: the relative impact of rewards and punishments on evaluations; the rate that the contingent payoffs are learned; and the consistency between learning and responding. Several studies were analyzed to estimate parameters for each psychological component and analyses their relative contribution to decision making deficit in different pathologies.

Lesley, K. Fellows and Martha Farah reported results from a first study in which they used an affective shifting task (AST) to demonstrate the role played by orbitofrontal cortex in another facet of self-control, i.e., reversal of affective learning over time. The second study contrasted the role of dorsolateral and ventromedial prefrontal cortex on two distinct aspects of future thinking, namely temporal discounting, i.e., the subjective devaluation of reward as a function of delay and time perspective, i.e., the length of an individual's self-defined future. Results show that temporal discounting is not affected by frontal lobe injury, while time perspective depends on the ventromedial region of the frontal lobe.

Based on prior research on addiction that have found poor performance on both IGT and AST, Laurette Dubé, Antoine Bechara and their collaborators proposed that a poor performance on AST and IGT could be predictive of more frequent eating behavior in everyday life. Results from a multi-phase study showed that performance (for AST) and estimates of process parameters underlying the performance (AST and IGT) could account for a significant amount of the variance in a person's everyday eating. The pattern

of response supports the view that to some extent, food is an object of addiction and that it is possible to help individuals recognize how well-equipped they are at the neuropsychological level to face self-control challenges involved in preventing food over-consumption in the modern world of plenty.

The discussant, Barbara Mellers, reviewed the three papers in terms of the avenues and challenges they suggest for building bridges between neuroscience, consumer decision making and behaviors in everyday life, and novel sustainable food marketing strategies that could give healthy eating a fighting chance.

When Good Pictures Make for Good Products: Consumer Misattribution Effects in Virtual Product Presentation Environments

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The *aboutness principle* (Higgins 1998) suggests that when people think about something, they usually assume that any thoughts that come to mind, or any feelings they experience, are *about* whatever is in the focus of their attention at the time of judgment. Hence, they tend to *misattribute* thoughts and feelings that are elicited by unrelated variables to whatever is in the focus of their attention. Misattribution is a pervasive phenomenon that has been examined from a variety of perspectives, including research on mood-as-information (for reviews, see Schwarz and Clore 1996, 2003), accessibility experiences (e.g., Schwarz et al. 1991), processing fluency (e.g., Nordhielm 2002; Reber et al. 1998; Whittlesea 1993) and priming effects (e.g., Niedenthal 1990; Winkielman et al. 1997). Much of this research in relation to general misattribution effects indicates that people's judgments of a neutral target can be influenced by various irrelevant sources unless the informative values of their thoughts or feelings is discredited. The purpose of our research is to extend this misattribution literature by examining misattribution processes in a virtual product presentation environment, which is a newly arising area for marketing research.

Research Context and Question

One of the differences between a traditional brick-and-mortar store and an online store is that in online stores consumers cannot try out products before they make a purchase decision. However, recently some online retailers in product categories like cosmetics and fashion accessories have started to provide customers with the opportunity to *virtually* try products using so-called virtual image technology. Consumers can upload their own digital photos and use those photos as "virtual mirrors" to try various products to determine how they would look on them. In the current research, we investigate how a consumer's preference for a product is influenced by the consumer's affective responses to the background image on which the product is being virtually tried. Given that consumers can virtually try products before making a purchase decision, it is important to understand how a misattribution process contributes to consumer choice and product evaluation in virtual product presentation environments. Our overarching research hypothesis is that the more consumers like their photos, the more they like the product presented on the photos. In other words, when consumers virtually try products on their digital image, they will respond holistically to the image, but misread their response as arising from the focal object, namely the product. This misattribution, in turn, will result in differential product preferences.

Experiments and Major Findings

We tested our hypothesis in three experiments. In the first experiment, forty-eight female participants evaluated different earrings, virtually presented on their own digital image with a neutral facial expression or with a smiling facial expression. Prior research shows that smiling faces are perceived as more attractive than non-smiling faces (e.g., O'Doherty et al. 2003; Otta et al. 1996). Therefore, we expected the product to be evaluated more favorably when it was virtually presented on participants' smiling faces than on their non-smiling faces. Empirically, this was the case. In the second experiment, thirty-two female participants were asked to evaluate earrings virtually presented on their own regular

photo image and on their mirror image (i.e., a photo equivalent to their reflection in a mirror). According to prior research, people usually prefer either their mirror image (e.g., Mita et al. 1977) or their regular photo image (e.g., Willis and Brown 1987) to the other. Given that people have their own preferred baseline image, we expected that a neutral product will be more positively evaluated when it is virtually presented on a person's preferred baseline image than on a less-preferred image. In this experiment, the experimental design was within-subjects and the various earrings evaluated by each participant were sometimes presented on her mirror image and at other times on her regular image. To measure each participant's preferred baseline image, after the main product evaluation task was finished each participant was shown her mirror image and her regular image side-by-side and asked to indicate the one she preferred. The key results revealed that participants evaluated the focal product more favorably when the product was presented on their preferred image: those who preferred their regular photo image over their mirror image also preferred jewelry shown on their regular image over jewelry shown on their mirror image, and vice versa for those who preferred their mirror image over their regular image. None of the participants reported that they had noticed that two different images were used in their product evaluation task. In the last experiment, we investigated whether a similar misattribution effect would occur when consumers evaluate products virtually presented on the digital image of someone they personally know. Fifty-seven female participants evaluated earrings virtually presented on their female instructor's digital image with her original skin texture or with an enhanced (i.e., smoothed by a computer graphic software) skin texture. As expected, 100% of the participants indicated that they liked the instructor's enhanced image better (when asked after their product evaluation task) and the enhanced photo resulted in more favorable product evaluations.

Conclusion

In combination, the results of these experiments support our overarching hypothesis that consumers respond holistically to the picture, but misread their response as being due to what they focus on: the product virtually tried on their image. This misattribution process results in differential product preferences, provided that the consumers remain unaware of the true source of their positive feelings. Our studies not only contribute to our understanding of how misattribution processes influence consumer choice and product evaluation, but also provide marketers with important insights into the potential benefits of using the virtual product presentation technology. More significantly, however, this research also adds to the current literature on the role of subjective feelings in the consumer misattribution process, by providing concrete marketing-specific examples of misattribution effects in the new context of virtual product presentation.

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Why Consumers Engage in Virtual New Product Developments Initiated by Producers

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ABSTRACT

In this article, I investigate why consumers engage in virtual new product developments initiated by producers. Drawing on motivation research found in related fields such as leisure, online communities, user innovation, and survey participation several intrinsic and extrinsic motives can be identified that may induce consumers' engagement. In this empirical study, 825 consumers participating in a virtual development project were asked about their motivations. Six motivational factors could be extracted. Intrinsic interest in the innovation activity and curiosity are found to be the most important motives for consumers' willingness to engage in further virtual development activities.

INTRODUCTION

From a producer's perspective the obtained benefits of virtual consumer integration such as risk reduction, identification of upcoming trends, or increased number of creative ideas seem to be obvious, but, why should consumers engage in virtual new product development (NPD) projects initiated by producers and share their ideas and know-how with them? What are their benefits? Up till now, no empirical data is available for this emerging field of research. In this article, I shall investigate why consumers engage in virtual new product developments initiated by producers and spend considerable time and effort actively contributing to a producer's new product development process. First, I shall give an overview of the concept of virtual consumer integration into NPD. Second, a theoretical review is provided on relevant motives inducing consumers to engage in virtual NPD. Following, the design and conduction of the empirical study is introduced, before I present the empirical results. Finally, the findings will be discussed and possible implications outlined. The results show, that rather the participation itself than the outcome of the virtual NPD—the new product—is considered as a rewarding experience, from which consumers derive benefit.

VIRTUAL CONSUMER INTEGRATION

These days, consumption becomes more fragmented and idiosyncratic (Holt 2002). This means that it is no longer possible to treat consumers at arm's length or as peripherally-related topics (Firat and Venkatesh 1995). More active consumers ask for more, but on the other hand offer new possibilities as they are more literate and willing to produce by themselves (Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Hemetsberger and Pieters 2001). Highly innovative and skilled consumers can be encountered in online communities (Kozinets 2002; McAlexander et al. 2002). For example, at *niketalk.com*, an online community for devoted basketball players, new basketball shoes are developed by users. The new designs are discussed, evaluated and improved within the community. Among others, Bagozzi and Dholakia (2002) point out that online communities present an aggregation of collective expertise that is difficult to match elsewhere. Researchers like consultants agree upon the enormous potential of online communities for new product development (Pralhad and Ramaswamy 2004; Urban and Hauser 2004).

In addition, the Internet offers new simplified modes to virtually integrate large numbers of former anonymous consumers into a producer's innovation process (Urban and Hauser 2004; von Hippel and Katz 2002). Recently, Dahan and Hauser (2002) introduced six web-based methods that facilitate the interaction between producers and consumers during new product development.

The novelty of virtual consumer integration, compared to traditional online market research is that consumers are not only asked about their opinions, wants and needs, but also to contribute their creativity and problem solving skills (Lilien et al. 2002). Consumers are invited to actively participate in the creation of new products by generating and evaluating new product ideas, elaborating a detailed product concept, evaluating or challenging it, discussing and improving optional solution details, selecting or individualizing the preferred virtual prototype, testing and experiencing the new product features by running simulations, getting information about the new product or just consuming it. Web-based tools enable the dialogue and allow the virtual transfer of consumers' explicit and implicit knowledge.

The Procter and Gamble Advisory Community, for example, illustrates, how consumers virtually contribute to innovation activities along the entire innovation process, even more than once. Consumers participate in designing, testing and launching new products such as shampoos, baby care, snacks, healthcare, and pet nutrition. This and several examples of other consumer goods firms such as Audi, Henkel, Lego, Ducati, Sony, or Swarovski (e.g. Füller et al. 2004; Verona and Prandelli 2002) demonstrate the potential of this new approach of co-creation.

However, virtual consumer integration only works, when qualified consumers are willing to participate. They have to be motivated to contribute their know-how, share their ideas and honestly state their preferences. In contrast to open source software and user innovation, consumers participating in virtual new product developments will hardly ever be able to benefit immediately from using "their" innovation. A producer of mass produced consumer goods like cars, mobile phones, TVs, or skies is able to consider only a few consumer ideas for modification or entirely new products. In addition, the products consumers contributed to, most of the time, will be available on the market with at least a 6-12 month delay. Due to this situation, it can be assumed that motivations for participating in virtual NPD slightly differ from open source software and lead user developments. The question arises: what motivates numerous consumers to engage in virtual new product developments initiated by producers?

MOTIVES FOR CONSUMER PARTICIPATION

According to social exchange theory, the reason why consumers virtually interact with producers and engage in virtual new product development is because they expect that doing so will be rewarding (Emerson 1981). An interaction is considered as being rewarding if the subjective derived benefit is greater than the experienced effort. While social exchange theory describes basic circumstances under which consumers virtually engage in new product development, it does not provide what Emerson calls a theory of values (Emerson 1987). However, whether or not a consumer engages in virtual new product development depends on the individual's motivational state, their need to receive and capacity to give (Hirschman 1987, 99).

Consumers may engage in virtual interaction because they show a certain interest for it. It is either the task itself—a playful, challenging experience—or the consequence linked to the engagement, such as recognition, a better available product, or receipt of offered incentive, what motivates them to participate. The reasons why consumers undergo virtual NPD may be manifold and originate from different sets of motives. According to Deci and Ryan,

engaging in activities and tasks can be considered as a function of intrinsic motivation and self-determined extrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan 2002; Deci and Ryan 1985). Intrinsic motives in combination with extrinsic motives may play a role for consumers engaging in virtual NPD initiated by producers. In the following, the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motives will be used to discuss possible factors influencing consumers when engaging in virtual NPD.

Intrinsic Motivation

Hobbies like playing chess, dancing salsa, rock climbing, or gardening are considered as playful, interesting, challenging, and exciting activities often executed as a means of an end (Deci and Ryan 1985). Individuals intrinsically motivated may consider their virtual contribution to new product development as playful and enjoying and therefore perceive it as rewarding instead of pure effort. It is not the outcome but the activity itself, creative consumers may derive benefit from. Such individuals show a positive attitude towards and are interested in virtual new product development activities. Intrinsic motivation can be noticed as interest, involvement, curiosity, satisfaction, or positive challenge (Amabile 1996). Individuals who enjoy their participation may sink in a state of flow—an optimal experience where they get totally absorbed by the activity, losing any sense of time and space (Csikszentmihalyi 2002). Under conditions of deep involvement, freedom, self-control, attention, challenge, sense of mastery, competence and task enjoyment consumers may easiest experience flow (Csikszentmihalyi 2002).

The reason for intrinsic motivation is an individual's very own need for feeling competent and self-determining in dealing with his or her environment (Deci and Ryan 1985). For example, programmers report feeling competent, satisfied and fulfilled when they write code for open source software (Lakhani and Wolf 2003). Hofman and Novak (2000), as well as Mathwick and Rigdon (2004) notice that consumers experience flow on the Internet. In general, cognitively engaging oneself in creative tasks is considered as being intrinsically interesting (Amabile 1996). Hence, the process of generating new concepts, assessing new innovations, or designing new products may trigger virtual participation, rather than the outcome of NPD.

Extrinsic Motivation

Consumers are extrinsically motivated, if they focus on contingent outcomes that are separable from the activity per se (Deci and Ryan 2002). Deci and Ryan distinguish between 'informational' and 'controlling' extrinsic motivators, depending on its effect on intrinsic motivation. 'Informational' extrinsic motivators that increase someone's sense of competence, need for finding a creative solution, or prevailing task involvement are considered as additional bonus and activity encouraging, reinforcing someone's intrinsic motivation, while 'controlling' extrinsic motivators like status, or job promotion confine self-determination and are considered as counterproductive as they undermine initial intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan 2002; Deci and Ryan 1985).

In the case of virtual consumer integration, appropriate rewards will either animate already participating consumers to make even better contributions, or attract additional consumers interested in the topic, but with so far too low motivation levels to engage in virtual NPD. The danger hereby is first, that consumers, not interested in the topic at all, suddenly participate in virtual NPD because they are looking for the incentive, but do not make serious contributions. Second, consumers that initially considered virtual NPD as playful, rewarding activity, suddenly may start to hide their

ideas, thinking they can gain some economic benefit by selling them, or they may feel misused by producers because the offered extrinsic incentives, by far do not present a proper compensation for the contributions made. The individual's perceived locus of causality shifts from internal to external (DeCharms 1968). Free riding may be the consequence.

Motives for Virtual Consumer Engagement

Drawing on the rich body of motivation research found in related fields such as leisure (Unger and Kernan 1983), online communities mainly open source software (OSS) (Hemetsberger 2001; Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004), user innovation (Franke and Shah 2003), and survey participation (Groves et al. 2000; MacElroy and Gray 2003) various intrinsic and extrinsic motives can be found to explain why consumers may engage in virtual NPD initiated by producers.

Autotelic/ Playful Task (AT): Individuals engage in tasks because the activity itself is considered as rewarding. Consumers involved in innovation tasks (Mittal 1995) of a certain product category (Bloch 1986), or brand (Coulter et al. 2003; Mittal and Lee 1988) may engage in virtual product developments. According to Belk et al. (2000), such tasks may offer a state of 'jouissance' people try to maintain.

Curiosity–Exploration–Arousal Seeking (CU): Curiosity may be defined as the desire for knowledge because of intrinsic reasons (Berlyne 1960). People gain intrinsic satisfaction from relieving curiosity (Unger and Kernan 1983). A distinction can be made between specific and diverse curiosity motivated behavior (Berlyne 1960). The former refers to the exploration of a single stimulus while the latter represents a tendency to seek stimulation from a variety of sources. Consumers may engage in virtual new product development just because they are curious, or because they want to escape boredom.

Achievement–Challenge–Self Efficacy (SE): The opportunity to prove someone's self efficacy, drives consumers to innovate on the Internet (Kollock and Smith 1988). Consumers that are optimistic about their capabilities to solve a certain task and cope with anticipated difficulties may perceive the activity as a challenge to be mastered. Consumers, just like "Hackers" (Lakhani and Wolf 2003) may be proud of their contributions.

Skill Development–Knowledge Acquisition (SD): People are motivated to perform an activity because they are striving to improve their skills and gain additional knowledge (Amabile 1996; Csikszentmihalyi 2002). Innovative users get in contact with their friends, peer group members, and producers because they look for complimentary knowledge and professional support, needed to advance their own ideas (von Hippel 2002). Engaging in virtual new product development may enable consumers to learn more about new technologies and products.

Information Seeking (IS): Prior studies show that people participate in online communities because they are looking for information relevant to them (Galegher et al. 1998). According to Butler et al. (2002), online communities offer a possibility to gain access to otherwise obscure or inaccessible information. Consumers may engage in virtual new product development because they are seeking for innovation or product related information.

Recognition–Visibility (V): Consumers may participate in virtual new product development to become visible and get recognition from other participants as well as from the producer. Online community members share their know-how and participate in activities connected to effort for ego gratification motives, fame, and reputation (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004). Further, consumers derive benefits from building up direct relationships with compa-

nies due to special treatment, offered self-esteem, and reduction of uncertainty (Gwinner et al. 1998). Strong brands provide additional benefits, as they are relevant for consumers' self identity creation (Fournier 1998) and serve as a means to express someone's individual lifestyle (Coulter et al. 2003). Engaging in virtual product developments may enable consumers to become visible and known as (co-) innovator beyond their local boundaries.

Altruism-Community Support (A): Altruism can be defined as "doing something for another at some cost to oneself" (Ozinga 1999 p.5). A lively debate is going on as how to define altruism (Takahashi 2000). Without going into the definitions in more detail, altruism may motivate consumer to engage in virtual NPD (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004).

Make Friends (MF): Beneath the interest for the topic, the possibility to get in contact with like-minded people is a main reason why consumers engage in virtual communities (Kozinets 2002). Moreover, Gwinner et al. (1998, p.104) point out that consumers interacting with companies interpret their relationship with employees as being similar to friendship. This is illustrated by the customer statement "he's like a kind of friend now". Getting in touch with like-minded people-employees and consumers, may be a reason for consumers to participate in virtual NPD.

Personal Need-Dissatisfaction (D): Sports enthusiasts start to modify or develop their own products because they derive benefit from using their innovation (Franke and Shah 2003). Such lead users develop their own products because they are dissatisfied with existing products available on the market and because they expect attractive innovation-related benefits from a solution to their leading-edge needs (von Hippel 2002). Personal need may motivate consumers to virtually engage in new product developments despite limited influence on the final design.

Compensation-Monetary Reward (CO): Immediate as well as delayed payoffs may be the reason why consumers engage in innovation activities (Lerner and Tirole 2000). Consumers engaging in virtual NPD may be interested in the offered monetary incentives such as give-aways, bonus points, prize drawings or monetary compensations delivering immediate benefit. The more time and effort consumers invest, the stronger will be their need for monetary compensation (von Hippel 2002). While monetary incentives may be detrimental for creativity (Amabile 1996), no negative effects on survey response quality have been found (Singer et al. 1999).

EMPIRICAL STUDY

Research Field

The following empirical study was conducted to examine why consumers engage in virtual NPD initiated by producers. Consumers that had actually participated in at least one virtual NPD project were asked about their motivations for participating in virtual NPD projects. Table 1 summarizes 10 virtual NPD projects considered in this study.

For example, Swarovski, the Austrian based market leader for crystal products, initiated a crystal tattoo design competition, inviting consumers to create crystal tattoos, a new generation of "body jewelry" which can be directly applied on skin. An internet-based toolkit see Figure 1 enabled 'fashionistas' to design their own crystal tattoos. In total, more than 6,000 consumers engaged in these projects and made valuable contributions. Further, on average, 77 % of the participants expressed strong interest in participating in further virtual innovation activities. What motivates consumers to do so?

Study Design

An online survey was used for data collection. Based on an extensive literature review, measurement items for all above described potential motives have been identified. Those measurement items have been applied in motivation studies of related fields (Butler et al. 2002; Constant et al. 1996; Unger and Kernan 1983), and were used directly or slightly modified for this study. Interviews with consumers that already participated in virtual NPD, as well as discussions with 5 experts in the field of virtual consumer integration were carried out to complete the initial questionnaire.

In total, the questionnaire contained 24 motive items anchored by (1) "strongly disagree" and (5) "strongly agree". After an online pre-test with 25 participants and subsequent telephone interviews with the participants, data collection with the final, adjusted questionnaire was conducted within 3 weeks in October 2003. 4,714 emails with a link to the online questionnaire were sent, whereof 1,390 emails were undeliverable. The email addresses were obtained from consumers that previously participated in virtual NPD projects and agreed to be contacted in the future. In total 3,320 consumers were reached, and 825 complete questionnaires returned. This corresponds to a response rate of 24.8%. As some projects had been dated back more than one year, I provided consumers with a short visual and verbal overview of the project they were attending to refresh their memory. 727 consumers were included in the further analysis, as they stated that they were able to remember their participation in detail (value ≥ 3) questioned on a 5-point scale anchored by (1) "I can not remember at all" and (5) "I can remember in great detail". To test possible none-response effects as described by Armstrong and Overton (1977), first, early and late respondents (first 3rd vs. last 3rd) were compared and, second, age, gender, and education already measured at the conducted virtual NPD project were compared between respondents and non-respondents. No significant differences were recognized. 53% of the participants were male, 47% female. On average, participants were 35.06 years old and well educated. 30.1 % hold a college degree, 37.9% even hold a post graduate degree. Almost half of the participants (N=354; 42.9 %) reported that they already had an idea for a new product or product modification. But, only a handful of consumers (N= 46; 5.6 %) actually realized their ideas, and only 48 consumers (5.8 %) tried to sell their product ideas.

RESULTS

Table 2 gives an overview of all 24 identified motive items.

Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was performed on the 24 items. Varimax was chosen to identify uncorrelated factors that are independent from each other. Using the scree test criterion a six factor solution was extracted. The scree test criterion was used first, because low communalities (< 0.50) suggested to abolish apparently important motive items like consumers' curiosity when applying Kaisers' eigenvalue-one criteria, and second, for factor analysis with less than 20 remaining items, as was the case in this study, the latent root criterion has the tendency to extract too few factors (Hair et al. 1998). All items with low factor loadings (< 0.5) or with high cross loadings (> 0.35) (Hair et al. 1998), not displaying an important single item, were eliminated. Based on these criteria 12 of the 24 items were deleted. Using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure for sampling adequacy (KMO=.787) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p=0.000$) indicated appropriate application of factor analysis. Coefficient alpha and split-half testing was used to test reliability of factor scores. Table 3 presents the final factor solution and contains factor loadings, explained variance along with item-total correlations, and α 's as far as available. In

TABLE 1
Consumers Virtually Participating in Following Development Projects

Project/ Study Participants	Project Description
Running/ Basketball Shoes (N=43)	Consumers from different running and basketball communities participated in the development of a modular and adjustable running and basketball shoe concept.
Furniture (N=27)	Readers of online interior design and lifestyle magazines like www.wallpaper.com designed their own modular furniture system in classic design.
Model Railroads (N=85)	Model railroading enthusiasts encountered on communities like www.miba.de and www.dampf-plus.de helped to customize innovative model railroading products according to their needs and to get ideas how to extend the producers product portfolio.
Public City Shiners (N=23)	Citizens of Munich, Germany supported design students to come up with new innovate shiners for the city. The design students modified their concepts according to the participants input. Munich residents became aware of the project via articles in newspapers like "Süddeutsche Zeitung"
Baby Carriage (N=272)	Young parents, frequenting the www.eltern.de community participated in the individualization of a new multifunctional baby carriage.
Mobile Phones for Kids (N=14)	Parents assessed new mobile communication ideas to interact with their children.
Towels and Bedclothes (N=50)	Housewives, visiting the website of Vossen, a famous towel brand in Austria, were invited to participate in a design testing of five different towel collections and taking part in the creation of new bedclothes.
Crystal Tattoo (N=43)	'Fashionistas' visiting sites like www.fashion.net created their own CrystalTattoos. The Swarovski design team got inspired by the creative contributions.
Infotainment Systems in Cars (N=259)	Car enthusiasts and fans of Audi designed their own future infotainment systems. A link on the Audi webpage called consumers attention to participate in the development.
Snowboard Backpack (N=9)	Members of snowboard and backcountry communities like epicski.com , forum.powdermag.com , and www.telemarktalk.com made valuable contributions to develop a multifunctional backpack with integrated avalanche shovel and back protection.

addition, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on the hold out sample was used to validate the factor structure of the measurement sample. The overall fit measures of the CFA suggest a good fit for the data ($\chi^2=103.66$ with 39 df; CFI=0.961; GFI=0.957; AGFI=0.913; RMSEA=0.067), and help to cross-validate the model. The final factor structure was also validated for every single project showing an adequate sample size.

As the factor analysis shows, consumers may engage in virtual new product developments, for several reasons: a) curiosity, b) dissatisfaction with existing products, c) intrinsic interest in innovation, d) to gain knowledge, e) to show ideas, or f) to get monetary rewards. The results of the factor analysis are conform with the previous theoretic considerations. Regression analysis was conducted to determine the importance of the different motives. Consumers' interest in further participations and participation frequency served as dependent variables. Table 4 shows the results of multiple regression analysis. As the study consists of 10 NPD

projects, leave-one-project-out analysis, for projects with $n \geq 40$, was applied to investigate the potential bias of one particular project on the overall results (cf. Chakraborty et al. 2002). All regressions delivered basically the same pattern of results i.e. significance levels, overall explained variance, direction, as well as importance of beta-coefficients.

As the highly significant results show, 'intrinsic innovation interest', 'curiosity', and 'showing ideas' are main drivers for consumers to engage in future virtual product developments. While 'monetary rewards' have a negative impact on further participation interest, they are positively related to participation frequency. Monetary compensation becomes important for consumers willing to spend more time and effort. Virtual engagement may be considered as a kind of work. On the contrary, 'curiosity' and 'show ideas' motivate to participate, but do not create endurance. As consumers' engagement is voluntary, interest in the task is the most necessary prerequisite.

FIGURE 1
Swarovski Crystal Tattoo Design Competition



TABLE 2
24 Motive Items Ordered According to Strength of Participants' Agreement

Motives Described	What are the reasons for you to participate in virtual product developments via the Internet?	Mean	SD
CU	Just because I am curious.	4.24	.91
IS	To keep up with new ideas and innovations.	4.20	.87
AT	Because I enjoy dealing with new products.	4.16	.88
CU	To experience new and different things.	4.12	.86
AT	For me, co-developing is rewarding.	3.89	1.06
A	Because I want to support new product innovations.	3.79	1.06
D	Because I would highly benefit from a new product.	3.77	1.14
SD	To gain new knowledge/ expertise.	3.70	1.05
A	To help inventors (producers) solve their problems.	3.60	1.03
MF	Because I want to meet others who share similar interests.	3.46	1.13
D	Because I am dissatisfied with existing products.	3.22	1.15
SE	To test my capabilities.	3.17	1.25
V	Because I have ideas that I want to introduce to producers	3.09	1.22
V	To make others aware of my knowledge and ideas.	3.07	1.26
SD	To improve my skills.	2.94	1.20
CO	Because I am interested in the offered reward (price drawing, competition,...).	2.72	1.32
SE	To gain a sense of accomplishment.	2.68	1.16
A	Because I was asked to do it.	2.68	1.36
V	Because I want to get in touch with producers.	2.56	1.23
CO	Because I hope to get a monetary compensation.	2.20	1.21
CO	Because I expect a compensation in return.	2.17	1.18
CO	To get a future support myself.	2.06	1.10
CO	Because I want to get paid for it.	1.95	1.11
V	To become known as co-inventor.	1.77	1.04

N=727

TABLE 3
Summary of Exploratory Factor Analysis and Scale Reliability

	Mean	Factor Loading	Explained Var. (%)	Item-Total Corr.	Alpha (α)
Compensation/ Monetary Rewards	2.11		22.03		0.91
Because I hope to get a monetary compensation.	2.20	0.92		0.83	
Because I want to get paid for it.	1.95	0.91		0.84	
Because I expect a compensation in return.	2.17	0.88		.81	
Show Ideas	2.47		15.39		0.71
Because I have ideas I want to introduce to producers.	3.09	0.78		0.52	
Because I want to get in touch with producers.	2.56	0.77		0.50	
To become known as co-inventor.	1.77	0.65		0.55	
Gain Knowledge	3.06		13.86		0.71
To improve my skills.	2.94	0.86		-	
To test my capabilities.	3.17	0.87		-	
Intrinsic Innovation Interest	4.18		13.39		0.75
Because I enjoy dealing with new products.	4.16	0.87		-	
To keep up with new ideas and innovations.	4.20	0.86		-	
Dissatisfaction	3.22		8.66		-
Because I am dissatisfied with existing products.	3.22	0.96		-	
Curiosity	4.24		8.29		-
Just because I am curious.	4.24	0.98		-	
N=727 Total			81.62		

TABLE 4
Summary of Regression Analysis: Willingness for Further Participation and Participation Frequency

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	
	Show Interest in Further Participation ¹ (Std. Beta)	Future Participation Frequency ² (Std. Beta)
Factor 1: Monetary Rewards	-.095 **	.213 **
Factor 2: Show Ideas	.107 **	.045
Factor 3: Gain Knowledge	.005	-.131
Factor 4: Intrinsic Innovation Interest	.399 ***	.329 ***
Factor 5: Dissatisfaction	-.009	-.142 *
Factor 6: Curiosity	.274 ***	.062
R ²	.330	.148
F	59.177 ***	6.127 ***

* p<0.05

** p<0.01

*** p<0.001

1: single item anchored by (1) "strongly disagree" and (5) "strongly agree".

2: single item (1) once a year, (2) once per quarter, (3) once per month, (4) once per week, (5) 2-3 days per week

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In contrast to open source communities and user innovations, where members engage in innovation tasks because they can benefit from using their innovation, consumers engage in virtual new product developments mainly because they consider the engagement as a rewarding experience. As virtual engagement of consumers is less intentional and planned, it may be considered as less 'professional' and persistent. However, considering consumers' innovation capabilities, illustrated by their previous innovation activities, and their stated willingness for further engagement, they offer a promising source of innovation. While monetary rewards are important for people to participate in surveys, or consumers that articulate their experiences on opinion platforms, as far as virtual new product developments are concerned, they only seem to attract a certain type of consumer. The main challenge of virtual consumer integration may be to create a compelling innovation experience. Only, if virtual integration is experienced as a spectacle, may it become a marketable, consumable product itself (Firat and Venkatesh 1995) attracting consumers to contribute on a continuous basis. Researchers developing new tools and methods for virtual integration, as well as innovation managers intending to integrate consumer into their innovation process may find some hints as to how they should design the virtual interaction in order to meet consumers' expectations. As this study covers different projects that were pursuing diverse goals and applying various interaction tools in different product categories, process stages, innovation activities, and levels of innovativeness, the findings should be broadly applicable for current virtual innovation projects in consumer markets. However, the study also comes up with many, so far unanswered, questions such as: How do consumer characteristics affect their motivation for participation? What is the effect of different consumer motives on the creativity, quality and quantity of their contributions? Further, it is interesting to know what the consequences of consumers' participation experience are. Does it evoke consumers' interest for the virtual new product? Those, and further questions may be addressed by future research investigating how to use the innovative potential of consumers encountered in online communities.

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Extending the Self in a Virtual World

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

It has been suggested that contemporary consumption is characterized more by an electronically conducted flow than by embedded heavy commodities. Widespread experimentation with consumption of technology has resulted in the creation of newer modes of consumption and possession. Computer Mediated Environment (CME) technologies have lately become a representative form of technological consumption. It can be argued that every moment spent in a mediated environment entails another given up in the real world; each act of consumption in a CME replaces an act of consumption in the real world; each simulated possession replaces a tangible one.

Technology is changing forms and modes of consumption; objects of possession and collection are being de-materialized. Examples of such replacements are letters by e-mail, cards by e-cards, paperbacks by e-books, newspaper by online versions, printed photographs by electronic format and real musical instruments by the virtual. While only some of these consumables in the CME may qualify as possessions on a par with our material possessions, all are nonetheless replacements of tangible possessions, and as such comport the potential and promise of self-extension. Given that a consumer's sense of self is in part predicated upon relationships with material objects, we ask how the dematerialization integral to new technologies such as CME alters this self definition process. Using Belk's original formulation of the extended self, we seek to understand if and how self-extension by means of consumption is affected by virtual possessions in a CME.

The study makes use of a slightly modified version of multi-sited multi-modal ethnography to cater for both landscape localism and flexible modes of netnographic data collection. Seven virtual replacements of tangible possessions represent the main focus of the findings. These are e-mail, e-cards, e-books and journals, pictures/photographs, newspapers, audio/video files and musical instruments.

Findings: The transition from real to virtual is neither sudden nor total; such replacements are progressive and incremental. There is a certain degree of fluidity and interchangeability in the way people make their consumption choices at different times. This context-dependant switching may result in an individual employing both tangible as well as hyperreal modes of consumption and possession for a single product at any given moment.

We found uncertainty a key component of this transition. Our informants found it difficult to replace tangible possessions like pictures with the digital versions. Even the very technologically adept informants wanted to keep a printout as well as multiple copies of digital pictures. This uncertainty was rooted in concerns about ownership and security of digital pictures, which perhaps echo the control aspect of possessions. Social visibility was another dimension of this uncertainty; conversion of self-defining possessions to a digital state reduced the social visibility. Such intangible possessions with reduced social visibility were not as 'self-defining' as their tangible counterparts; this 'taking a part out of me' effectively altered the source and sense of identity for our informants.

We also found emotional attachment as a missing attribute for many virtual versions of the tangible possessions. For example, where in case of real books the reasons of attachment were emo-

tional (pleasure, pride, aesthetics, value), they were purely functional for e-books (cost, ease of use, updates). Very similarly, our informants found it easier to delete an e-card than to tear up a Hallmark.

Collections (Pictures, letters, music, cards): Self-extension through possessions is often manifested in collections. Consistent with the argument presented earlier that consumers tend to experiment with the consumption of technology, we found many of our informants using CME as a platform for collection, parallel to or in addition to the other platforms of collection in their lives. Many self-defining collections—such as those of personal letters and cards, newspaper clippings with personal ties, music and pictures—act as reminders and mementos of the past and containers of identity. With the advent of new media technologies cyberspace has become the ultimate history-book. In the cyberspace, 'we are what we post'; however, for some of our informants such self-presentation in cyberspace had little self-defining or collectible value. However, digital music emerged as one exception of self-defining collection; many of our informants thought that CME, because of its seamless geographically unbounded interconnectivity, was a potent platform for music collection and consumption.

Collections—as tangible manifestations of identity, as a part of one's physical environment—are the sources of meanings, creating a sense of past. Intangible collections—such as pictures, letters, songs and cards on hard disk, presented a sense of past that was qualitatively different from the tangible collections for our informants.

Dilemmas of Virtual Possessions: Given their special characteristics, virtual possessions may become a source of many dilemmas for the consumer. Our informants seemed extremely wary of the fact that constant changes to the technological environment may limit continued control and access to their virtual possessions. Beliefs and assumptions that such changes in technological order may necessitate forced and untimely disposition of a virtual possession gave rise to many concerns. Further, since social exhibition is a desirable quality for many self-extending possessions, any dematerialization which alters this visibility also affects its role in self-extension. Finally, because simulations can be duplicated by electronic means, they appeared to be less authentic and our informants found this difficult to accept.

Conclusion

Digital dematerialization in terms of consumption and possession has been portrayed as an indication of gradual abdication of materialistic values in contemporary societies; however, a sizeable body of literature in consumer research views self extension through possessions as almost always materially oriented and external in nature.

Objectification of a possession assumes a central role in the whole process of creation and maintenance of the construct of 'possession'. We find that even though they might exist and interact in the disembodied domain of cyberspace, consumers are still conditioned to exist and respond to a material world where constructs like possessions, no matter how abstract, still need tangible foundations. The simulations in CME might replace some aspects of the real and tangible, but they do not completely replace them in terms of value and association.

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Location, Location, Location: The Relative Roles of Virtual Location, Online Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) and Advertising in the New-Product Adoption Process

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

It is no secret that the emergence of *cyberspace* has changed marketing communications (Rogers and Allbritton 1995; Silk et al. 2001). More prominently, the Internet has changed from face-to-face social based interpersonal communications to one of computer-based social networking (Wellman 2001). Cyberspace allows consumers to “gather” in virtual communities and exchange opinions that lead to an “information democracy” in which the information is tilted toward the consumer instead of being manipulated by marketers (Armstrong and Hagel 1993; Bargh and McKenna 2004; Rheingold 1993; Sawhney and Kotler 2001). In other words, cyberspace allows the opportunity for the voices of consumers to possibly drown that of the marketers.

In spite of the advocacy and the reality of the proliferation of online word-of-mouth, (eWOM) with 33% of all adult Americans having participated in it in one way or another (www.pewinternet.org), researchers mainly remain silent about this phenomenon in relation to advertising within the new-product adoption process. Traditionally, marketing and interpersonal communications were separated by time and place with mass media transmission first, followed by word-of-mouth interpersonal communications through face-to-face social contacts (Two-Step Flow by Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955; New-product Diffusion Process by Rogers 1962). The quality of the Internet merging both mass media and interpersonal communications into one *changed that* (Deighton 1997). Consumers can now access both marketing and interpersonal communications at the same time and at the same space on multiple websites. The question then becomes, how does this new *combination* affect the persuasion process within new-product adoption? Are the combined advertising and word-of-mouth messages effective in all websites?

Previous persuasion research has elicited that when there is an incongruity between the source (the messenger) and the message (content) in advertising, the persuasion effect could be negative instead of positive as originally intended (Slater and Rouner 1996). In this paper, we argue further that even when the source and message are congruous, their incongruity with the *location* could lead to a lesser or even an opposite persuasion effect than intended. In other words, this paper speculates that when a firm includes positive eWOM in its own website to facilitate its marketing communication messages, similar to that of mass-media based advertising using “fellow consumers” word-of-mouth endorsement, the persuasive effectiveness may diminish. This is because consumers would most likely perceive the positive eWOM as a deliberate part of manipulated marketing communications, a phenomenon especially not welcome under the Internet-based new “information democracy” previously mentioned (Sawhney and Kotler 2001). This paper extends this argument to suggest that the inclusion of positive eWOM in a firm’s website may in fact undermine the firm’s own marketing messages.

In order to make eWOM a part of an effective persuasive communication within the new-product adoption process, we suggest allocating it within a 3rd-party independent website that has no affiliation with the advertising firm. While the independency of the source enabling a more persuasive effect is not new, in this paper we

are extending the independency requirement to the “location” which hosts both the source and the message. We hypothesize that the independency of the location will maximize the persuasive effectiveness of the message.

Further, we hypothesize that simply advertising on a 3rd-party independent website would not necessarily increase its persuasive effectiveness when compared to that of the firms’ own websites. This is due to the fact that persuasion knowledge model posits that consumers can detect advertising messages and can identify an agent trying to influence them and will activate their persuasion knowledge accordingly. In this sense, consumers do not vary their attitudes toward the advertising message in either website.

This paper aims to measure the perceived persuasiveness of the combination of advertising and word-of-mouth communications in two types of websites (firm-sponsored versus 3rd-party independent-sponsored websites) toward the new product adoption process to include consumers’ interest and likelihood to adopt a new product. A fictitious movie with its advertising and word-of-mouth information were given to four groups of subjects to measure their response on website location effect, word-of-mouth effect and quantitative information effect.

A 2 (firm-sponsored vs. 3rd-party sponsored independent website) x 2 (advertisement only vs. advertisement plus eWOM) between-subject design was used in this experiment. The product used was a new movie DVD. The independent variables consisted of website location and eWOM. Involvement and likelihood to adopt a new product were the two dependent variables. A total of ninety subjects were recruited from a participation pool at a large Northeastern university. The subjects received course credit for participation. All subjects were assigned randomly to the treatment conditions.

After conducting an ANOVA, we found empirical support for positive online word-of-mouth having an additive effect to advertising in 3rd-party sponsored websites but not in firm-sponsored websites. The results also supported the interaction effect between website location and eWOM messages, with eWOM added to advertising in a 3rd-party website having a larger additive effect on consumers involvement and likelihood to adopt a new product than in a firm-sponsored website. The results also supported the hypothesis that consumers do not differ in their involvement or likelihood to adopt a new product when exposed to only the advertisement, regardless of where it is placed.

In particular, the findings of this study bring forth new evidence that positive word-of-mouth does not have an additive effect on advertising when they are placed within the company’s own website. This new evidence adds empirical support to the body of literature that has prophesized that the new virtual space will change the landscape of marketing and interpersonal communications to become a hybrid of mass interpersonal communications that empowers the consumer (Deighton 1997; Sawhney and Kotler 2001).

Finally, this paper makes three important contributions. It adds knowledge to current literature in (1) website strategic management in deciding where not to include word-of-mouth communications, (2) word-of-mouth communications in the interaction effect of word-of-mouth and advertising in the online environment,

and (3) new-product adoption in shedding light as to why not all positive word-of-mouth communications are effective.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

An Examination of the Concept of Postmodern Home and the Role of Consumption in Home-Making Practices

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OVERVIEW AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Home is a fundamental construct in social sciences that represents the emotional and meaningful relationship that consumers form with place (Altman and Werner 1985). However, consumer research on home is scarce (McCracken 1989; Sherry 2000). Home has been studied mainly as a context for decision-making and commercial exchange (e.g., Frenzen and Davis 1990; Grayson 1998). But previous work argues that home constitutes an important place for self-development and family life (Claiborne and Ozanne 1990; Hill 1991; McCracken 1989; Venkatesh, et al. 2001). These studies suggest that home is a symbolic and sacred object, and allude to consumers' use of possessions and consumption practices to transform place into home environments. However, we lack studies that focus on the role of the marketplace in home practices as well as studies on the concept of home per se. Furthermore, this session suggest that consumer researchers move beyond an outdated conceptualization of home as a fixed place, typically identified with the house or the homeland, and in which the consumers' display a strong, affective, nostalgic, and permanent connection to a place. By focusing on the concept of home, this session advances our understanding of the ways that consumers relate to place in postmodernity as well as the role that the marketplace plays in consumers' home related practices, such as indwelling and constructing a home.

Consistent with a current movement in social sciences that re-examines the ways that consumers relate to place in postmodernity, the three papers in this session investigate the ways that contemporary life conditions have transformed the notion of home and argue for an increasing role of the market in the social construction of home. The first paper by Bardhi and Arnould investigates a mobile notion of home among contemporary nomadic consumers. They find that the home in postmodernity is not necessary defined in terms of place, but in terms of relationships, possessions and spatial patterns. Mobile professionals actively engage in practices that transform public, commercial spaces into private and salient spaces of home. The second paper by Rosenbaum focuses on aged informants' consumption of a diner. This study demonstrates the social role this consumptionscape plays in the lives of aged consumers—becoming either an extension of their homes or a replacement home. The study investigates how consumers and service providers co-construct the consumption experience in this diner as a home experience through their social relationships, the regularity of consumption practices in the diner, and the domestic activities that take place there. The third paper by Venkatesh is part of an ongoing research project, "Family Portal Design." This research shows how the integrative use of technology in multiple aspects of domestic life blurs the traditional boundaries between the home as private sphere and society as public sphere. In the postmodern home, work and domestic lives are interpenetrating, while home takes on nomadic qualities and is no longer fixed to a place (see also Venkatesh et al. 2001). This study argues for a polysemous understanding of technology at home.

"Making a Home on the Road: A Mobile Concept of Home among Transnational Mobile Professionals"

Fleura Bardhi and Eric Arnould

Global geographical mobility is a normal condition of postmodernity. Seven hundred million people move daily across borders while eighty million people reside outside their native home country (Beck 2000). Many people live between and betwixt several homes and others are in a continuous state of mobility without a fixed place to call home (Featherstone 1995; Urry 2002). How do these contemporary nomads construct a sense of home on the road? What is the meaning of home for these mobile populations? How do they use possessions and commercial setting in the process of home making? These research questions are addressed in this study.

Home is one of the central social concepts that consumers orient themselves in time and space as well as a highly symbolic and often sacred object. However, consumer research on home is scarce (Sherry 2000). Mobile consumers' connections to home and the influence of this relationship in consumer behavior have been discussed in the acculturation literature. However, acculturation studies have examined mainly sojourner consumer segments—sedentary consumers for whom mobility is only a temporary condition and they sustain the connection to a place they call home. We also do not know much about the ways that mobile consumers construct a home on the road (Thompson and Tambyah 1999). The focus of existing studies has been on the ways that sojourners sustain connection with existing homes while on the road. Finally, consumer research has been informed by an implicit notion of home as fixed to a place (homeland or dwelling).

This study addresses these issues by studying the notions of home among consumers who willingly live nomadic lifestyles, such as transnational mobile professionals (TMPs) (Featherstone 1995). TMPs are members of a mobile professional class that has emerged worldwide with the development of the global economy. This global consumer segment is characterized by cosmopolitan orientation and voluntary nomadism, always on the road from one global city to the other, without a clear anchoring of identity to place or nationality (Featherstone 1995; Hannerz 1996). The data for this study is comprised of 35 semi-structured, long interviews with highly mobile global professionals. The informants were selected on the bases of sampling criteria derived from the literature on TMPs. The sample includes roving professionals, business travelers, and expatriates located in different parts of the world. The researchers traveled in the informants' places of residency or work to conduct the interviews, which lasted from 1 to 5 hours. N*Vivo was used to code the data following a preliminary list of codes and the recommended techniques of qualitative data analysis.

The study found that TMPs desire to have a home and engage continuously in practices that enable them to maintain or recreate a sense of home on the road. We find that TMPs define home in a mobile sense, in three different ways. First, TMPs define home in terms of order: home is found in places where certain spatial and temporal patterns exist or are created. Second, TMPs define home in terms of salient relationships. Findings show that TMPs experi-

ence places where certain family or kinship relationships take place as homes. Third, TMPs define home in terms of cherished possessions; homes are places that serve as “vaults” of precious memories represented and stored in cherished possessions. These three notions of home represent *mobile notions of home* that differ from traditional concepts of home in several ways. Home among TMPs is not only a place, but can be defined in terms of relationships, possessions, or spatial patterns. TMPs have multiple homes and the relationships they form with place are temporary where departure from home-places is not experienced negatively.

Since TMPs have a mobile notion of home not affixed to a place, the study found that TMPs engage in an ongoing process of making a home on the road. TMPs attempt to create a sense of home in the hotels in which they reside during travel, blurring the line between the private space of home and the public, commercial space. Informants engaged actively in several practices of appropriation of commercial spaces that transform them into home-like environments. For example, informants talked about moving hotel room furniture so that they create a similar spatial order to the one at home. They request certain furniture and appliances in their rooms that they consider “necessary” home objects. They find the room ambiance, such as color, light, and smell important in constructing the sense of home. Personalization of space through decorating with family photos, flowers, food, etc is another practice that informants used to transform commercial hotel rooms into homes. Informants also emphasized social elements of hotel service as important in making the hotel more like home.

We believe that the findings of this study make a two fold contribution. First, this study contributes to the social sciences literature on the construct of home by identifying a mobile concept. In this way, our research provides an empirical response to calls for more portable, fluid notions of home in postmodernity (Rapoport and Dawson 1998). Second, this study shows that home remains an important construct that influences consumer behavior even in the postmodern context. Facile postmodern notions of decentered subjects and fragmented identities require revision in light of TMP consumers’ active construction of home-like environments.

“From a Diner to a Home: Understanding How Customers Find Home in the Marketplace”

Mark S. Rosenbaum

The concept of place is well engrained in the marketing discipline as a marketing mix tool that refers to distributional and to organizational activities associated with making products and services available to targeted consumers. Marketers tend to conceptualize places in isolation from consumers’ personal lives and experiences. Places are mainly considered as mere points-of-exchange. Sherry (2000) posits that places have different dimensions of meaning for consumers on based of personal experiences in them. The goal of this paper is to offer a conceptual framework that explains how and why consumers experience places in the lives. As such, the paper advances our understanding of why and how customers may transform places from consumption settings to home-like settings. This article contributes to several research paradigms including commercial friendships, (Price & Arnould 1999), customer communities (McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002; Muniz & O’Guinn 2001), commercial social support (Kang & Ridgway 1996), and loneliness (Goodwin and Lockshin 1992).

The study employs Grounded Theory Methodology (Glaser & Strauss 1967) to develop a parsimonious, relevant, and modifiable framework regarding how and why consumers imbue places with different meanings. The study is based upon fifty-six interviews with customers (44), employees (8), managers (2), and owners (2) at Sammy’s, a casual dining restaurant located in a suburb of a large

Midwestern city. During the initial stage of data gathering, customers were asked to explain what Sammy’s means to them. The data revealed that customers emplace three types of meanings in the restaurant, and hence, experience it in three different manners. First, some customers view the restaurant as a place to fulfill a consumption need; hence, they experience *place-as-practical*. Second, other customers perceive the restaurant not only as a place to eat, but also, as place to socialize, or to “kibitz” with friends; therefore, they experience *place-as-gathering*. Third, other customers, referred to as the regulars, view the restaurant not only as a place to eat, or to socialize, but also, as their home-away-from-home. *Place-as-home* is conceptualized as a place that consumers experience in order to satisfy consumption, companionship, and emotional support needs.

The next stage of theoretical development concerns understanding why consumers imbue the restaurant with different meanings and experience it so differently. The data revealed that customers who experience the restaurant as place-as-gathering or as place-as-home do so in order to prevent, or to remedy, feelings of loneliness. In order to alleviate social and emotional loneliness, individuals typically turn to traditional sources of support, including family and friends (Weiss 1973). However, findings show that life events, such as retirement, chronic illness, or death, may deplete aged consumers’ traditional sources of support. In the study, aged informants turn to a kind of neo-tribe and commercial friendships to fill these voids. I found that “regular” customers who experience the restaurant as home are older-aged adults, most of whom are widows or widowers, retired, and who reside alone. These customers no longer had access to sufficient traditional sources of social support, and hence, turned to employees and other customers in the restaurant for supportive resources that were metaphorically imbued with domestic meanings. For example, customers talked about how the owner of Sammy’s was like their son, and that they were part of his family. Other customers discussed the love, the care, and feelings of belonging that they received from simply being at the restaurant. Thus, for these customers, the supportive relationships that they held with others in the restaurant resembled familial and friendship bonds, and led them to perceive the restaurant as their home-away-from-home (Hill 1991).

Similar to the customers who required social support, so too, did the employees and the managers at Sammys. Several of the waitresses discussed that they were in abusive relationships, and that working at Sammy’s was a temporary escape from reality. Gallo, a waiter, and recent émigré from Ecuador, discussed how he relies on his regulars for information about living in America, such as information about applying for credit, taxes, as well as, legal and medical issues. The restaurant is home not only to its customers, but also, for its employees.

The manner in which consumers experience a place affects their relationship with the place. The data reveals that customers who experience the restaurant as place-as-practical are satisfied, but not necessarily loyal to the restaurant. Customers who experience the place-as-gathering exhibit a “community loyal.” These customers are loyal to a group of people that happen to gather in the restaurant. However, customers who experience the place-as-home are customers who are fused together with a variety of individuals in bonds of human togetherness and care, so that customer and place become a social unit.

“Designing the Family Portal as Home Information System and Home Networking”

Alladi Venkatesh

This study is part of an ongoing project that aims at designing an interface for home use that would address the specific needs of

TABLE 1

<i>Family Activities</i>	<i>Mediating/Enabling Technologies</i>	<i>Home Information System Inputs</i>
Family get-togethers, vacations.	Digital Photography and Peripherals	Photographic records, Digitized family pictures
Family cooking, meal preparation.	Smart kitchen appliances	Family consumption of food, types of meals prepared, family member tastes and preferences, frequently or occasionally purchased items
Children's education and entertainment (music, reading, sports, etc).	PC use; Hand-held information appliances	Children's school performance, library information, other needs of children, records of children's interests.
Home financial management.	PC; Information Appliances	Family financial, tax records, credit card information
Family communication; Social contacts.	PC (e-mail), cell-phone, pager; Information Appliances	Addresses of friends and near/extended family, keep track of invitations and social occasions
Shopping.	Same as above	Store addresses, items purchased, record of monthly shopping both online and offline

families in the context of their domestic information based activities and routines. This project examines the use of technology at home attempting to design an information infrastructure that uses Internet technologies for home management and external networking, called the "Family Portal". Our recent work on home networking (Venkatesh, et. al. 2003) indicates that the focal point of the Family Portal is the home as an activity and information center. Table 1 provides some examples of the link between the activity center and the household information system.

This paper attempts to a) identify the ways that families use technology at home; and b) examine the influence of technology in family life and notions of home. The study was conducted through in-depth interviews with ten families followed by concept testing of the Family Portal. The key respondent (usually a female adult) provided information on current computer usage at home and other daily activities. After the interview, the respondent was presented a screen shot of "the Family Portal." This was used to encourage them to talk in detail about their potential usage of the internet for various applications. This was followed by the introduction of a more realistic version of the Family Portal.

Most published literature on computer use at home cites three major uses for the computer: communications, information and entertainment. The findings of this study confirm these results. However, there are other uses which point to the fact that family computer use is more complex or diverse. As the technology becomes more domesticated and integrated into the family life, other uses become more prevalent. Thus, families with children use the computers as part of their parenting responsibilities and child oriented activities including school. Findings suggest that family priorities and activities determine the varied use of technology in the home.

In a larger sense, many household activities involve several themes. For example, when families communicate with family members, friends, shops, service agencies, banks etc., one way to describe this is simply to say that the computer is used for communication—which suppresses a lot of finer details. This is because each act of communication has its own distinct quality and content which should be uncovered meticulously. For example, communication with family can mean family interactions on various matters or organization of family events. Communicating with children

implies some parenting activities or following everyday routines. Similarly, online shopping may involve communicating with stores (online or physical), community agencies or medical sources.

While this study argues for a polysemous use of technology at home, the findings also illustrate the domestication of technology to carry parental roles, social communicator and networking roles, as well as domestic consumption roles. Additionally, by examining the influence of technology on the home and family dynamics, the study finds that domestic use of technology has enhanced family's social networks, enabled formation of different levels of social bonds, and empowered the family members. For example, communication technology and the human decision to employ it expand the social network by increasing the emotional web of social contacts and by making it more feasible for new relationships to enter the network. The technology has provided individuals with different levels of bonding (e.g. high and low levels) in their social networks. Further, the breadth of communication technology provides more options for families to manage family and community events. For instance, the convenience of scheduling a family party is not more apparent than in a communication scenario where other families can be contacted through one correspondence. Finally, the data shows that family members are empowered by the negotiation process of communication technology. The tech-enabled network allows its members to choose a mode of communication that suits their experiential needs.

Finally, to conclude, the role of the Family Portal in this complex set of activities is that it permits families to plan events, contact friends, relatives and outside agencies, keep family records, follow news, and perform various activities that the computer is suitable for. The family portal has the potential to become a central unit that systematizes family computer use, collectively and individually. It is a meeting point for the family members and shared virtual space. At a very basic level, the family portal is an information or communication portal. At another level, it permits families to use it for different organizing needs.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY
Dynamics of Self-Regulation
Suresh Ramanathan, University of Chicago

SESSION OVERVIEW

There has been considerable research in the social psychology and marketing literature on the topic of self-regulation and self-control (e.g., Carver and Scheier 1981; Fishbach, Friedman and Kruglanski 2003; Hoch and Loewenstein 1991; Ramanathan and Menon 2005; Shah, Friedman and Kruglanski 2002; Shiv and Fedorikhin 1999, 2002; Vohs and Schmeichel 2003). These have looked at self-regulation through a variety of lenses including goals and motivation, spontaneous and higher order affect, and mental resources. This session seeks to integrate some of these perspectives in presenting a dynamic view of self-regulation.

The broad purpose of this session was to present work that adds to this growing body of research, and to delineate the intrinsic dynamics of self-regulation and its influence on goal pursuit and goal management. In doing so, we identify several new dimensions to these phenomena. For example, we show that efforts at self-regulation may cause greater levels of intensity in subsequent emotional reactions (Vohs et al.). We also show how hedonic goals and regulatory goals come into conflict on a moment-to-moment basis and how people's pursuit of these goals and their emotional reactions are influenced over time (Ramanathan and Menon). Finally, we also show how people adaptively manage or regulate their goals over time through a variety of techniques such as goal shielding, goal switching, goal shedding and goal synthesis (Shah and Bodmann). The specific purposes of the session are: (a) to outline the theoretical processes at play, whether cognitive, affective or motivational, (b) to determine the conditions that facilitate and impede these processes and to understand the boundary conditions thereof; and (c) to explore these effects in different domains, across multiple research paradigms.

The papers in this session explore the mechanisms by which efforts at self-regulation may influence and in turn be influenced by affective and motivational processes. For instance, the paper by Vohs and co-authors shows that trying to exert self-regulation leads to more intense experience of both positive and negative emotions. In other words, people experience higher peaks and lower troughs in subsequent affective experiences. The paper by Ramanathan and Menon provides evidence of both affective and motivational processes at play in self-regulation, as it explores the moment-to-moment experience of approach/avoid reactions in response to hedonic or healthy stimuli. Shah and Bodmann argue that successful self-regulation requires an adaptive mechanism of goal pursuit to be followed, such that people could dynamically decide on whether to pursue their current goal and shield it from other goals, switch from it, or even shed it totally.

The first paper by Vohs, Mead, Schmeichel and Bruyneel shows that people who were depleted of resources via a variety of novel tasks reported more intense positive and negative emotions. For example, participants who had to suppress their thoughts (not think of a white bear) reported more intense positive emotions while watching a comedic film. In a second study, participants in a Stroop task involving words and colors that were inconsistent with each other (depletion condition) displayed more polarized evaluations of subsequently presented emotional pictures compared to those in a control condition with consistent words and colors. In another study, participants, after completing a depletion task, were asked to keep their hand in freezing water for as long as they could. Depleted

participants were less able to keep their hands in the water and reported more intense pain compared to a control condition. Viewed together with prior research on self-regulation and depletion, this paper makes a case that failures at self-control due to depletion may be driven by these intense emotional states.

The second paper by Ramanathan and Menon focuses on the dynamic experience of approach/avoidance motivation as people are faced with temptations. After establishing in a first study that there are significant differences in reward sensitivity between people classified as impulsive or prudent and in response latencies to the measures of impulsivity, the authors ran a second study in which half the participants pre-classified as impulsive or prudent were primed with a hedonic goal. They were then shown a tray filled with cookies or vegetables and asked to use a joystick continuously over three minutes to indicate how much they felt drawn towards the items on the tray or how much they felt like avoiding it. The dynamic traces of the like-dislike reactions showed interesting differences for impulsives and prudents, depending on whether they were primed with the hedonic goal or not. While both impulsive and prudent people who were primed with a hedonic goal showed an immediate spike in their evaluations of the cookies, the former showed greater ambivalence over time that resolved in favor of an increasing desire for the cookies. The latter however showed a marked decline in evaluations of the cookies over time that mapped on to a concurrent increase in evaluations of the vegetables, indicating goal switching.

The final paper by Shah and Bodmann looks at how people manage their goals in self-regulation. The authors present a series of studies that show how people prioritize and juggle their goals as they engage in self-regulation. They show that people might regulate the attention they pay to concurrent multiple goals via "goal shielding." In other words, they inhibit other goals and keep them from becoming salient while pursuing a focal goal, particularly when the goals in question fulfill the same regulatory need. Interestingly, they also show that certain emotional states, notably anxiety, are more conducive to such inhibition while depression actually hinders goal shielding. Even more interestingly, the authors show that goal shielding has important consequences for how intensely goals are pursued and how likely they are to be attained. Other studies by the authors also show evidence of other regulatory mechanisms. In particular the authors will present data that articulates how individuals shift from goal to goal and when they might consider shedding goals entirely. Together, these studies are powerful evidence of the way people manage multiple goals and goal conflict, important concepts in any discussion on self-control and self-regulation.

Two of the three papers in this session (Vohs et al.; Ramanathan and Menon) focus on failure in self-regulation, suggesting that these are due to more intense emotional states being created by demanding extrinsic situations or due to the pursuit of hedonic goals that continue to strengthen over time and override any ambivalence. A third paper (Shah and Bodmann) shows how good self-regulation involves adaptive goal management techniques that can potentially influence well-being over time. Together, the three papers look at different domains of self-regulation, thereby attesting to the generality of the findings presented.

“Self-Regulatory Resource Depletion Makes People More Extreme in Their Emotions and Judgments: A Possible Mechanism for Ego-Depletion”

Kathleen Vohs, University of Minnesota

Nicole Mead, Florida State University

Brandon Schmeichel, Texas A&M University

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Self-regulation has been studied from a variety of perspectives (e.g., Carver and Scheier 1981; Hoch and Loewenstein, 1991) but virtually all of this research finds that people have a difficult time (at best) controlling impulses and overriding desires in order to reach goals. Reviews of the literature have suggested that self-regulation can be viewed as operating off a limited resource (e.g., Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven and Tice 1998; Vohs and Schmeichel 2003). It is not yet known, however, why people who have fewer self-regulatory resources fail at subsequent attempts at self-regulation, except to say that they have fewer resources to put to the task. The current research examined changes in the subjective feeling-state of participants who were depleted versus those who were not depleted, as a possible explanation for decrements in self-regulation after earlier self-control. Results from five experiments support this assertion.

In Study 1, participants first engaged in a thought-listing task—those in the depletion condition were given thought suppression instructions (do not to think of a white bear), whereas participants in the control group were told they could think of whatever they wished, including thoughts about a white bear. Later, all participants watched a comedic film. Results of mood after the film indicated that participants in the thought suppression condition subsequently felt more positive emotions and less negative emotions as compared to participants in the control condition. Also, participants in the depletion condition reported deeper emotions while watching the film compared to participants in the control group.

Study 2 provided further support for the hypothesis that depleting self-regulatory resources leads people to become more polarized emotionally. The Stroop color-listing task was used to manipulate self-control. Participants in the depletion condition were asked to read the color of ink that the word was printed in, with ink colors and names of color being inconsistent (the word “red” written in blue ink), whereas participants in the no depletion condition were asked to name the color of ink that four XXXXs were printed in. Results showed that participants in the depletion condition had more extreme ratings of highly-emotional pictures than did participants in the no depletion condition.

In Study 3, participants in the depletion condition were asked to read aloud boring, technical text but to do so with exaggerated gestures and high enthusiasm, whereas participants in the no depletion condition read aloud the same passage without further instructions. Next, participants rated 20 Chinese characters on their attractiveness. As predicted, participants in the depletion condition rated the Chinese characters more extremely than did participants in the no depletion condition.

Study 4 tested whether multiple types of judgments were affected by self-regulatory resource depletion or whether only those relating to emotions were affected. We employed two different dependent measures (within-subjects; counterbalanced): ratings of Arabic letters as to their likeability (emotionally-laden judgments) versus sensory-based judgments of products, such as “How heavy is this glass?” To manipulate self-regulatory resources, participants were randomly assigned to complete either an easy or difficult version of a proofreading task. As expected, only judgments of likeability were affected by depletion, whereas ratings of sensory aspects of products were unaffected. Participants in

the difficult proofreading group showed significantly more variability in their ratings of likeability of Arabic characters (i.e., they were more extreme) than participants who completed the easier version of the proofreading task. No differences were found in variance of ratings for sensory perceptions between groups.

In Study 5, participants in the depletion condition read aloud boring text in an animated fashion (as in Study 3), whereas no-depletion participants read aloud without instructions. All participants then submersed their arms in freezing water for as long as they could. This cold pressor task allowed for measurements of pain sensations and self-control. Results revealed that participants in the depletion group were less able to keep their arms in frigid water as compared to no-depletion participants and reported more intense pain. Mediation analyses suggest reduced self-regulation is due in part to reports of increased pain.

In sum, the current research suggests that being in a state of resource depletion from earlier expenditures of self-control changes people’s subjective feelings states. They experience highs as higher and lows as lower. This change in emotionality likely makes it significantly more difficult to regulate, with the result being less control over oneself.

“Moment-to-Moment Pursuit of Hedonic Goals”

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There is considerable research on self-control and failures thereof, examining these occurrences from a variety of different perspectives, such as spontaneous hedonic or low-road affect (Giner-Sorolla 1999; Shiv and Fedorikhin 1999, 2002), ego-depletion (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven and Tice 1998; Vohs and Schmeichel 2003), and goal conflict (Fishbach, Friedman and Kruglanski 2003; Ramanathan and Menon 2005). One area that has not been studied is the dynamic nature of the process of exerting self-control or giving in to temptations. Specifically, what happens to us on a moment-to-moment basis as we see a tempting stimulus?

Our first goal was to show that there are differences between impulsive and prudent people in terms of reward sensitivity and chronicity of such reward-seeking. We used a task called the CARROT (Card Arranging Reward Responsiveness Objective Task, Powell et al. 1996) to show these differences. This task requires participants to sort a stack of 100 cards, each of which has a five digit number printed on it, into three piles. Each five digit number has one of the numbers 1, 2 or 3 occurring in it at any position, and the participant is required to sort the stack into piles that contain the digit 1, the digit 2 or the digit 3. This task is performed over three trials, with the middle trial being rewarded (20 cents for every five cards). People classified as impulsive on a standard impulsivity scale sorted significantly more cards on the rewarded trial compared to the average of the non-rewarded trials. Response latencies to measures of impulsiveness were significantly smaller for those classified as impulsive, suggesting that these self-ratings were chronically accessible.

Study 2 focused on how differences in these chronic hedonic goals might manifest in moment-to-moment reactions to hedonic or healthy stimuli. Participants completed a scrambled sentence task that either primed a hedonic goal or was neutral in content. Following this, they were presented with a tray filled with cookies or cut vegetables and were asked to look at the items while using the joystick continuously to indicate exactly how they felt at the precise moment towards the items on the tray (by pulling it towards themselves if they felt drawn towards the items at the moment and pushing it away if they felt like avoiding it). Movements of the joystick were captured every 0.1 seconds over three minutes by the program, and averaged to 1 sec. The stream of data showed four

interesting results. First, impulsive people primed with the hedonic goal showed an immediate spike in their approach reactions to cookies that lasted 40–50 seconds. This was reflected in a high positive velocity and acceleration in evaluations. This then gave way to an intensely ambivalent state characterized by sharp ups and downs. This period showed the highest variance in feelings. Around 100 seconds, this state of ambivalence was replaced by a steadily increasing approach reaction indicating that an unsatiated hedonic goal was still at play. Second, in line with the findings of Fishbach, Friedman and Kruglanski (2003), prudent people who were not primed with the hedonic goal showed an immediate spike downwards (as reflected in a high negative velocity/acceleration) after seeing the cookies that lasted about 30 seconds and then gave way to a stable, unconflicted, low variance reaction over time. On the other hand, prudent people primed with the hedonic goal and presented with cookies showed a sharp increase in the approach reactions that lasted approximately 60 seconds and then decreased sharply to below baseline levels as obtained in the non-primed condition. Correspondingly, prudents primed with a hedonic goal, but presented with vegetables showed a sharp increase in their evaluations of the vegetables around the same time as the decrease observed in the cookie group.

These data suggest that there are differences between impulsive and prudent people in terms of how they dynamically handle the fight between willpower and desire. Hedonic goals, whether chronic or primed, lead to spontaneous approach reactions towards tempting stimuli among both impulsive and prudent people in the immediate term. However, the time course of these reactions is markedly different over a longer window. A key characteristic of goal conflict is ambivalence—this was clearly seen among impulsive people soon after they got over their immediate affective reaction. They managed this ambivalence by choosing the unsatiated hedonic goal that continued to gather strength. In contrast, prudent people who were primed with the hedonic goal managed their goal conflict by switching to a health goal, as seen in the sharp decrease in evaluations of the cookies and the corresponding increase in evaluations of vegetables.

“Attention Mechanisms in Goal Management”

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Goal pursuit is rarely done in isolation. We are almost always pursuing multiple goals at once, often with only limited time and resources. Given such limitations, an important, although perhaps under-examined, component of effective self-regulation is the manner in which we prioritize and “juggle” our various pursuits and resolve goal conflict in order to best ensure the successful attainment of as many goals as possible. This paper focuses on the mechanisms involved in such goal management and the degree to which they may unfold automatically.

One challenge of pursuing multiple goals is how easily one pursuit can pull one away from another (see Shah & Kruglanski, 2002). Indeed, there may often be significant benefit to inhibiting alternative goals in that such inhibition may better allow one to direct one’s full attention to the goal at hand. We explore the role of goal inhibition in self-regulation by examining how the activation of goals may inhibit the salience of one’s other important intentions. Study 1 examined how goal shielding (as evident in fewer listing of alternative goals) was positive related to focal goal commitment, need for closure and general differences in goal-related tenacity. Study 2 replicated the general goal commitment results of Study 1 using a lexical-decision technique that assessed goal shielding in terms of the latency of responding to an alternative after being

primed with a focal goal. In Study 3 the same technique was used to examine the same effects for participants’ short-term goals. Study 4 again used this technique to examine whether goal shielding varied as a function of the relation between the goals involved. Whereas commitment to a goal was found to more strongly inhibit redundant (substitutive) alternatives, this commitment was less likely to inhibit facilitative alternatives since pursuing such alternatives would presumably help one attain the focal goal in question. Thus, for some individuals the goal of playing tennis may readily inhibit the goal of jogging since both fulfill a higher-order need to get in shape. Alternatively, goal activation less readily inhibits alternatives whose attainment is viewed as facilitating the salient focal goal. Thus, for other individuals the goal of playing tennis may not inhibit the goal of jogging because the latter may be perceived as helping one attain the former. Study 5 examined how the regulatory purpose of goals in question may influence goal shielding. Whereas a promotion focus and promotion-related emotions (dejection) was found to lessen goal shielding, since individuals with a promotion focus have an orientation toward change, a prevention focus and prevention-related emotions (agitation) was found to enhance goal shielding as prevention focus is oriented toward issues of security. Finally, Study 6 found evidence that, independent of goal commitment, goal shielding may serve important self-regulatory functions in that it has distinct consequences for how intensely goals are pursued and how likely they are to be attained (as evident in individuals’ persistence and performance in pursuing specific task goals).

Effective goal management thus involves not only goal shielding but also three other mechanisms—goal shifting, goal synthesis and goal shedding. Goal management may be aided by the consideration of how goals relate to each other. Does the attainment of one goal, for instance, aid the attainment of another? Does goal attainment render another goal less important? Understanding the ways in which different goals may be synthesized could prove to be an invaluable tool for effectively juggling one’s various pursuits.

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Giving and Receiving Humanity: Gifts Among Prisoners in Nazi Concentration Camps

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Gift-giving research in the field of consumer behavior has expanded our understanding of what a gift can be and of what it means to give. However, this research has been conducted in fairly normal contexts such as romantic dyads and family holiday exchanges. But what happens when the context becomes much more extreme and gift-giving embodies life and death decisions? The purpose of this paper is to explore instances of gift-giving in Nazi concentration camps. In spite of intense pressures toward selfishness, prisoners gave gifts to one another, demonstrating the basic personal need to express humanity through generosity.

A careful textual analysis of personal memoirs as case studies (Stake, 1995) and historical accounts was conducted. All of the memoirs were written by Jews, who are widely acknowledged to have suffered the greatest deprivation and mistreatment of all prisoners in the camps. Thus, their gift-giving was done under the most difficult of circumstances. The historical accounts (Cohen 1953; Des Pres, 1976; Todorov, 1996) were used as a way to include the perspectives of authors who have carefully studied life in concentration camps, as well as to verify our interpretation of the memoirs used in our study.

The structure of the concentration camp system and the dismal conditions endured by prisoners were not conducive to concern for others. All forces pushed one to focus on survival. As Cohen (1953) writes of his initial days at Auschwitz, "I had only one thought left: How can I survive (p. 123)?" This drive for survival necessarily put prisoners at odds with one another as they fought for extremely scarce resources: "Will you survive, or shall I? As soon as one sensed that this was at stake everyone turned egoist (Lingens-Reiner, 1948, p. 23)." As Louis de Wijze (1997) writes of Auschwitz, "Everyone lives for himself. Our one and all-encompassing credo is: Survive! Between the outer limits of life and death, previous values and norms lose their meaning, and our spiritual baggage gradually erodes. The only norm that counts is "I". All our senses, thoughts, and deeds are used only for our own benefit (p. 67)."

Yet, we found many instances of helping and gift-giving in the camps. Further, we found that the act of giving was in part a defiance of the dehumanizing forces. Along with other attempts to re-establish humanity such as engaging in intellectual activities (Levi, 1989), religious observances (Cohen, 1953), and the modification of uniforms to express individuality (Klein, 2003), giving to others helped both the giver and the receiver feel more human. Some gift-giving was more directly instrumental, and thus we present instances of gift-giving along a continuum from the very instrumental (i.e., bribes) to giving that is motivated by the simple desire to demonstrate humanity. Giving on this end of the continuum was motivated not by expectations of return but simply by the notion that helping is the correct and human thing to do. Sometimes this helping was very reflexive and natural in nature.

Gift-giving was most likely to take place within dyads or small groups (i.e., cliques). Dyads were sometimes governed by a norm of true balance (i.e., circular reciprocity), while other giving relationships were notably skewed in a particular direction because one member of the pair had greater access to resources (Belk, 1976). In some cliques, the norm of equipollence (Lowrey, Otnes, and Robbins 1996) seemed to play a major role, in that every member tended to expect equivalent treatment and violation of this norm caused distress to all concerned. In other cliques, it was recognized

that dyads within the group—such as sisters—would give primary support to one another.

Although the concentration camp setting is certainly extreme, we believe that our findings are relevant to consumer behavior researchers in a variety of other contexts as well. The recent tsunami disaster points to one area ripe for future study. Do inhabitants of relief camps exhibit similar acts of giving, perhaps establishing normative guidelines and pressuring those who fail to comply? Similarly, refugee camps, often more long-term in nature than temporary disaster relief situations, may offer further evidence of a widespread "need" to give. These contexts can still be classified as somewhat extreme, but we would argue there are situational factors inherent in these settings that are not that different from living in a totalitarian regime, or living in dire poverty. Past gift-giving literature has stayed mainly in the realm of middle-class respondents (or higher income levels), but those at lower levels, and in more restricted life circumstances, give nevertheless. Despite pressures toward selfishness, we argue that both giving and receiving helps us to feel more human, which is a strong behavioral motivator regardless of circumstance.

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The Transition to a Special Needs Consumer: My Ethnographic Journey Caused by Celiac Disease and Diabetes

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ABSTRACT

About two years ago I was diagnosed with celiac disease for which the only treatment is a strict gluten-free diet which eliminate all foods with wheat, rye, or barley. Then, nine months ago I was found to have developed diabetes which added further dietary restrictions, blood sugar monitoring, and medications. This paper describes, in ethnographic fashion, the multitude of changes in my consumer behavior and offers insights into the behavior of many other consumers who face dramatic restrictions in their diets.

INTRODUCTION

About two years ago I was diagnosed with celiac disease. Celiac disease (or celiac sprue or sprue) is caused by the intake of gluten which limits the ability of the small intestine to absorb food. There is no cure other than a strict diet which eliminates all gluten from the food being consumed. The challenge with this diet is that gluten is found in wheat, rye, and barley which means that I cannot eat traditional bakery items (e.g., breads, rolls, pizza crust, cake, cookies), crackers, most canned soups, many sauces, beer, and breaded items. Then about nine months ago I was diagnosed with diabetes which necessitated reducing carbohydrates, timing meals, and instituting new medications, including insulin.

As a marketing professor who teaches consumer behavior, I observed myself over the past two and a half years as I drastically changed my purchasing, food preparation, self perception, and other aspects of consumer behavior. While I am a sample of one, it raises issues that millions of consumers face as they attempt to adjust to new lifestyles and priorities when confronted by diseases or other limitations introduced into their lives. There are many consumers who find that they must live on newly restrictive diets. People with allergies, especially food allergies, find themselves avoiding certain foods or additives. Diabetes forces multitudes of consumers to monitor their intake of carbohydrates. Lactose intolerance limits the intake of dairy products. Therefore, my experience presented in this paper would, in varying degrees, likely parallel the experience of millions of these consumers. Hopefully, this ethnographic experience can identify areas of research that lead to better understanding of consumers who face similar situations. To describe my journey, I will discuss these personal and consumer-based changes when I first faced celiac disease and then diabetes.

FIRST, CELIAC DISEASE

I had been losing weight and I lacked energy. The ordeal of diagnosing celiac disease is often a challenge because the symptoms can vary from person to person (American Family Physician, 2003). Celiac disease is an autoimmune disease in which the body attacks gluten which in turn attacks the villi, the microscopic hairs in the small intestine which absorb nutrition. These villi atrophy resulting in nutrition not being absorbed which can affect those organs nourished by that part of the intestinal track (Jahar and Jahar 2001). The only treatment is a strict lifelong gluten-free diet (Green et al., 2001). Another symptom, which I had the pleasure of experiencing, was months of diarrhea. Finally, my gastroenterologist did a scope into the stomach and the opening of the small intestine which produced biopsies which found blunted villi. A new blood test finally confirmed celiac disease. He gave me a few brochures, told me that I cannot eat anything with flour, barley, and rye and sent me on my way. I remember walking out to my car

wondering how on earth am I supposed to eat. It was very much a life changing day for me.

Celiac disease affects about 1 in 133 people although a significant percentage are not aware they have the disease (Fasano et al., 2003). They (referred to as "celiacs") may be asymptomatic or may have symptoms which physicians may not associate with the disease (Lohimmiemi, 2001). It is becoming more recognized but physicians continue to have difficulty diagnosing the disease because it can manifest itself in so many ways.

As I was struggling to adjust to my new diet and my new life, I certainly didn't approach this struggle as a consumer researcher. However, over time I began to notice how different my consumer behavior was becoming. Two and a half years have added greater perspective to these changes and this paper will identify the dimensions of consumer behavior that have changed. I will present these consumer behavior dimensions roughly as I became aware of them over time.

Evaluative Criteria

An average consumer looks at the array of food products and evaluates them on the basis of taste, price, calories, etc. Glanz, Basil and Mailbach (1998) noted that taste is the most important attribute of food for most people. For those with celiac disease, foods must first be evaluated to determine if it is gluten-free. Everything else is secondary. The problem is that so many foods contain gluten, it is estimated that gluten is the second most prevalent food substance in Western civilization (Harder, 2003). As a result I needed to become very focused on ingredients to which I previously paid little attention. Gluten can come in different forms: flour, rye, barley, and for some people, oats. However, they are often not listed on the ingredients in that form. They are often camouflaged as "modified food starch" or "malt" which contains barley. There are literally hundreds of forbidden foods and ingredients ranging from brewer's yeast to some soy saucez to some vegetable gums (Celiac Sprue Association, 2001). Gluten might also be found in aspirin, preservatives, dental fillings, toothpaste, and colorings. To add further confusion, "wheat-free" does not mean "gluten-free" because malt, rye, etc. could be in the product. As a result, in a grocery store and in our kitchen, the assessment of ingredients became an obsession for me and my wife.

This task of deciphering ingredients should improve with the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA) that will go into effect on January 1, 2006. In plain English food labels must indicate if the food has one of eight major food allergens responsible for over 90% of food allergies: milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, and soybeans. The intent of this law is to allow consumers to more easily note if these problem ingredients are present in the food.

Perceived Risk

Before my diagnosis food was something to be sampled and savored but after my diagnosis food was a potential danger. I had to completely eliminate gluten from my diet to recover because any gluten would exacerbate my symptoms. I avoided restaurants for many weeks and my first visit required a phone call to the cook to reassure me that it was indeed safe to eat in that restaurant. In an incident a few weeks later, a salad dressing at a luncheon that a well-meaning waiter assured me was fine, set me back for three weeks.

I now realize that cooks in many restaurants don't even mix ingredients, they merely assemble pre-made foods and they are not even aware of what might be in a sauce. French fries that used the same oil as breaded items would pick up gluten. Potato salad at a family get together could have gluten. Some instant rice contains gluten but how do you know if it is instant or regular rice?

Gradually the risk was reduced as I learned what was safe (e.g., most fast food restaurants use separate fryers for french fries while sit down restaurants do not), I took more food with me (e.g., gluten free power bars, packets of gluten-free salad dressings), and adopted other options (e.g., bunless burgers, no sauces). It got to the point where I traveled to France knowing little French but, equipped with a sheet describing my problem written in French that I gave to waiters, I managed quite well.

Social support

My primary care physician and even my gastroenterologist give me little guidance in just how I should change my diet. Lee and Newman (2003) found that only 17% of newly diagnosed celiacs received information from physicians and 13% found dietitians helpful. I had a useless appointment with a dietitian who gave me information printed off of web sites, some of which my wife and I had already found. The only real assistance my gastroenterologist offered was the phone number of the local celiac support group. They provided innumerable and invaluable suggestions and support in terms of how to shop and how to cook-gluten free. Lee and Newman found that 71% found the most assistance from the Internet and support groups. My wife bought gluten-free cook-books, reminded me at restaurants to watch out when I became a little too casual about checking ingredients, and was a real partner in helping develop my new diet.

Store choice

Mass marketers essentially do nothing for celiacs. However, there are niche marketers in the health food market that provide gluten-free options and also insights and advice. The day after my diagnosis I went to a new health food store in my community. After I outlined my problem, the assistant manager walked me through sections of the store that offer gluten-free products. I remember feeling so grateful that I really do have some options that I was misty-eyed walking out with food that I could actually eat. Food co-ops generally offer more options of gluten-free foods. I also found numerous web sites that specialize in gluten-free foods, and while they vary considerably in quality, I began to realize there was hope.

Impulsive purchases/consumption behavior

Nothing can be done on impulse. One mistake, especially in the early months, exacerbates and prolongs symptoms. I had to look at the ingredients first. No more sampling in the copy room at work when someone brings in snacks, restraint is needed at buffets or luncheons, and those Saturday samples at the grocery store are now generally ignored.

Self reliance

When a person is on a restricted diet you cannot assume that you can just pick up something to eat when you get hungry. I am used to bringing my lunch to work but now I bring my own snacks. I have a refrigerator in my office and my car always has food in the glove compartment. Going to a party means taking something in case there is nothing "legal" to eat. A fellow celiac developed a strategy of ordering frozen gluten-free sub rolls on-line and bringing one to luncheons to make his own sandwich.

Vacations and traveling bring self reliance to another level. Hotel breakfast buffets usually mean bagels, rolls, and cereals

which are off limits so I pack my own cereals. I now have several coolers of different sizes to accommodate trips of varying lengths.

Stages of transition and self image

When I went from "normal" to a celiac, my self image seemed to evolve, not unlike Kubler-Ross' (1969) stages of dying. In retrospect, there were four stages of transition of my self image. First, the diagnosis was not unexpected after months of assorted tests and researching my symptoms, but there was an initial period of shock, disbelief, and "why me." I loved whole grain breads and savored bakery items which I could never again eat. I felt no control of my life. I had to give up seemingly most foods and I was very unsure of how I was to manage. Second, my mental state evolved to acceptance that I could probably get a handle on this as I began to understand that there were alternatives. I began to gain confidence that I might be able to get control over my life again. Third, a sense of mastery evolved where I developed strategies to manage travel, we bought a bread machine to make my own gluten-free bread, my wife began to gather and use excellent gluten-free recipes, and I my symptoms gradually faded away after a year. Fourth, after gaining back control over my life and my health, I must admit to feeling a bit of superiority compared to people who complained about their ability to stay on their diets, their difficulty of staying away from sweets, etc. They can't stay on a simple diet when half the grocery store is off limits for me? Maybe it was the draconian changes that I endured to make that made me feel I could do anything, maybe it was a way for me to reduce the dissonance of having to restrict my diet, but it was like going through boot camp and now I can handle anything.

Rituals and symbolic representation of food

There are some rituals in which we participate that are dramatically changed for celiacs. For example, Thanksgiving dinner now means no stuffing, bread (unless I bring my own rice-based bread), or pumpkin pie. I cannot have a hot dog in a bun at a ball game. I cannot have a beer and pizza watching a game on TV with friends or just a beer after a long day. I grew up in northern Michigan where pasties (meat and vegetables baked in a crust) are enjoyed at family gatherings but, unless one is made without crust for me, I must eat something else. In these types of situations, food serves as a common binding focus that the group can share. The result is these rituals lose some of their affective appeal for celiacs. This kind of exclusion also leads to a sense of alienation because I cannot enjoy things like everyone else.

There are other comfort foods that I enjoyed as a child, such as cinnamon rolls and real home made bread that are no longer an option. There is no chicken noodle soup when I am sick. If someone has a birthday, unless they really plan ahead and make a gluten-free cake (there are such things), I must pass on the cake.

Life satisfaction

Food is integral to providing satisfaction in everyday life. When the previously described comfort foods (e.g., breads, pastries, pies, pasta, or even beer) are removed from a diet, it would be expected that life satisfaction would be reduced. The research on life satisfaction with celiacs is conflicting. Some have found lower quality of life satisfaction (e.g., Hallert et al., 2003, 2004) while others found that celiacs had similar quality of life scores as the general population (e.g., Greco, Mayer and Ciccarelli, 1997; Lohiniemi et al., 1998). In my situation, I have gradually accepted the elimination of gluten and those old foods are barely a memory. Pies and pastries were an occasional treat and whole wheat bread was a staple. Now, I haven't had a sandwich in a year because gluten-free bread quickly dries out and makes sandwiches a crum-

bly mess, but that is something that seems in the past. However, there are times such as at parties or during the Christmas holidays when I do miss sampling the special dishes and treats.

NEXT, DIABETES

About two years after being diagnosed with celiac disease (about nine months ago) and several months after my celiac symptoms finally disappeared, I gradually began to notice that I was again fatigued, had groggy thinking, and was losing weight. My doctor told me that I had diabetes even though I was an active, physically fit person, not at all overweight, obviously had a controlled diet, did not smoke, and did not have a family history of diabetes. Here we go again.

Diabetes occurs when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin. The body digests carbohydrates and converts it to sugar. Insulin is used by the cells to take in the sugar for nutrition and energy. Insufficient insulin means that the sugar is not being absorbed by the cells and the sugar levels in the blood increases. My diabetes is something between Type 1 and Type 2 meaning that my pancreas still works but produces insufficient insulin. After months of experimentation I found a combination of oral medication and insulin injections brought down my sugar level. This added another layer of food issues revolving around closely monitoring my carbohydrate intake, monitoring my blood sugar level, and regulating my meds.

My progression through the process of treating diabetes is remarkably similar to that experienced with celiac disease. I went through parallel stages of disbelief to acceptance, I started a new learning curve of monitoring foods, and I am now counting carbs along with eliminating gluten. That learning curve is not quite complete since, while I have brought down my blood sugar levels to normal, low sugar levels occur with some frequency since my pancreas is not completely predictable. Of course the two diseases cannot be separated; the diabetes issues were just added to the celiac issues. The addition of diabetes exacerbated many of the consumer behavior changes experienced with celiac disease.

Evaluative criteria

Carbohydrates are the second determinant attribute added to my evaluative criteria on foods. Too many carbs relative to insulin leads to high blood sugar so monitoring carb intake is critical. This is also important even if one takes insulin injections because the volume of insulin for each injection is dependent on the blood sugar level and the amount of carbs in the upcoming meal so lower carbs allow for better prediction of the appropriate level of insulin to inject. Fortunately low carb foods are now much more common and give me far more alternatives than diabetics had in the past. After I was diagnosed with celiac disease, I felt that I could at least have orange juice and a big bowl of fruit for breakfast. That big jolt of sugar was the last thing a diabetic needs in the morning and had to be drastically reduce and the new low-carb orange juice helps.

Perceived risk

The risks associated with celiac disease gradually retreated as I was able to get my diet under control. The perceived risk related to diabetes is more immediate and is constantly present. If my blood sugar is too high, that is temporary and I usually feel no symptoms but still needs to be minimized. However, if I use too much insulin, if I work out in late morning or afternoon (exercise sharply drops my blood sugar level), if my meal has fewer carbs than I realized, or if my pancreas decides to produce a little extra insulin for a few hours, my blood sugar can quickly drop. The symptoms can be a shaky feeling, fuzzy thinking, or with very low blood sugar levels, coma

(which I have thus far avoided). I find myself making sure I have food with me if a meeting might extend over the lunch hour, keeping sugar packets in my brief case in case I start to feel wobbly in class, and planning meals and snacks to head off the potential low blood sugar. My level of risk has declined as I have gained a better grasp of anticipating potential blood sugar levels and my confidence correspondingly has increased.

The combination of celiac disease and diabetes exacerbates risk. If I am at a meeting where lunch is provided and there are no gluten-free options, I cannot just eat the salad because I need enough carbs to keep my blood sugar up. Another risky situation is being stuck on an airplane for longer than anticipated with no gluten-free options (which is common) but needing carbs. Hence, I keep gluten-free power bars in my brief case just in case and an even bigger stash of these bars when I am traveling.

Symbolic representation of food

To most people, food is often presented in attractive ways and can be an adventure in new tastes, textures, and flavors. Restaurant menus and new recipes are offer tantalizing options. Food can be a treat, an indulgence, a pleasant reward. That is the also the goal for celiacs and diabetics but there is a layer of restrictions that first must be satisfied. In most settings the threats that foods present must first be avoided and, since that cannot often be determined (no one really is sure what is in that sauce), it is best to pass on that item. The result is the food is usually viewed warily and has lost some of its excitement. However, when my wife or friends make a new gluten-free meal with reasonable carbs, it is just as tantalizing and is probably more exciting because it happens less frequently. (My wife and I share cooking duties but I tend toward the predictable. Fortunately, my wife enjoys the challenge of new recipes.)

Situational perceptions of food

The same foods can be viewed differently depending on the situation. I have found that my perception of certain foods changes depending on my: blood sugar level (impending low blood sugar suggests eating some fruit but high blood sugar levels means fruit is off-limits); the other foods in the upcoming meal (I need to add some carbs if the rest of the meal is low carb, such as meat and vegetables, but I will minimize carbs if the rest of my meal is higher in carbs such as potatoes and bread); or time of day (having an apple as dessert after lunch is not usually a good idea because it will increase my blood sugar level too much but having an apple handy in the late afternoon gives me the assurance that I can eat the apple to pop my blood sugar back up). Even a candy bar, usually problematic because of its high carbs, becomes a comfort in my coat pocket to be used if low blood sugar hits. Of course it is gluten-free.

Self reliance

Self reliance is now even more pronounced. I have to plan and anticipate meals and snacks even more and, in the end, only I am responsible. I have blood testing kits at home, in my car, and at the office. In this situation, being a slightly obsessive person is helpful and probably contributes some self reliance.

Self image

Even though I am well along on my diabetes learning curve and generally have my diet and blood sugar levels under control, I have occasional low blood sugar levels. It takes a considerable commitment to check my blood sugar levels and plan my meals and my meds. I haven't reached the level of perceived mastery that I felt dealing with celiac disease. My unpredictable pancreas, and therefore my unpredictable blood sugar levels, put me in the category of

a “brittle” diabetic, meaning quick changes in blood sugar levels can result from my insulin or from my diet. The feeling of control that I experienced with celiac disease is not yet there.

There is also the feeling of being alienated or “being different” from others at a buffet or in a restaurant as they ponder their options or when discussions turn to the merits of various foods. It doesn’t seem to be my conversation; I am more of an observer. There are other situations when I am the center of concern. If my family is evaluating restaurants, some are excluded because “there is nothing there for Dad.” Everyone is being very considerate but that too is sometimes uncomfortable because there is the feeling that others are working around my limitations.

During the last days of writing this paper I received a call from my endocrinologist’s office with the news that my A1C score (a three month cumulative blood sugar level) is back to normal. Finally. In retrospect, I don’t think I have been “normal” for many years. My blood sugar levels had increased dramatically only in the past year but I suspect that my celiac disease has been problematic, but at a sub-clinical level, for a number of years. I could not think as crisply and often felt rather blank. Lately I am beginning to be more productive and felt more clear-headed than I can remember. My life, any my self image, have probably been suboptimal for many years. I got things done because I forced myself to do them, not from an internal spirit. I now realize that I did not have the energy and drive that I am again beginning to feel. For many years I did not realize that I was just sick, but only sick enough to cast a cloud over me, and in a way, over my family.

Family and social impact

As a celiac/diabetic, who is being careful with his diet, I find that I affect my wife and family and others in a social setting. They select restaurants based on my diet, I am checking my blood sugar levels, giving myself shots, checking ingredients, making sure we eat early enough before my blood sugar drops, coming home from running errands with low blood sugar, or thinking out loud about my day’s dietary plans. It can be consuming, especially when a celiac/diabetic is learning the ropes. This can be a bit much for my wife although she is very supportive and understanding. In fact, she has been a true partner in helping figure out these dietary problems over the past few years. Hopefully in the future many of these activities and concerns will become unstated and be less of an annoyance to everyone around me.

Another dimension of social impact is how others make adjustments to accommodate my diet. If we are visiting friends or relatives, some are not sure if I can eat something, some are bewildered about what is gluten-free, or some just don’t think about it and then feel embarrassed that I can’t eat the wonderful meal they’ve prepared.

An interesting phenomenon occurs with spouses of someone who has my kinds of problems where it seems the spouse takes on the disease with his or her partner and it becomes “their disease.” Fortunately my wife is supportive and we work well as a team. However, we are aware of some couples where the spouse becomes frustrated and even suggests cheating by suggesting “oh go ahead, a little won’t hurt you” or by clearly communicating how irritated he or she has become. This seems to be more common with diabetes because the effects of high blood sugar are not obvious.

Perceived age

My cognitive or perceived age used to be well under my chronological age. Since I work out virtually everyday, I was in excellent physical shape and my blood pressure and cholesterol were to be admired. In retrospect, celiac disease started to close this age gap and diabetes hastened the process. In part it may be the

physical impact on my body but it is also the physical and mental energy of planning meals and checking blood sugar levels that takes some toll. Physical challenges (e.g., blowing the snow from the driveway, starting a project in my shop) and intellectual challenges (e.g., starting a new paper, revamping a course) now seem a little more daunting and gives me pause. It is irritating and even feels a little embarrassing but, maybe as a sign of true aging, I am beginning to accept it.

Then there is the previously described restaurant example where my family eliminates restaurant options based on me and my diet. Could this be the first whiff of what my parents used to worry about of “becoming a burden. . .?”

Quality of life

Considerable research has been conducted on diabetics and their life satisfaction and quality of life. Generally, these findings suggest a decrease in quality of life for diabetics (e.g., Ahlgren et al., 2004; Naess et al., 2005). However, as diabetics gain control of their diet and medications, their quality of life approaches that of the rest of the population (e.g., Rubin and Pegrot, 1999; Senecal, Nouwen and White, 2000). As previous discussion suggests, I am still adjusting to diabetes but am making progress. It seems that as the extraordinary (restrictive diets, injections, packing food, etc.) becomes just another part of my life, it then approaches ordinary. Hopefully, I will continue to evolve to that stage in the near future.

CONCLUSION

My experience is obviously not representative because I have several advantages. First, I have a Ph.D., as does my wife, so I understand my issues, ingredients, and what is necessary to deal with my problems. There are other segments of the population who sometimes don’t have the capabilities to deal with all of these issues. Second, my wife is bright, resourceful and dogged in assisting me while many others either do not have a supportive spouse or have no one to provide support. Third, we are comfortable enough financially which allows me to buy any gluten-free food that is of interest to me. Gluten-free foods are more expensive which can be a significant financial burden for many people. Fourth, I am 59 years old, which in this case is probably an advantage. I feel sympathy for teenage celiac/diabetics who cannot eat most foods in a school lunch line or have a pizza or burger with their friends. I was able to drink beer in college but college age celiacs will not have that experience. My limited feeling of alienation as an adult, because I cannot enjoy the same foods as others, must be magnified for a child or teenager. Lastly, I am fortunate to be disciplined and fitness-oriented. Now I just have to be more extreme about that so, in some ways, the adjustment was not terribly dramatic. People who have an unhealthy diet and have little willpower may just not be able to make the significant changes necessary to become healthy.

It is surprising how little consumer research has focused on what consumers experience as health problems force changes in their lives. I could find no consumer-based research articles on diabetics or celiacs. While less than one percent of the population have celiac disease, 18 million people have diabetes (Elder, 2004). Millions of others develop food allergies or allergies to additives, become lactose intolerant, are on chemotherapy, or contract other diseases that force radical changes in their diets. Not only are these consumers compelled to alter their diets and experience the accompanying challenges and adjustments, but their families also are affected by these changes.

There are other changes that are creating more special needs consumers. Childhood and adult obesity has increased two to three times the rates of previous generations are causing dramatic increases in diabetes (Ebbeling, Pawlak and Ludwig, 2002). Increas-

ing awareness and improved diagnostic techniques will likely result in more people being diagnosed with celiac disease (Harder 2003). As aging baby boomers approach 60 years of age, health issues are certain to increase.

Clearly consumer researchers could contribute to these consumers by helping to understand the myriad challenges faced by these consumers and their families. I hope that this paper facilitates this process by highlighting the issues that I faced and increases the sensitivity toward these special needs consumers.

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A Transformative Look at Food Security and Surrogate Consumption Behavior

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this paper is to draw consumer researcher attention toward the issue of food security. We also seek to encourage consumer researchers to view the concept of surrogate consumption more broadly. Toward this dual end, we profile food-insecure persons, a growing segment of disadvantaged consumers in the United States, as a type of surrogate consumer user. By drawing attention toward the issue of food security we hope that consumer researchers might be better equipped to make positive differences in the lives of the growing number of food-insecure consumers in the United States.

INTRODUCTION

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), in 2003, nearly 36.3 million persons—12.7 percent of the U.S. population—lived in households that, at some time during the year, “were uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, enough food for all their members because they had insufficient money or other resources” (Nord, Andrews, and Carlson 2004, p. iv). Of these more than 36 million people living in “food-insecure” households, approximately 9.6 million lived in households experiencing hunger by virtue of being food insecure to the extent that one or more household members could not afford enough food at some time during the year (Nord, Andrews, and Carlson 2004). USDA research indicates that the number of persons living in both food-insecure and “food-insecure with hunger” households has risen steadily since 1999 (Nord, Andrews, and Carlson 2004).

These and other data suggest that food insecurity is a large and growing consumption-related social problem in the United States. Understanding consumption issues related to food insecurity has not, to date, been a major priority for all but a select few consumer researchers. Given the Transformative Consumer Research theme of the 2005 ACR conference, we feel that this is an opportune time for disciplinary scholars to consider paying greater attention to this important social problem. Accordingly, the primary purpose of this exploratory, conceptual inquiry is to draw consumer researcher attention toward the issue of food security. We pursue this goal via conceptualization of the food insecure as surrogate consumer users—as disadvantaged consumers that (often must) rely on the intervention of others in the consumption process in order to meet (often basic) needs. We begin, below, by examining the concept of food security.

FOOD SECURITY (AND INSECURITY) IN THE UNITED STATES

Understanding food security in the United States is predicated on understanding at least three issues related to the concept: 1) the historical development of definitions of food security (and its relationship to hunger), 2) measurements of food security (and insecurity), and 3) the incidence of food insecurity. Each issue is discussed below.

History of “Food Security”

Hunger has been researched in the social sciences and has been of interest to public policy makers in the United States for many years. The notion of food security, however, is of relatively recent vintage. The origins of current conceptualizations of food security—and the concept’s relationship to hunger—can be traced most directly to 1984 when the President’s Task Force on Food Assis-

tance “... recognized the distinction between the concept of hunger in the traditional medical usage and a more socially oriented, common-sense meaning” (Andrews, Bickel, and Carlson 1998, paragraph 3).

The work of hunger analysts, driven by the findings of the 1984 Presidential Task Force, culminated in the formulation of definitions of food security, food insecurity, and hunger which remain in common use today. These definitions were reported by the Life Sciences Research Office (LSRO) of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology in 1990. The seminal LSRO definitions are as follows.

Food security—Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum: (1) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food, and (2) an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in acceptable ways (e.g., without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies).

Food insecurity—Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in acceptable ways.

Hunger—The uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food. The recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food. Hunger may produce malnutrition over time... Hunger... is a potential, although not necessary, consequence of food insecurity (Nord and Brent 2002, p. 20).

Using the LSRO definitions, households and, to a less precise extent, household occupants¹ can be categorized into one of three segments based on degree of food-related deprivation: food secure, food insecure without hunger, and food insecure with hunger.

The LSRO’s definition of food insecurity warrants brief elaboration. There are two main types of food insecurity contained in this definition (Hamilton et al. 1997). The first—hereafter referred to as food insecurity “type A”—concerns the household’s inability to acquire a sufficient amount of food to meet basic needs. The second form of food insecurity included in the definition—“type B”—occurs as a result of having “to resort to socially unacceptable ways of obtaining food” (Hamilton et al. 1997, p. 62). A household can also be classified as food insecure for both reasons simultaneously. Food insecurity type A is generally considered the more severe form of insecurity due to a greater probability of it leading to a state of hunger (Hamilton et al. 1997).

Food Security Measurement

Arguably the most significant use of the 1990 LSRO definitions has been by the USDA. In 1994, the USDA, working jointly

¹USDA measurements of food security are done at the household level. If any member of the household has experienced food insecurity in the time period of interest, then the household is classified as food insecure. It is thus: a) possible for a food-secure person to be living in a food-insecure household, and b) not appropriate to assume that all members of food-insecure households are themselves food insecure. For further discussion on this issue see: Nord, Andrews, and Carlson 2004; Nord and Brent 2002.

with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, hosted an inaugural conference on food security measurement and research (Wilde 1994). The main outcome of this conference was the formulation of food security measurements that continue to be utilized by the USDA (in the Food Security Supplement to the U.S. Census Bureau's annual Current Population Survey). Food security is measured by asking respondents a series of 18 questions—10 questions addressing food conditions at the household level and among adults in the household and, if the household contains children, eight additional questions examining their food conditions (Nord, Andrews, and Carlson 2004; Nord and Brent 2002). See the Appendix for a complete listing of questions included in the USDA's food security measure.

Since its development in 1994, the USDA's 18-item scale has been used by governmental agencies, the media, and advocacy groups to: 1) report on the extent of food insecurity and hunger in the United States, 2) monitor progress toward national food-security and hunger goals, and 3) evaluate the impact of particular hunger and food-security policies and programs (Wilde 1994). The USDA's food security measures have, however, been criticized (e.g., on grounds that the statistical model used is inappropriate and that measures are "crude" [Wilde 1994, p. 6]). The USDA has admitted inadequacy with regard to the ability of its scale to measure "type B" food insecurity—the form present when a household finds it necessary to resort to socially unacceptable means of acquiring food. In 1997, the USDA tested the possibility of adding a "resource augmentation index" to the scale to remedy this deficiency but chose not to do so (see Hamilton et al. 1997). This decision was based on the USDA's conclusion that adding these items does not significantly improve the overall measurement capabilities of the scale. According to USDA analysts:

A resource augmentation index... and estimates of "type B" food insecurity derived from the index, provide a potential means of broadening the basic categorical measure of food insecurity prevalence to include the dimension of food insecurity involving reliance on non-normal, "emergency," or "socially unacceptable" forms of food acquisition. The practical effect of broadening the reach of the categorical food security measure in this way, however, turns out to be slight. This is because a very large proportion of the households that would be classified as food insecure on the basis of the resource augmentation index are already classified as food insecure by the underlying measurement scale and the classification criteria for the food security status indicator (Hamilton et al. 1997, p. 66).

These same USDA analysts do, however, note that "resource augmentation or coping behaviors... constitute an important area for future research" (Hamilton et al. 1997, p. 68). Since 1997, several teams of researchers have attempted, with at best moderate success, to, among other things, better measure the social aspect of food insecurity inherent in its "type B" form (see Kennedy 2003). Official USDA measurements of food insecurity remain focused on "type A" insecurity (capturing mainly the "sufficiency" or "economic access to enough food" dimension of the concept).

Overall, there is generally strong consensus that the USDA measures of food security have been, at the very least, a large step in the right direction with regard to understanding U.S. food security. Arguably the most significant achievement of the measures has been their ability to help inform the national debate over the incidence and nature of hunger in the United States. Prior to 1995, for example, hunger was typically viewed as a monomor-

phic—"yes" or "no"—malady experienced by as many as 30 million U.S. residents per year (Wilde 2004). Today, thanks in large part to the USDA's food-security measures: 1) hunger is seen as existing on a continuum—with various degrees of relevant deprivation, and 2) assessments of the incidence of hunger in the U.S. are generally more accurate (and considerably lower than previously thought) (Wilde 2004).

Incidence of Food Insecurity in the United States

As previously alluded to, the number of food-insecure households in the United States is large and growing. Table 1 contains selected USDA data documenting the incidence of food insecurity between 1999 and 2003.

Most notable in Table 1 is the steady upward trend in the number (and proportion) of "food-insecure" and "food-insecure-with-hunger" households (and persons living in these households). Another way to comprehend the magnitude of this growing problem, given that being food insecure entails having "...an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in acceptable ways (e.g., without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies)" (Nord and Brent 2002, p. 20), is to track recent increases in demand for the services of privately run emergency food relief (EFR) organizations (i.e., food banks, food pantries, and soup kitchens). It is now estimated, for example, that tens of thousands of EFR organizations in the United States provide assistance to "nearly a tenth of the population during some point in a given year" (Martin, Cook, Rogers, and Joseph 2003, paragraph 3). America's Second Harvest (A2H), a rapidly growing network of more than 200 food banks and food-rescue organizations² serving every county in the U.S., provided EFR services to 23.3 million persons in 2001—a nine percent increase over 1997 (America's Second Harvest 2004a). Demand for A2H's services has risen fastest in the nation's largest cities. In New York, for example, demand at soup kitchens and food pantries was up 45 percent between 2000 and 2002 (America's Second Harvest 2004a). In Boston, the Greater Boston Food Bank recently saw demand for emergency food rise from the normal level of 350,000 pounds a week to between 500,000-600,000 pounds (America's Second Harvest 2004a). The operator of a state-level food bank system sums the situation up as follows.

Food is flying off the shelves and not keeping up with demand... Once again, we had an increase in the number of working poor, folks who kind of fall through the cracks. They don't qualify for public programs... Rents are not going down, utility costs are going up, gas prices are going up, and people are having to stretch a dollar farther (Graves 2004, paragraph 2).

EFR organizations, which have existed in the United States for more than 200 years, were, until very recently, predominantly temporary in nature. Today, however, driven by the escalating number of food-insecure persons (coupled with what many analysts view as inadequate governmental assistance programs for the food

²Food banks "serve people in need by securing and storing surplus food and distributing it through their own network of local service agencies" (America's Second Harvest 2004c, paragraph 3). Food-rescue organizations "often operate within a shorter time-frame, picking up and delivering perishable foods on a single run" (America's Second Harvest 2004c, paragraph 3). Some A2H affiliates combine the two types of operations.

TABLE 1
Selected USDA Data on the Prevalence of Food Insecurity 1999-2003

Unit	Total		Without Hunger		With Hunger	
	# (1000s)	% (of all U.S.)	#	%	#	%
Households						
1999	10,529	10.1	7,420	7.1	3,109	3.0
2000	11,101	10.5	7,786	7.3	3,315	3.1
2001	11,521	10.7	8,010	7.4	3,511	3.3
2002	12,058	11.1	8,259	7.6	3,799	3.5
2003	12,583	11.2	8,663	7.7	3,920	3.5
Household Members						
1999	31,015	11.5	23,237	8.6	7,779	2.9
2000	33,231	12.1	24,708	9.0	8,523	3.1
2001	33,642	12.2	24,648	8.9	9,014	3.3
2002	34,902	12.5	25,517	9.1	9,385	3.4
2003	36,255	12.7	26,622	9.3	9,633	3.4

Source: Nord, Andrews, and Carlson (2004 [Table 1, p. 6]).

insecure [see: America's Second Harvest 2004d; Biggerstaff, et al. 2002; Graves 2004; Martin, et al. 2003³], these organizations appear to have become permanent fixtures on the U.S. social landscape (Biggerstaff et al. 2002).

THE FOOD-INSECURE CONSUMER

Although it is difficult to calculate the exact number of food-insecure consumers in the United States, there appears to be strong consensus among EFR service providers and food-security analysts as to who the food-insecure consumer is. Biggerstaff, Morris, and Nichols-Casebolt (2002), for example, in a study of approximately 1,500 food pantry and soup kitchen users, find that: 1) 24.9 percent of respondents were employed, 2) 25.7 percent stated that the main reason for EFR use was that they are "working poor and cannot make ends meet," 3) 15 percent of informants were homeless at some time during the previous six months, 4) 16 percent had lost Food Stamp Program (FSP) benefits in the previous six months, 5) 13 percent had recently lost Medicaid or other health insurance benefits, 6) more than 67 percent of respondents had completed high school or above, and 7) primary risk factors for food insecurity include recent job loss, low earnings (even if employed), and recent retirement. Graves (2004), reporting on a state-level survey of 3,761 households seeking EFR assistance, finds that: 1) 43 percent of informant households include at least one working adult, 2) 80 percent lived below the 2004 federal poverty level (of \$18,850 for a family of four), 3) more than 50 percent turned to EFR assistance

"because their food stamps ran out," 4) 45 percent of households included adults without health insurance, 5) many EFR clients have high levels of debt, and 6) 10 percent are homeless. Finally, America's Second Harvest (2001), in a study of more than 32,000 clients, finds that: 1) 39 percent of households include at least one employed adult, 2) 6.7 percent of households are dual-income households, 3) 1.1 percent of client households contain three working adults, 4) 19.7 percent of clients who have worked or are currently working have or had managerial or professional jobs, 5) 64 percent of households have incomes at or below the poverty level, 6) 45 percent of clients had to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating oil, 7) 36 percent had to choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage bill, 8) 30 percent had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care, 9) 30 percent of clients are receiving (federal) food stamps, and 10) 10 percent are homeless.

At least two notable segments of food-insecure consumers emerge from these (and other similar) studies: 1) the working poor, and 2) the newly poor. Each type of food-insecure consumer is discussed below.

The Working Poor

Not surprisingly, low levels of income and wealth increase one's chances of being food insecure. Arguably not so predictable is the number of households with one or more employed adults who have, in recent years, found it necessary to seek EFR assistance. The working poor are not only typically the largest client segment for EFR service providers, they are also among the fastest growing group of EFR users (America's Second Harvest 2004b). A2H estimates that: 1) 70 percent of poor families with children include a person who works, 2) the poverty rate among working families has risen by nearly 50 percent in the past two decades, and 3) nearly half of all parents in working poor families lack health insurance (2004b). A2H sums up the predicament faced by the food-insecure working poor as follows.

³While many EFR clients utilize these services due to being ineligible for or having recently lost governmental benefits just as many appear to be driven to seek private EFR assistance by the complexity of governmental assistance programs, being poorly informed about these programs, and/or the stigma associated with utilization of governmental benefits (see: Biggerstaff, et al. 2002; Martin et al. 2003).

In the last decade, hunger-relief agencies have found that the greatest increase in hungry Americans has been among the working poor. Despite the strong economy and their own hard work, they cannot always make ends meet (2004b, paragraph 1).

As many poor families continue to make the difficult transition from welfare to work, as their benefits are cut or reduced, they are finding that their meager wages are not sufficient to meet their basic needs... Too often, a family finds that it must cut their food budget or turn to a local charity for aid (2004d, paragraph 2).

The Newly Poor: Food Insecurity Among the White-Collar Unemployed

As alluded to above, Biggerstaff et al. (2002) find that recent job loss is one of the primary risk factors associated with seeking EFR assistance. As suggested by America's Second Harvest's (2001) finding that nearly 20 percent of their clients who have worked before or are currently working had or have managerial or professional jobs, a considerable portion of food-insecure persons seeking EFR assistance may be motivated to do so as a result of losing well-paying jobs (and facing resultant financial hardship).

Other research supports this contention. USDA researchers Nord and Brent, for example, note that: "During the 3-year period from 1995 to 1997... middle- and high-income households accounted for 20 percent of all food-insecure households and 17 percent of all households with hunger" (2002, p. ii). According to Nord and Brent: "This apparent anomaly raises questions about the measurement process" (2002, p. ii). The researchers then set out to determine whether these middle- and high-income households truly are food-insecure or if their identification as food-insecure is the result of measurement error. Nord and Brent (2002) find that measurement error is not a significant factor and that "food security as measured is the same phenomenon" (p. ii) as experienced by low-income households. They conclude that "determinants of, and responses to, food insecurity are similar across the income range" (p.iii).

Berner and Zellner (2003) also support the notion that once financially secure persons facing recent hardship constitute a significant and growing proportion of the food-insecure. Berner and Zellner tell the story of Michael Smith, a senior project manager at Nortel Networks, Ltd. in Richardson, Texas. Mr. Smith often donated money to a local food charity (where his wife was a volunteer worker). In January of 2001, Smith lost his job. He quickly found another job but shortly thereafter lost it as well. After being unemployed for nearly a year, Michael and his wife "found themselves back at the food pantry... but this time as supplicants" (Berner and Zellner 2003, paragraph 1). According to Berner and Zellner, this case is exemplary of a startling trend in food insecurity among the newly poor. Berner and Zellner report, for example, that, in 2002, the number of white-collar clients was up 190 percent at the Center for Food Action in Mahwah, New Jersey. At the food pantry where Michael Smith and his wife reluctantly became clients, the number of white-collar clients has recently quadrupled.

Berner and Zellner (2003) cite several factors (beyond mere job loss) that create this growing segment of food-insecure consumers. These include: 1) unemployment among college graduates rising faster than for those with high school degrees, 2) white-collar job hunters taking longer to find new work—9.6 weeks presently vs. 5.8 weeks in the economic downturn of the early 1990s, and 3) the white-collar unemployed having high levels of debt as a result of having "...locked themselves into high-dollar lifestyles during the boom and are now strapped with hefty mortgages, college

tuition, car payments, and credit-card debt" (paragraph 4). Finally, Berner and Zellner speculate that the newly poor may become an even more important customer segment for EFR service providers. According to Berner and Zellner (2003): "Often, the wealthy have fewer coping skills than the poor, who may better understand how to take advantage of the resources available to those down on their luck" (paragraph 6). As increasing numbers of the white-collar unemployed learn how to cope with their newfound food-insecurity—and seeking EFR assistance begins to lose its negative connotations, as Berner and Zellner suggest it might—we may see more and more newly poor persons frequenting food pantries and other EFR service organizations.

Food Insecurity and Surrogate Consumption

Surrogate consumption exists as an area of consumer research offering a wealth of opportunities to disciplinary scholars interested in advancing knowledge with regard to food security and, most particularly, the consumption behavior of food-insecure persons. Below, we first briefly review seminal surrogate consumption literature and then conceptualize the food-insecure as surrogate consumer users.

SURROGATE CONSUMPTION: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Solomon (1986) defines a surrogate consumer as "an agent retained by a consumer to guide, direct, and/or transact market activities" (p. 208). The two main theoretical treatments of surrogate consumption—Hollander (1971) and Solomon (1986)—both focus on exchange-based surrogate consumption activities involving professional surrogate consumers (e.g., wardrobe consultants and interior decorators) and the relatively wealthy persons choosing to employ them. Hollander (1971) focuses on describing various functional motivations for surrogate usage (e.g., lacking product knowledge and limited access to goods). Solomon (1986), while also addressing functional motivations, expands upon Hollander's perspective by: 1) discussing psychic and expressive motivations driving the employment of surrogates (e.g., the desire to make the most socially advantageous purchase possible or to move up in the social hierarchy), and 2) suggesting that surrogate consumption activity is most likely to occur when consumers are in role transition.

Overall, what emerges from a preponderance of the surrogate consumption literature in marketing and consumer research is: 1) the notion that surrogate users tend to be relatively wealthy and relatively young, and 2) that role transition and/or a desire to move up in the social hierarchy are situational factors that significantly increase the likelihood of surrogate consumer utilization. Another important—albeit seldom explicitly discussed—issue involves the notion that surrogate usage is a matter of choice and that it involves an economic exchange. Specifically, for either aesthetic and/or functional reasons, surrogate consumer users choose to formally assign the right to perform acquisition and other consumption activities to an expert, professional agent.

The practicality of our disciplinary focus on the relatively privileged persons most likely to choose to employ the services of a surrogate consumer is not questioned from a strategic/practitioner perspective. However, a problem that potentially arises from a theoretical perspective is whether or not these privileged consumers are the only surrogate users worthy of researcher attention. Related problems concern: 1) whether or not surrogate users necessarily choose to formally employ the surrogate consumer, and 2) whether or not an economic exchange necessarily takes place between the surrogate consumer and the person benefiting from their involvement in the consumption process.

It is our opinion that there exists a sizable segment of consumers, including but not limited to food-insecure persons (see Gabel 2005), who: 1) frequently need and use surrogates, 2) do not and/or cannot formally employ the surrogates that perform services for them, 3) often have little if any choice but to rely on surrogate intervention for fulfillment of consumption needs, and 4) go unaccounted for in existing surrogate consumption theory. Below, we view the food-insecure as surrogate consumer users worthy of consumer researcher attention.

The Food-Insecure as Surrogate Consumer Users

Food-insecure persons often lack the financial resources to function within the “normal” exchange-based marketplace in which surrogate consumption studies are typically conducted. The food insecure are, however, highly likely to utilize the services of surrogate consumers (e.g., persons employed by EFR organizations) based on strong functional need. Although the food insecure typically do not compensate or formally employ the persons or organizations providing EFR services, these service providers do function as surrogates in that they perform consumption activities (e.g., food acquisition and preparation) on behalf of the food insecure.

The newly poor food-insecure warrant special consideration as surrogate consumers. This is due to the fact that these persons, who may account for as many as 20 percent of food-insecure consumers in the U.S. (America’s Second Harvest 2001; Nord and Brent 2002), differ from their working-poor counterparts in at least two important ways central to the concept of surrogate consumption. First, the newly poor are in role transition—they, often due to recent job loss, unemployment, and/or underemployment are learning their new role as lesser-affluent consumers. This transitional condition, according to Solomon (1986), is likely to motivate the persons experiencing it to seek the help of others—EFR surrogate consumers—in an effort to adjust to their new living conditions. Second, the newly poor may be far more likely than their working poor counterparts to exhibit “type B” food insecurity—food insecurity resulting from resorting to socially unacceptable means of food acquisition. Thus, the social implications of surrogate consumption here differ significantly from those generally discussed. Whereas the privileged surrogate users discussed by Solomon (1986) often employ surrogates in an effort to either make the most socially advantageous purchase or to move up in the social hierarchy, newly poor food-insecure surrogate users may experience negative social consequences (e.g., stigmatization) as a result of surrogate use. Accordingly, the newly poor may be hesitant to use EFR services or may not use them to the extent that they perhaps should. It is possible, however, that this may change over time as the newly poor learn to cope with their new roles and “do what they have to do” to make ends meet.

DISCUSSION

Food insecurity is a large and growing social problem in the United States. With but few notable exceptions (e.g., Hill’s [Hill 1991; 1992; Hill and Stamey 1990] work on the food acquisition behaviors of the homeless), consumer researchers have had little to say about food security. We feel that consumer researchers are well qualified to both advance knowledge on food security and to make positive differences in the lives of the food insecure. Further, we believe that viewing the food insecure as surrogate consumer users is a potentially fruitful perspective for scholars interested in food security.

One area where consumer researchers, particularly those experienced in ethnography, have much to offer involves better

measuring and understanding “type-B” food insecurity—the dimension of food insecurity most in need of additional study (Hamilton et al. 1997). For example, in the context of surrogate consumption activity engaged in by the newly poor, disciplinary scholars are well equipped to investigate the under-researched issue of what does and what does not constitute a socially unacceptable means of food acquisition (at the level of the lived human experience of the food-insecure surrogate user). In extant research on “type B” food insecurity, researchers have used questions that they assume serve as indicators of socially unacceptable means of food acquisition only to then cite as a limitation to their findings their (post-hoc) observation that the questions used “could be interpreted by some respondents as not indicating behaviors that are socially unacceptable” (Hamilton et al., 1997, p. 65). Social unacceptability is, in short, a highly subjective matter: 1) that at times has not been viewed as being highly subjective in attempts to measure “type B” food insecurity, and 2) that consumer researchers are in an excellent position to better conceptualize.

Additional examination of the interface between the food-insecure surrogate user and the surrogate service provider also provides consumer researchers with an opportunity to advance knowledge of food security in heretofore non-considered ways. Better profiling the food-insecure surrogate user, perhaps in an attempt to better segment the food-insecure surrogate user market or to understand the consumption-related expectations of food-insecure surrogate users, is one possible avenue for research. Another goal for consumer researchers to pursue might be better understanding what motivates food-insecure persons to seek (or not seek) interactions with EFR surrogate service providers. Whatever the specific objective, we hope that this exploratory inquiry will encourage consumer researchers to at least consider better understanding food security and, perhaps, try to make positive differences in the lives of the growing number of food-insecure consumers in the United States.

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APPENDIX

Questions Used to Measure Household Food Security in the Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement¹

1. We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.
Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
2. The food that we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more.
Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
3. We couldn't afford to eat balanced meals.
Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
4. In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in the household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food? (Yes/No)
5. (If Yes to Question 4) How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?
6. In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food? (Yes/No)
7. In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry, but didn't eat, because you couldn't afford enough food (Yes/No)
8. In the last 12 months, did you lose weight because you didn't have enough money for food? (Yes/No)
9. In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in your household ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food? (Yes/No)
10. (If Yes to Question 9) How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

(Questions 11-18 are asked only if the household includes children under 18 years of age.)

11. We relied on only a few kinds of low-cost food to feed our children because we were running out of money to buy food.
Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
12. We couldn't feed our children a balanced meal because we couldn't afford that.
Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
13. The children were not eating enough because we just couldn't afford enough food.
14. In the last 12 months, did you ever cut the size of any of the children's meals because there wasn't enough money for food? (Yes/No)
15. In the last 12 months, were the children ever hungry but you just couldn't afford more food? (Yes/No)
16. In the last 12 months, did any of the children ever skip a meal because there wasn't enough money for food? (Yes/No)
17. (If Yes to Question 16) How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?
18. In the last 12 months, did any of the children ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food? (Yes/No)

¹Sources: Nord, Andrews, and Carlson 2004; Wilde 2004. Not all questions are weighted equally. Items are listed in increasing order of severity (Wilde 2004).

A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing: Exploring Researcher Vulnerability

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ABSTRACT

Methodological concerns surrounding the research of vulnerable consumers tend to focus on respondents' welfare, that they are not harmed or further disadvantaged by the research process (Reinharz 1992; Finch 1984). Consequently, researcher vulnerability has been largely neglected within the consumer research literature. This paper aims to identify the ways that research with vulnerable consumers can impact on consumer researchers. Reflecting on our doctoral research experiences with vulnerable consumers, namely low income families and consumers confined to the home due to disability, we identify areas where the physical and psychological vulnerability of the researcher was exposed and the resulting strategies employed.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the heightened awareness of diversity within society during the last decade, consumers who are not deemed part of the dominant social system have traditionally been "underresearched and underserved" (Henderson 1998). Transformatory consumer research is likely to be accompanied by increased interest in vulnerable and disadvantaged consumer groups such as consumers with disabilities and those on low incomes. Vulnerable consumers are "those who are at a disadvantage in exchange relationships where that disadvantage is attributable to characteristics that are largely not controllable by them at the time of the transaction" (Andreasen and Manning 1990). Researching such diverse consumer populations can result in insights into human behavior that have the potential to enhance quality of life (Henderson 1998; Moore and Miller 1999). A less ambitious but still important aim is to provide such consumers with 'a voice.' Reinharz (1992) cited demystification as one of a number of transformatory research strategies where the aim is to investigate and challenge common myths and stereotypes that persist about such groups. Vulnerable consumers are not often the subject of interest within marketing and consumer research and it has been acknowledged that further research aimed at dispelling myths and overcoming stereotypical misconceptions is needed (Murphy 1990; Philips 1990).

Methodological concerns surrounding the research of vulnerable consumers tend to focus on respondents' welfare, that they are not harmed or further disadvantaged by the research process (Reinharz 1992; Finch 1984). The re-institutionalization of ethical review is evident by the expanding role of Research Ethics Committees across the UK and North America in recent years (Truman 2003). Hill (1995) identified a number of issues and ethical dilemmas that consumer researchers face when researching vulnerable consumers. Whilst the protection of vulnerable research subjects has attracted much debate across all disciplines, little attention is given to the impact of such research on the researchers. Researcher vulnerability has been largely neglected within the consumer research literature. As the following definition implies, sensitive research can impact on both the researcher and the researched: "a sensitive topic is one that potentially poses for those involved a substantial threat, the emergence of which renders problematic for the researcher and/or the researched the collection, holding, and/or dissemination of research data" (Lee and Renzetti 1993).

The assumption of researcher power is questionable, rather, the relationship between researcher and respondent is one of

"shifting boundaries" (Davison 2004, 338). As the title of this paper implies, the researcher is not always in the dominant position but is open to vulnerability. The aim of this paper is to identify and highlight the ways that research with vulnerable consumers can impact on consumer researchers leaving them vulnerable. Following a brief review of the limited literature in this area, we go on to reflect on our own experiences of undertaking doctoral research interviews with vulnerable consumers, namely low income families and consumers confined to the home due to disability or long term illness. We identify a number of areas where the physical and psychological vulnerability of the researcher was exposed and the strategies employed as a result. Finally, the paper argues for more recognition of this issue and how it might be incorporated into the researcher training and supervision processes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Due to the paucity of material dealing with researcher vulnerability within consumer research, it was necessary to consult other disciplines to provide the background for this paper. The sociological arena provided some initial ideas on this subject.

Berger and Kellner (1981, 11) suggested that a defining feature of sociology is precisely what they call "a certain debunking angle of vision." In other words, it is a frame of reference which looks beyond the visible and the obvious to what is latent, hidden or obscured. Drawing on this definition, it should be a natural progression to move from the obvious potential vulnerability of the researched to the masked vulnerabilities of the researcher. De Laine (2000, 3) stated that during the fieldwork "researchers experience ethical dilemmas with an immediacy and personal involvement that draws on intuition and empathy, feelings and emotion." Davison (2004) concluded that the potential to feel isolated, vulnerable and distressed does not magically disappear because we assume the role of researcher.

Marshall (1994) went a step further than this and suggested that doing research can seriously damage health. For example, Goode (2000) carried out a research project on drug and alcohol-using mothers, a group who remain a hidden and hard to access population. Using a feminist perspective Goode (2000) found that there were no strict guidelines on how such research should be conducted and stated that "I had to find my own way through these dilemmas." Researching this group placed "emotional demands" on the researcher and the fieldwork was described as "difficult and demanding." Indeed, from a feminist perspective, Reinharz (1992, 36) discussed stress as an inherent variable that the researcher encounters in addressing topics of a sensitive nature: "The interview process gives the researcher an intimate view of this pain and the shock of discovery may eventually force her to confront her own vulnerability."

Similarly, Scott's (1998) research on ritual abuse illuminated such vulnerability on the part of the researcher. In this study, the effects acknowledged were both emotional and physical. Scott (1998, 5.14) stated that "the sheer quantity of stories in the research process created a high level of stress. I had dreams about dying, and dreams in which I learned that none of my interviewees had told me the truth. Staying in an unfamiliar house after one interview I walked in my sleep for the first time in my life, and during the weeks of transcription I endured stomach cramps and nausea on a regular

basis." She concluded that doing research can not only damage your health but also "make a nasty dent in your ontological security."

Nursing literature identified such effects experienced by the researcher. James and Platzer (1999) suggested that hearing stories from vulnerable populations (in this case, lesbians and gay men) can be "upsetting and stressful." Consequently, "it is rare to find honest accounts of the difficulties and dilemmas encountered when conducting sensitive research with vulnerable research populations" (James and Platzer 1999, 1).

Although there has been some interest raised in this direction it is generally secondary to the main thrust of the investigation. Historically, many researchers have tended to disguise the problems arising in the research process so as not to elicit negative feedback in terms of result validity (Brewer 1993). Furthermore, the admission of vulnerability may be interpreted by others as a sign of weakness or even researcher incompetence and thus such vulnerabilities are usually experienced in isolation (Davidson 2004).

The paucity of research accounts on disadvantaged consumers means that conducting research on such populations may appear a daunting task for the researcher and, in practice, can expose unthought-of ethical and methodological problems. More consumer researchers need to override these problems and acknowledge the presence of invisible, under-researched disadvantaged groups. In consideration of these thoughts, we now go on to reflect on some of the problems and issues that emerged during fieldwork with such groups and their impact on the researchers.

METHODOLOGY

Although many consumer and qualitative research accounts provide advice on interviewing techniques (e.g. Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989; Carson et al. 2001), there has been little advice about strategies to use in the case of sensitive topics with vulnerable consumers. Findings in this paper are drawn from a reflection on the research process incorporating two studies on vulnerable populations, namely the home-confined consumer and the low-income consumer. The study on home-confined consumers, which is still ongoing, investigates the consumption practices in this population through multiple depth interviews with a small number of case study respondents over a period of two years. The low-income families study examined the coping strategies employed by families to deal with disadvantage in the marketplace and the ways in which these could be interpreted as acts of consumer agency. Single in-depth interviews were undertaken with all family members. In total, 30 families were included in the study. Interviews were held in respondents' homes in both studies.

The methodological approaches adopted, namely, radical constructivism and social constructionism, were considered effective in capturing the consumer lived experience without compounding the vulnerabilities of respondents. Given the limited opportunities for social interaction, radical constructivism offers an appropriate channel for exploring the transition from ableism to non-ableism in the experiential reality of the home-confined consumer. In contrast, the "ableism" of the low-income consumer dictates that social constructionism provides the means to explore the subjective consumer experience within a social context.

Additional supporting material was deemed necessary to complement interviewing procedures in order to obtain a more holistic picture of realities under exploration. In both studies, living diaries consisting of the reflective thoughts of the researcher were compiled immediately after each interview when the experience was still "fresh." These diaries provided the basis for the discussion pertaining to researcher vulnerability presented in this paper.

Researchers in the qualitative tradition see the disclosure of sensitive information as dependent upon the ability to manage

privacy and confidentiality with a non-condemnatory attitude. The creation of a relaxed environment can aid researchers to confront issues which are deep, personally threatening and potentially painful (Lee 1993). The implications for understanding those groups marginalized within the context of consumption rely on the researchers adopting an empathic stance to ease exploration and knowing. Given that the two studies were of a very personal and confidential nature, it is naturally assumed that the interview is typically a stressful experience for all parties concerned (Brannen 1988) and to alleviate this stress, every effort was made to minimize potential discomfort.

Researching vulnerable populations can make the researcher more sensitive to the demands of those we study. This shows itself in data collection methods that emphasize and support the informants' empowerment when the presence of the researcher (i.e. an outsider) may enhance and exaggerate vulnerability. We now go on to reflect on some of the problems and issues that emerged during fieldwork with such groups and their impact on the researchers.

REFLECTIVE FINDINGS

This section discusses the transformative measures that were required by the researchers throughout these studies to counterbalance both the researcher and researched vulnerability, and as such demonstrates the inextricable linkage between both these vulnerabilities.

Interview Issues

In both studies interview topics could be considered as sensitive in nature and interviews involved the discussion of private and personal issues. Despite this, in most cases the researchers found that respondents were keen to share their personal experiences. Participants in the home-confined consumer study were obviously limited in opportunities for social interaction and this was also found to be a problem for low-income consumers, especially lone mothers, because of employment status and an inability to participate in the leisure lifestyle. As such, many respondents suffered feelings of isolation and consequently welcomed the opportunity to talk to someone. Given this isolation and the researchers' empathetic response, the danger of raising respondents' expectations of ongoing contact and friendship was evident. In the low-income consumer study, the researcher had to make it clear that contact would be over a short time scale.

Even with informed consent, qualitative interview routes can never be fully predicted and from the researchers' perspective this created the dilemma that respondents may reveal too much information. In relation to the disclosure of intimate details, Finch (1984, 80) noted that "I have emerged from interviews with the feeling that my interviewees need to know how to protect themselves from people like me." Particular emotional (e.g. depression) and behavioral (e.g. obtaining of illicit income) aspects of respondents' lives indeed caused upset for the researchers and emphasized the two way vulnerability between researcher and the researched. Despite hearing stories of hardship, researchers had to ensure that they did not don the counselors' robes and heighten the consumers' expectations of receiving personal advice. Rather, researchers prepared in advance of interviews a list of potential organizations where consumers could seek advice and support (e.g. debt counseling).

With reference to the interview process, it should be acknowledged that when conducting research in private homes the risk of intrusion is high (Stalker 1998), given the unequal exchange between researcher and respondent in the research process. A study by Swain, Heyman and Gillman (1998) involving people with learning difficulties acknowledged the danger of unwanted disclosure or disclosures later regretted, and the need to balance respon-

dents' right to "a voice" and respondents' right to privacy. This highlights the necessity for transformative consumer research especially when it is unclear what the benefits to respondents will be. The overriding challenge then for researchers has to be the ability to balance unwanted intrusion with over-immersion in 'the cause' (Stalker 1998).

Language

Within research carried out on the home-confined consumer, particular cases called for increased attention in terms of the mode of language utilized. To illustrate this point we will consider the example of Jay, a quadriplegic as a result of an accident.

Both the researcher and the researched conversed using language associated with movement and the ableist perspective. This was employed to accentuate feelings of "normalism." For example, Jay did not adopt discourse related to immobility and rather made comments like, "I was up since 4 o'clock this morning" or "Imagine I had to go to bed at 10.30pm on a Friday night!" The significance of this style of language, given the extreme situational confinement to bed, is apparent. For the researcher this involved careful consideration of using strong ableist adjectives by adopting a style dictated by respondent's own experiential reality in his special space.

As well as oral communication the researcher also had to consider the issue of body language in this particular case. During interviews with Jay, the researcher attempted to suppress their own body movements in favor of a more animated form of speech. In a situation of this nature, the researcher felt awkward and guilty with respect to their own "ableism" and in order to downplay this imbalance and prevent feelings of disempowerment, the emphasis was shifted to oral communication.

Language is not only a consideration for groups "in extremis," rather it is a compulsory tool that all researchers of vulnerable populations should be aware of in terms of its extended implications. Take the case of the low-income consumer, whose presence is more prevalent as regards population figures than the former home-confined consumer. While not all respondents complied with the stereotypical view that low-income consumers are essentially those of a low level of education, it was an issue for the majority of the respondents involved in this study. This placed a strain on the researcher to employ an appropriate style of language that minimized educational differences in order to make respondents feel comfortable.

These studies were carried out in a community in conflict where political unrest and cultural divisions resulted in additional problems for the researchers. Many of these issues arising could also be pertinent and applicable to other communities in conflict or post-conflict situations. The researchers had to access and interact with respondents coming from different religious and cultural backgrounds. While this aspect was not a major player in the mechanics of the data interpretation process, it nevertheless played a significant role in terms of researchers' language during in-depth interviewing. As a result, researchers' language had to adopt a more neutralized form to avoid offence and misunderstandings, which is inherent in different cultural settings within the same community. This placed a considerable strain on the researchers and demanded a constancy of thought that inevitably placed constraints on the free flow of communication.

Security

As stated previously, the study of low-income consumers involved interviews in respondents' own homes. Although this was advantageous to informants in that the natural setting offered both sanctuary and empowerment, it however, created problems for the researcher. In the main, security was an overriding concern. The

majority of interviews in this study were conducted in zones considered as high criminality. To avoid respondents encountering feelings of relative deprivation, the researcher chose not to arrive at respondents' homes in a car, even in cases where access via public transport was particularly problematic. From the researcher's perspective this created feelings of pre-interview anxiety in relation to the journey to and from respondents' homes.

The primary concern of research on sensitive topics has been the protection of vulnerable subjects (Lee, 1993), and as such, this resulted in the researcher placing her own personal security at risk. Reliance on public transport necessitated the meticulous planning of routes to ensure that personal safety was maximized. Part of these journeys entailed some measure of walking and at these times personal risk was heightened due to the overriding sectarian climate evidenced in these areas. Interviews were scheduled to facilitate respondents and as such did not always fit with times that took into account the welfare of the researcher. This resulted in the researcher being forced to "kill time" in areas that rendered the researcher "vulnerable."

Similar problems were encountered within the home-confined consumer study. For example, the researcher felt that her own possessions (an accepted extension of the self, Belk 1988) appeared alien to the research landscape. The registration plate on the researcher's car identified it as being different to the accepted norm within the respondent's community and therefore a potential target for sectarian crime. This became a particular worry of the researcher during periods of civil unrest and led to the systematic checking of the vehicle upon departure.

Researcher Identity

It has been acknowledged that ethnography is "*a means of self-discovery and creative self-authorship*" and through the ethnographic process, the ethnographer's identity is indirectly and creatively managed (Humphries, Brown and Hatch 2003). However, it is not only in the domain of ethnography that issues concerning the researchers' identity arise. Identity concerns highlighted within ethnography will also be apparent in the utilization of depth-interviewing involving vulnerable consumers. In consideration of our studies, the disclosure of sensitive information caused the researchers to be more reflective and as such, the discovery of the other also led to the discovering of the self (Humphries, Brown and Hatch 2003).

Taking a contextual viewpoint, the peculiarities of the research arena have already been identified. Such an environment has had an impact on the researchers' self-identities. To illustrate, the researchers have had to enter social spaces where they are confronted with and have to interact with ideologies that conflict with their own perspectives. The desire to adapt and adopt rules of social behavior exhibited by respondents led to the suppression of the researchers' own identities.

This problem was evidenced in both studies to varying degrees. The different zones where research was conducted required the researchers to present differing aspects of the self in order to establish an interactive equilibrium. As a result, other aspects of the self were diminished to avoid disconnection from respondents and sustain an interactive forum.

The home-confined consumer study extends this aspect of suppression to a heightened degree due to the longitudinal nature of the study. Understandably, increased involvement and contact with respondents resulted in the internalization and regularization of the codes of conduct particular to respondents' settings. As a consequence of this, the researcher's own sense of self had to be altered during the data collection period.

As literatures suggests, the maintenance of the outer body is a reflection of self-identity (Thompson and Haytko 1997; Featherstone 1991). The importance of this upon entering the field becomes heightened when interacting in vulnerable spheres. In relation to the low-income consumer study, the concerns of outer body image were of particular significance given the research environment. Within the contrasting cultural communities, differing styles of “uniform” were evident. As such, failure to comply with the common mode of dress could have had a detrimental effect given that apparel is perceived as an indicator of one’s political and religious stance as well as socio-economic grouping. These concerns were incorporated into the research design, meaning that the researcher had to fit with the prerequisites of each community resulting in the shedding of one identity in favor of another. The donning of multiple identities, other than the researcher’s own, accentuated feelings of displacement and suppression of the researcher’s known and desired self-image.

In absence of “knowing” the rules of respondents’ social worlds, researchers encountered obstacles and embarrassment in accessing respondents’ experiential reality. In one case of home-confinement, the non-realization that all manner of perfumes, deodorants, soaps and fumes of smoking instantly created barriers to entry and consequential inclusion to respondent’s social network. This showed the importance of immersing oneself in the socio-historical perspective. This is made compulsory by the respondent’s stringent testing to judge if the researcher could be allowed entry into the respondent’s special space. The washing ritual employed by the researcher in this particular case to eliminate all artificial odors led to continual self-examination and testing for levels of smell before carrying out the explorative study.

These rules were not relaxed and all subjects interacting in this social world had to adopt such measures to gain access. The respondents in this case, two sisters, are gatekeepers and it is only through their high standards of acceptability that their social world is constructed. Obviously such measures fall heavily with the researcher to keep in an outer body condition that matches respondents’ level of suitability.

Multiple Vulnerabilities

Respondents addressed within these studies can be considered to be doubly vulnerable. This highlights the danger of defining respondents in terms of one characteristic such as poverty or disability. As Henderson (1998) acknowledged, diversity exists not only across groups but within generalized groups and as such the exploration of the human situation demands an individualized gaze. Moore and Miller (1999) noted that the inclusion of doubly vulnerable individuals in the research design may present special challenges. With respect to the home-confined consumer, a particular case scenario presented the researcher with not only home confinement but also “interiorized” confinement in terms of “ableism” in the home. Having two sources of confinement to negotiate adds to the difficulties presented to the researcher. The extremely restrictive special space of this respondent accentuated the problems that access to such a social world entails. The significance of this extreme confinement, emotionally and physically caused the researcher to maintain a constant focus on the minutiae of interaction. It can be extremely tiring to keep a constancy of behavior suitable for the respondent without overpowering and dominating the situation. In the respondent’s world, the rules that are constructed subjectively should be adhered to at all times and the researcher must acknowledge that their position within this context is not perceived as “abuse” of the respondent. This reflexive introspection coupled with the intensity of said situation together maximizes both the respondents’ and researcher’s vulnerability.

Many of the low-income consumers studied in this research are considered as doubly vulnerable. They are not only relatively deprived in monetary terms, but the added “ghettoization” ostracizes and stereotypes them as a direct result of their geographical landscape. These respondents are also stigmatized for their reliance on welfare state benefits and have to deal with the negativity projected towards them by other members of the consumer society. The researcher not only had to address the respondents’ feelings of isolation, low self-esteem and social exclusion but the added pressures of dealing with the cultural implications in conjunction with “ghettoization,” played a major role in how the ambience of social exchange was established.

When dealing with consumers who are faced with multiple sources of vulnerability, the researcher is presented with the problem of determining the most appropriate way to respond to informants. Davison (2004) discussed this aspect in relation to social work researchers suggesting that feelings of powerlessness arise due to the conflict between the role of researcher and the role of social worker. In these studies, the disclosure of personal stories regarding the difficulties encountered by vulnerable consumers aroused feelings of empathy in the researchers. For example, one respondent involved in the low-income consumer study discussed the recent suicide of her sister and the imprisonment of her son. Hearing stories of this nature created feelings of sympathy and compassion and increased the researcher’s awareness of the real need to help such vulnerable individuals. Personal circumstances like these, presented the researchers with an added dilemma in relation to power asymmetries. Careful management of the researcher-respondent relationship was required to ensure that respondents were not further “victimized” or “romanticized” (Edwards 1990) in terms of their poverty and disability.

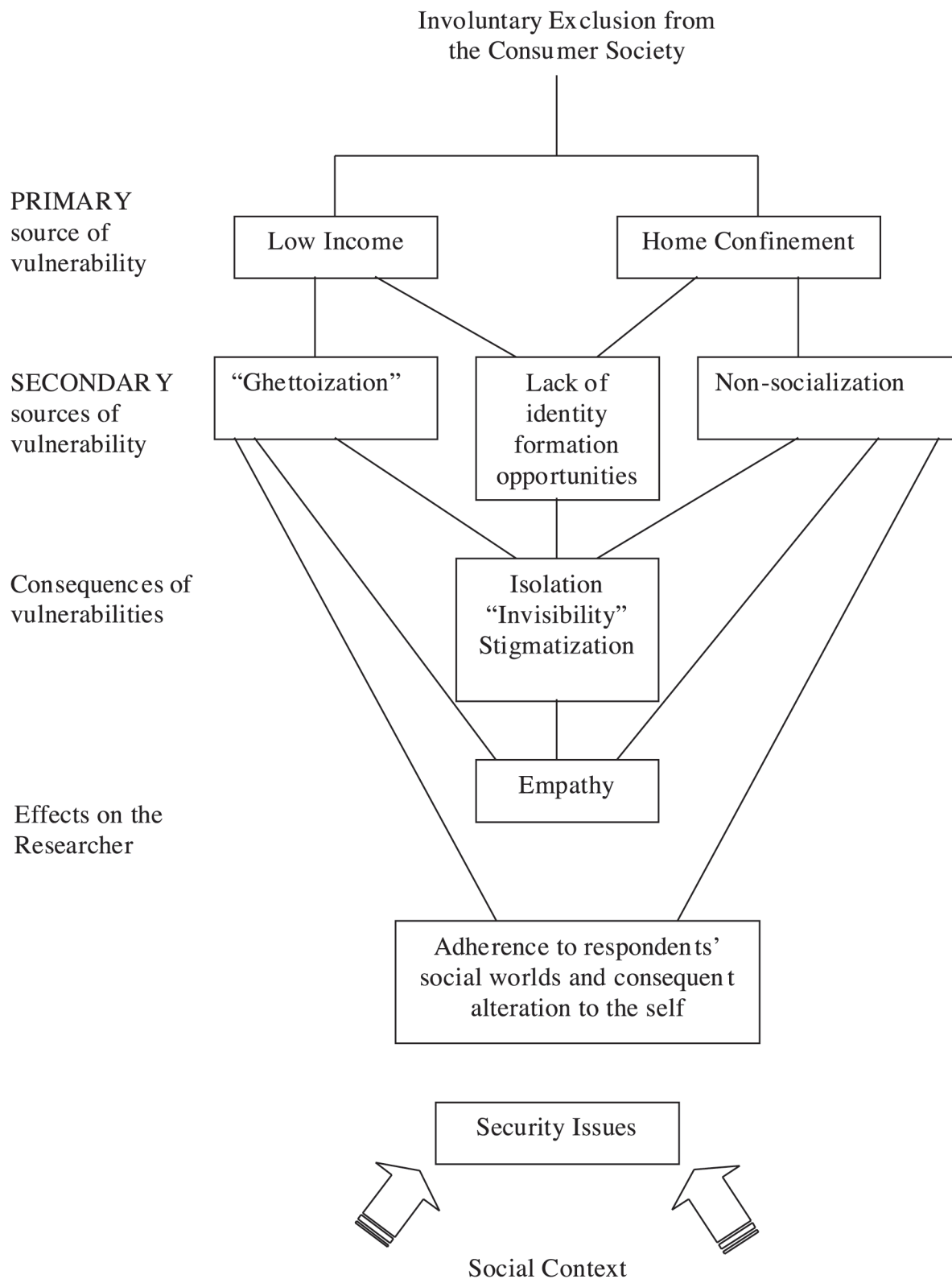
Figure 1 illustrates the multiple vulnerabilities facing both the low-income and home-confined populations and the consequent effects on the researcher. The primary source of vulnerability can stem from various factors such as divorce or the death of a breadwinner for low-income consumers and an accident or illness for home-confined consumers. In both populations the primary source of vulnerability results in additional difficulties that also render respondents vulnerable. These factors, as well as the social context in which the research was carried out, presented a number of obstacles for the researchers. However, it is important for the researcher to enter into the consumer vulnerability experience with openness in attempting to experience it and embrace vulnerability as a reflection of the diversity of humanity.

CONCLUSIONS

Researchers working in the domain of vulnerable consumers need to be aware that feelings of vulnerability may be reflected back to the researcher. As a consequence, research involving vulnerable populations calls for careful consideration of the holistic research environment in order to minimize potential risks for both parties. Although it is possible to anticipate certain aspects of risk associated with researcher vulnerability, it is only during the process of fieldwork that hidden risks emerge and, as a result, every eventuality cannot be addressed in the context of formal training. Topics not considered sensitive at the research design stage may become so as fieldwork progresses. Similarly, it is difficult to predict in advance exactly how the research will impact on the researcher and what vulnerabilities will be exposed.

Consequently this strengthens the case for open dialogue between supervisors and doctoral students to ensure that doctoral students obtain the relevant guidance and support (Davison 2004). In other words, researcher vulnerability needs to be on the supervisory agenda so that uncomfortable issues can be explored. This is

FIGURE 1
Sources and Consequences of Vulnerability



especially important as fieldwork begins and researchers are at their most vulnerable. It is also important to devote attention to issues of researcher vulnerability at the outset of a research study. Davidson (2004) suggested that when conducting research with vulnerable groups, supervisors may find it helpful to explore the motivations and assumptions that research students bring to the research topic.

Some of the issues highlighted in this paper should be considered during any research study, regardless of whether it involves vulnerable or non-vulnerable consumers. There is always going to be a researcher/participant(s) interaction that cannot be avoided in that each party is affected by the research experience.

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Product Attribute Evaluations: Understanding the Role of Consumer Experience and Halo Effects

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Product trial is an important marketing activity in highly competitive markets where true product differentiation is lacking (Bloom and Pailin 1995). As a personal introduction to a brand, product trials are frequently used to gain consumer acceptance of innovative offerings (Smith and Swinyard 1982). The self-generated knowledge produced from product trials serves as an important input to consumer brand knowledge—the experiential information subsequently becomes the *basis* for product-related brand associations. According to Keller (1993) brand associations are the foundation of a brand's image and the primary mechanism for imparting brand meaning to consumers. However, most brands are an amalgamation of attributes that vary in kind and whose relative importance in brand building is unclear.

We explore the influence of experience and non-experience based attributes on brand evaluations by drawing on previous findings from consumer behavior research. The extant literature reveals that direct experience compared to indirect experience disproportionately affects consumer beliefs (Fazio and Zanna 1978, Smith and Swinyard 1988). Additionally, brand beliefs derived from direct experience are stronger and held with greater confidence than those constructed from marketer-controlled sources of information such as advertising (Fazio and Zanna 1978). Moreover, the influence of direct experience on consumer brand beliefs tends to vary depending on an attribute's specific properties (Wright and Lynch 1995). Based on the seeming power of self-generated knowledge and direct experience, the major premise guiding this research is that consumers anchor their beliefs on experience rather than non-experience attributes when trying products.

Research on halo effects, a cognitive process in which the global evaluation of a brand influences one's response to other attributes or the impression of one attribute shapes the impression of another independent attribute (Nisbett and Wilson 1977), permits us to make a priori predictions about the influence of experience-based attributes on brand evaluations. For example, co-variation in attribute relationships appears to be driven by experience attributes. Wirtz and Bateson (1995) also proclaim that experience attributes have a potential to induce 'halo effects'. Beckwith and Lehmann (1975) and James and Carter (1978) further suggest that attributes lacking a physical dimension or well-defined properties tend to be affected by halo effect. Hence, it is possible that the nexus of brand evaluations resides in consumers' evaluation of experience attributes.

The purpose of this research is to identify the source of co-variation, if any, in product trials. Our investigation of consumers' evaluation of the different types of attributes (i.e., search, experience and credence) builds on theories of 'halo effects' and 'information diagnosticity'. We make two predictions: (1) attribute evaluations for search, experience and credence attributes are dependent on one another and (2) consumers' post-trial evaluation of credence attributes are affected by their post-trial evaluation of experience attributes.

We conducted two experiments using everyday grocery items (fruit cocktail and trash bags) to test our hypotheses with student subjects. In Study 1, subjects evaluated search, experience and

credence attributes for a nationally-branded product both before and after trying the product. The primary measures included attribute evaluations for each of the three types of attributes both before and after trying the product. We analyzed the data to understand how post-trial ratings of search, experience and credence attributes vary when compared to their pre-trial ratings. Study 2 replicated the first study using a different national brand as the target product. The key findings from both studies support our hypotheses. First, we found evaluations of search, experience and credence attributes are not independent. Subjects displayed a systematic pattern of bias in their post-trial attribute evaluations. Second, subjects' post-trial evaluation of experience attributes compared to their pre-trial evaluation significantly affected their post-trial credence attribute evaluation. The observed halo effect applied to both positive and negative brand evaluations. However, evaluations of search attributes were not affected by the halo effect.

In sum, product trial experiences appear to alter consumer evaluations of credence attributes but they show no significant influence on evaluations of search attributes. The halo effects we observed in attribute-level evaluations stem from the anchoring of brand evaluations around experience attributes. Consequently, the presence of halo effects in brand evaluations can potentially enhance or erode brand building efforts for nationally-branded products by overshadowing the true merits or masking the inadequacies in search and credence attributes. Marketing academicians and managers should increase their efforts to understand and harness the power of experience attributes to create unique brand associations.

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The Effect of Target Familiarity on Prediction Accuracy

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

A couple leaves the furniture store quarreling because she cannot understand why he likes the black leather upholstery for the recliner seat they had agreed to buy. A man buys one of his friends a T-shirt of his favorite football team that he will never wear. A girl gets an expensive Gwen Stefani haircut because her fiancé loves No Doubt, only to find out that he likes the music but not the looks of the singer. Why are we so inaccurate in predicting the product attitudes of familiar others, like family members, friends and colleagues?

Although it could intuitively be expected that target familiarity results in more accurate predictions due to the extensive amount of pre-stored target information, previous research already provided some evidence that people are indeed not very good in predicting a familiar target's product attitudes. Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale (1986), for instance, found that only 53 percent of the partners were able to outperform a hypothetical forecaster who simply used the average gender-specific preference. A lack of diagnostic information about the familiar other's specific product attitudes has typically been identified as the main reason for these low levels of accuracy (e.g., Kenny and Acitelli 2001; Swann and Gill 1997). This implies that it would be easy to overcome prediction accuracy, once diagnostic information is available. In this study, we argue that predicting product attitudes of familiar others induces prediction problems far beyond a simple lack of diagnostic information. In fact, we hypothesize that familiarity will even have a negative effect on prediction accuracy in the presence of product-specific target feedback. A first explanation is that people, at least initially, assume high levels of attitude similarity with familiar others (e.g., Moreland and Zajonc 1982). This initial similarity assumption likely colors new but ambiguous attitude information and motivates predictors to ignore attitudinal discrepancies (e.g., Davis and Rusbult 2001; Stapel and Schwarz 1998). Therefore, high levels of projection may persist, despite the availability of veridical attitude feedback. Second, people have an elaborate amount of information about familiar others. This diverse knowledge base probably makes them highly confident and, in turn, less sensitive to new, product-specific attitude feedback (Alba and Hutchinson 2000).

Taken together, we predict that target familiarity will have a negative effect on prediction accuracy if product-specific attitude feedback is available because people will put heavy weight on their own attitudes and their pre-stored target information at the cost of more diagnostic attitude feedback. To test the specific effects of familiarity on prediction accuracy, we asked participants to predict their relationship partner's attitudes towards a series of product alternatives. Instead of manipulating the prediction target, we manipulated the awareness that one is predicting the partner's attitudes. More specifically, for some participants we disguised the true identity of the target by telling them they had to predict the product attitudes of a stranger. For the others, we revealed the true identity of the target and asked the participants to predict their partner's product attitudes. By keeping the target (i.e., the partner) constant in all conditions, we avoided confounds (like differences in attitude similarity).

Applying this manipulation in three experiments, we provide the first evidence that target familiarity hurts prediction accuracy in the presence of product-specific attitude feedback. This negative

effect is especially strong when attitude similarity was low. This could indicate that participants continue to rely heavily on their own product attitudes when predicting those of a familiar, but dissimilar other. Yet, our findings provide evidence that familiarity does not hinder participants in adapting their projection level to the actual level of attitude similarity. Instead, our results suggest that target familiarity causes predictors to put an overly heavy weight on pre-stored target information relative to the new and diagnostic feedback about their partner's product attitudes. More specifically, we find that people attend to product-specific attitude feedback and they also learn from it. Yet, when predicting their partner's product attitudes in a subsequent task, people do not fully rely on this newly encoded and diagnostic information. Instead, they continue to retrieve other, pre-stored partner information. Given that most of this pre-stored partner information is not diagnostic for specific attitude predictions, the elaborate partner information turns out to be a cause of prediction inaccuracy rather than a prediction advantage.

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Preference Exploration and Learning: The Role of Intensiveness and Extensiveness of Experience

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

“Not alone *age* matures one, but *breadth of experience* and *depth of reflection*.”
—Ross (1948, p. 214)

Thinking back to their first sip of wine or their first visit to a modern art museum, people are often surprised at how much their tastes and preferences have evolved. Though too slow to draw attention, these changes can become quite striking over time. In this research, we attempt to shed new light on how and why preferences evolve.

We reviewed the extent literature and identified two broad classes of factors exerting influence on preference learning. One class of factors (e.g., biology and exposure) has a direct influence, whereby preferences respond to lower-order forces such as biological adaptation and sensory feedback (Beauchamp, Bertino, and Engelman 1983; Birch & Marlin 1982; Janiszewski 1993; Lawless 1985; Pliner 1982; Rozin & Schiller 1980; Torrance 1958). The second class of factors (e.g., informational goals and social learning) has an indirect influence, whereby preferences are subject to higher-order forces such as cognitive representations of desirable end states (Bandura 1977; Belk 1988; Bourdieu 1984; Brewer 1991; Heilman, Bowman, and Wright 2000). Despite the wide range of literature covered, however, we found a dearth of research on the role of breadth of experience in the preference formation process. We attempt to remedy this shortcoming by refining the “experience” construct, thereby introducing two new subconstructs: intensiveness and extensiveness of experience.

We define intensiveness of experience as the amount or the frequency with which a person has been exposed to a product category. For example, a consumer who has been drinking Chardonnay for 20 years has accumulated a high intensiveness of experience with wine. Alternatively, we define extensiveness of experience as the breadth or the variety of exposure a person has accumulated in a product environment throughout her consumption history. For example, a consumer who completes a two-week tour of California’s vineyards for her twenty-first birthday may have limited intensiveness of experience with wine, yet her extensiveness may be well developed. Indeed, during these two weeks, the consumer benefited from a wider spectrum of experiences than many regular wine drinkers whose exposure to wine has been more frequent but more limited in breadth.

In essence, our conceptual effort focuses on refining the experience construct, whereby we try to disentangle the impacts of intensiveness and extensiveness of experience on the preference learning process. Note that, though these two constructs are not mutually exclusive, we believe that they need not accrue simultaneously. Indeed, it is possible to develop one aspect of experience (e.g., intensiveness) without necessarily enriching the other (e.g., extensiveness). In light of this argument, we contend that one’s preference formation will be influenced by the nature of one’s past experience. More specifically, we predict that, as consumers gain familiarity in a product category, they also experience a preference

shift, whereby more experienced consumers become able to identify and appreciate higher quality products, and predict their own preferences. Furthermore, we argue that such enhanced capabilities are afforded more readily by extensiveness than by intensiveness of experience. Stated formally:

H1: Extensiveness (intensiveness) of experience leads consumers to more (less) preference learning as identified by their greater (a) semantic knowledge of the category, (b) ability to identify high quality products, and (c) ability to predict their own preferences.

Note that our measures of preference learning also follow Alba & Hutchinson’s definition of expertise, i.e., “the ability to complete product-related tasks successfully” (1987). Therefore, this paper also contributes to the expertise literature by shedding light on the expertise building process.

Empirical Approach

We selected beer as the product environment to test our predictions because the category allows for large contrasts among individual experiences and because it is rich in normative knowledge.

To disentangle the respective impacts of intensiveness and extensiveness of experience on preference learning, we created two indices. We captured intensiveness through two questions: number of years drinking beer and number of beers consumed in a typical week. We standardized responses to both questions and added them to create an overall “intensiveness index.” We followed the same procedure for the three questions (e.g., number of brands regularly consumed, number of beer types experienced, and number of specific brands experienced) that formed the “extensiveness index.” We then retained the resulting two indices and their interaction as independent variables in our regression analyses.

Study 1

To test participants’ knowledge of the product category, we set up three tasks. The first task consisted of ranking ten target brands in terms of quality. We then correlated each participant’s ranking with an “objective” ranking formed by using price and experts’ testimonials as surrogates for quality. The second task consisted of naming countries famous for producing high-quality beer. We retained the number of countries cited as our second dependent variable. However, to avoid crediting participants for citing countries whose ties with beer remain questionable, we devised an accuracy scale with the help of five beer experts. Depending on the relevance of the countries cited, each participant received an accuracy score. The third task consisted of ranking five target beers in terms of alcohol content. Again, we correlated each participant’s ranking with an objective ranking of alcohol content.

As expected, intensiveness of experience did not predict preference learning. In contrast, we found that extensiveness of experience was an accurate predictor. Indeed, participants with greater breadth were better able to discriminate quality, knew a

greater number of countries legitimately famous for producing high-quality beer, and were better able to estimate the alcohol content of beers. These results support H1A.

Study 2

Study 2 included two tasks. First, we asked participants to visually inspect and then rank a set of eight target beers according to their preferences. Next, participants went to an adjacent room where we asked them to blindly taste and then rank a subset of five unidentifiable beers according to their preferences. To devise our dependent variables, we used three rankings: (1) a quality ranking, formed by using price as surrogate for quality; (2) a semantic ranking of preference, collected when participants ranked the eight brands; and (3) a sensory ranking of preference, collected when participants tasted and ranked the five unidentifiable beers. Our dependent measures were the pairwise correlations between these rankings.

As predicted, greater intensiveness of experience conferred no significant benefit whether in terms of semantic knowledge about the category, ability to identify quality, or ability to predict idiosyncratic preferences. Extensiveness of experience, on the other hand, yielded significant coefficients on all three measures. These results support H1A, H1B, and H1C.

Discussion

Using semantic and sensory tasks, we showed that preferences shift as one gains experience in a product category. Over time consumers become able to identify and appreciate higher quality products, and predict their own preferences. Furthermore, we established that such enhanced capabilities are afforded more readily by extensiveness than by intensiveness of experience.

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Decoy Effects and Brands

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ABSTRACT

The relative preference for a target product over a competitor can be increased by providing a third alternative (a decoy) that is clearly inferior to the target but is not necessarily inferior to the competitor. We investigated how these “decoy” effects are influenced by the presence or absence of brand name information and the level of consumer brand knowledge. A field experiment was conducted with three hundred and twenty married females. Results indicated that overall, inclusion of a decoy in the choice set significantly increased the relative preference for the target (i.e., a decoy effect). However, identifying alternatives with real brand names eliminated this effect when participants possessed an extensive amount of knowledge about the brands, but it did not when participants had relatively limited knowledge. These results were generally consistent with implications of the category-based processing view about brand name information.

INTRODUCTION

The decoy effect (or attraction effect) refers to a possibility that adding a new alternative in the choice set increases the choice for one of the existing alternatives that dominates the new one. This effect, which was first identified by Huber, Payne, and Puto (1982), has been replicated in a wide variety of choice situations involving not only commercial products (Ariely & Wallsten, 1995; Dhar & Simonson, 2003; Pettibone & Wedell, 2000; Sen, 1998; Simonson, 1989), but also gambling (Wedell, 1991), jobs (Highhouse, 1996) and political candidates (Pan, O’Curry, & Pitts, 1995). The cognitive processes that potentially underlie these effects have also been extensively investigated (i.e., Dhar & Glazer, 1996; Park and Kim 2005; Pettibone & Wedell, 2000; Shafir, Simonson, & Tversky, 1993; Wedell & Pettibone, 1996).

Most of the past research, however, has investigated the decoy effect in situations under which no real brand names were given. That is, participants typically received attribute information about a target, a competitor, and a decoy that were denoted only by hypothetical brand names or simple letters (e.g., Brand A, B, C). Presumably, these participants had to choose among them, or evaluate each alternative only based on the externally available product information. The decoy effect was then claimed to be evidenced if the preference for the target (relative to the competitor) increased when the decoy was present compared to than when it was not. In the real world, however, there are only rare situations in which consumers compare alternatives without knowing their brand names. Moreover, the literature has shown that brand names can exert distinct influences on cognitive processes underlying consumer judgments and choices. Thus, the effects of a decoy might turn out quite differently in terms of magnitude and/or direction if brand names are provided along with specific product information. The present research intended to provide insights into this matter.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Suppose there are two competing brands in the market: a target (T) and a competitor (C) as in Table 1. The attribute configurations indicate a trade-off: the target is superior to the competitor on dimension 1 but inferior on dimension 2. Consider that a third alternative (D) is also available, one that is clearly inferior to the target but not to the competitor. Adding D (a decoy) in the

consideration set is likely to increase preferences for T (i.e., decoy effects). Now suppose that the three products are not only described using the attributes but also explicitly identified by real brand names such that T and C are competing brands but T and D are of a same brand (see Table 1). How then would the brand names influence participants’ decisions regarding the alternatives? According to the literature on brand name effects, there seem to be at least two distinct possibilities. First, a brand name can serve simply as another piece of attribute information about the alternative. In this case, the evaluative implication of the brand name might be incorporated with implications of the other information into overall evaluations of the product in an averaging fashion (hereafter, “averaging process view”). Second, a brand name can be more than just an attribute. That is, it can serve as a distinctive cue activating a brand schema or category from memory, thus inducing category-based processes during judgment formation. In this case, providing a brand name might systematically influence the amount or direction of cognitive processes of the other information (hereafter, “category-based process view”). Both views predict a general decrease in the magnitude of the decoy effects when real brand names are available. However, they make different predictions regarding how the level of consumer brand knowledge would interact with the brand names. These are elaborated in turn below.

Averaging Process View

The way in which individual informational items are integrated into an overall judgment of the target is well articulated by the information integration theory (Anderson 1971, 1981). It assumes the evaluation of alternatives as a function of individual informational items about the target object. Further, it posits the “averaging model” which assumes that each attribute’s importance is adjusted according to the weight of the other attributes being considered (e.g., Anderson 1971; Birnbaum & Mellers 1983). If so, adding new information is likely to reduce the impact of the existing information on overall judgments about the target. It follows that providing real brand names along with attribute information about alternatives is likely to decrease the impact of the latter information on overall evaluations. Since the decoy effect occurs due to specific attribute configurations of the existing and new alternatives (e.g., Wedell and Pettibone 1996; Pettibone and Wedell 2000), adding brand names is likely to reduce the magnitude of the decoy effects. Further, this should occur regardless of the level of knowledge that participants have accumulated about the brands. People certainly differ in terms of extensiveness of product knowledge. Thus, upon exposure to a same brand, different people will activate different memory associations that might have different evaluative implications about the brand. However, the activated brand knowledge would still weaken the impact of the attribute information on judgments of the alternatives, regardless of the specific nature of the implications of it. This can be formally stated in the hypothesis below.

Hypothesis (averaging process view): The effect of a decoy will be reduced or eliminated when real brand names are provided along with attribute information about choice alternatives. Moreover, this will occur regardless of the level of consumer brand knowledge.

Category-based Process View

Consumer researchers have also identified an alternative way of forming product judgments, i.e., category-based processing (e.g., Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989; Rao and Monroe 1988; Sujan 1985; Sujan and Dekleva 1987). Further, it has been shown that a brand name can serve as a category label and thus lead to a category-based evaluation (e.g., Aaker and Keller 1990; Maheswaran, Mackie and Chaiken 1992; Sujan and Bettman 1989). The category-based product judgments have been typically conceptualized with reference to dual processing formulations of impression formation (see Fiske, Lin and Neuberg 1999; Fiske and Neuberg 1990). According to the formulations, perceivers first attempt to categorize an object on the basis of available cues that might signal a particular social category to which it belongs. The affect or the evaluations associated with the category are then transferred to the object and serve as a basis for evaluating it without engaging in a detailed analysis of additional features or individuating information. Further, perceivers may engage in relatively elaborative processing of individuating information. However, this additional process is usually confirmatory in nature, i.e., to preserve the initial categorization, and also largely dependent upon the level of personal relevance of the evaluation object for the perceivers and their ability to process the additional information.

One obvious implication of the categorization literature for decoy effects is that providing brand names would induce a category-based processing, thus reducing the impact of individuating information of alternatives on preference construction. Therefore, the effect of a decoy on preference for the target is likely to be reduced or eliminated when brand names are available. On the other hand, the existing literature on consumer knowledge suggests that consumers with high knowledge usually have previously-formed evaluations of various brands, hold strong confidence with their evaluations, as well as possess detailed information about the brands. Furthermore, it has been shown that category-based processing tends to be even more pronounced when stereotypes or category schema in memory are strong rather than weak (e.g., Fiske 1982). Therefore, decisions by high knowledge consumers might be quite independent of the specific information that is externally available on the spot. Consequently, the negative influence that providing real brand names might have on the magnitude of decoy effects is likely to be the case, particularly for participants with extensive brand knowledge. In contrast, consumers with limited knowledge usually do not have a strongly-held prior evaluation about products. Therefore, their decisions might have to be constructed on the spot, mainly based on the externally provided information. Thus, attribute configurations of a decoy can come easily into play.

The categorization literature also suggests a possibility that attribute information about alternatives can be actively processed even if brand information is available. In this case, however, the attribute information is typically processed in accordance with implications of the existing schema in memory. It is particularly so when the schema or category stereotype is strongly held (e.g., Maheswaran 1994; for more theoretical processes see Fisk and Neuberg 1991). If so, we can expect that providing real brand names is likely to reduce decoy effects, particularly for the high knowledge consumers. This prediction also seems to be in line with the previous finding that decoy effects may not be observed when the information about alternatives is rich and meaningful to consumers (Ratneshwar, Shocker, and Stewart 1987), when we consider another previous finding that attribute information is more meaningfully encoded when brand information is available (e.g., Maheswaran 1994; c.f., Hong and Wyer 1990). In sum, the above

considerations suggest that providing real brand names is likely to reduce decoy effects, particularly for high knowledge consumers. This can be summarized into the hypothesis below:

Hypothesis (Category-based process view): The effect of a decoy will be reduced or eliminated when real brand names are provided along with attribute information about choice alternatives. However, this is more likely to occur for participants with a high level of brand knowledge than for those with limited knowledge.

EXPERIMENT

A field experiment with married females was conducted to test the implications of the averaging process view vs. the category-based process view. To do so, we provided participants with information about a target (T) and a competitor (C), which was either accompanied by information about a decoy (D) or not. In addition, in some cases, real brand names were used to identify the alternatives: T and C were two competing brands in the market, whereas T and D were the same brand. In other cases, simple letters (e.g., A and B) denoted alternatives instead. Then, attractiveness ratings of each alternative and the preference were measured.

Participants and Design

Three hundred and twenty married females in a metropolitan city participated in the study. They were randomly assigned to each cell of a 2 (decoy conditions: no-decoy vs. decoy) x 2 (brand name conditions: no-brand vs. real-brand). Later, these participants were divided into two groups of brand knowledge (high vs. low). A median split was used for this division based on the measured knowledge scores regarding the target product category in the market. Therefore, the study involved a 2 x 2 x 2 between the subject factorial design.

Stimulus Material

The stimulus materials we presented are summarized in Table 1. That is, the target product (T) was a refrigerator that had fast freezing time but moderately high operating cost, whereas the competitor (C) was a refrigerator that had slow freezing time but low operating cost. The decoy (D) had virtually the same (fast) freezing time as the target but much higher operating cost than either the target or the competitor. Therefore, the decoy was dominated by the target but not by the competitor. In addition, simple letters (A and B) were used to identify the alternatives for no-brand name conditions, whereas the real (famous) brand names were used for real-brand name conditions.

Procedure

The survey was administered by a professional survey organization. The data were collected through face-to-face interviews with individual respondents, assisted by a structured questionnaire. All interviewers were highly experienced and well trained regarding the purpose of the survey and the contents of the questionnaire.

The participants were told that we were concerned with how consumers make judgments on the basis of limited information. They were told that they would be asked to consider several alternative refrigerators, each of which would be described along two dimensions. They were also told to assume that they were actually going to visit an electric appliance shop. They were then presented with product information about choice alternatives.

Participants first reported their preferences. They then evaluated each refrigerator along a scale from 1 (unattractive) to 10 (attractive). In addition, they evaluated the desirability of the

TABLE 1
Attribute Values of Choice Alternatives, Stimulus Materials

	Refrigerator alternatives		
	Competitor (C)	Target (T)	Decoy (D)
<u>Relative attractiveness</u>			
Dimension 1	2	4	4.1
Dimension 2	4	2	1
<u>Stimulus Material</u>			
Freezing time (min)	25	10	9
Running Cost	\$49	\$56	\$69
Brand	Brand A	Brand B	Brand B

alternatives along each dimension individually along scales from 1 (not good) to 7 (good). Finally, they indicated their subjective knowledge about refrigerator types and characteristics along a scale from 1 (I do not know about it better than the others) to 7 (I know about it better than the others).

Results

To reiterate, it was expected that overall, the effect of a decoy would be reduced or eliminated when real brand names are provided along with attribute information about choice alternatives. Further, the averaging process view predicted that such reduction is likely to occur regardless of the brand knowledge levels, whereas the category-based process view predicted that it is more likely to be the case for participants with extensive rather than limited brand knowledge.

In order to examine these predictions, we analyzed the overall attractiveness ratings data (for each alternative) and the choice data. Mean attractiveness ratings and percentages of participants who chose the target are summarized in Table 2 as a function of *decoy* (no-decoy vs. decoy) and *brand name* (no-brand vs. real-brand) and *brand knowledge* (high vs. low). We now present results from the two types of data separately.

Attractiveness ratings. Separate ANOVAs with decoy, brand name, and brand knowledge as between-subject factors were conducted on evaluations of T and evaluations of C. As apparent in Table 2, evaluations about the competitor did not vary significantly across experimental conditions, all p 's > .10. However, the evaluations of the target systematically varied over the conditions.

First, the ANOVA on evaluations of T yielded a significant interaction effect of *brand name* and *decoy*, $F(1, 316)=9.80, p<.01$. As expected, the evaluation of T in no-brand name conditions increased significantly when the decoy was available (6.38) as compared to when it was not (5.31), $F(1, 158)=22.58, p<.01$. By contrast, this was not the case in the real-brand name conditions (6.81 vs. 6.69), $F(1, 158)=0.07, p>.10$.

Second, the two-way interaction effect between *decoy* and *brand name* was qualified by *brand knowledge*, $F(1, 312)=4.77, p<.05$. Subsequent analyses indicated that for the low-knowledge group, there was a significant main effect of a decoy on evaluations, $F(1, 118)=13.11, p<.01$, which was not contingent upon the brand name conditions (no-brand name vs. real-brand name), $F(1, 118)<1$. For the high-knowledge group, however, the interaction between *brand name* and *decoy* was significant, $F(1, 194)=13.55, p<.01$.

The target was evaluated more favorably in the decoy conditions than in the no-decoy conditions (6.36 vs. 5.37) when no real brand names were used, but the pattern was reversed when real brand names were available (7.22 vs. 6.52). This pattern of results was more consistent with the implications of the category-based processing view.

Choices

Results from the choice data were quite similar to those from the attractiveness ratings data. Since the choice data was categorical in nature, we used a binary logistic regression to analyze it as a function of consumer knowledge, decoy condition, and brand name condition.

First, there was a significant interaction of *brand name* and *decoy* ($B=-.980, Wald=3.98, p<.05$). Specifically, proportions of participants who chose the target were higher in the decoy conditions (.388) than in the no-decoy conditions (.175), $z=3.10, p<.01$ when no real brand names were available. However, this difference was negligible (.500 vs. .525), $p>.10$, when real brand names were provided.

Different patterns of results, however, emerged when the level of brand knowledge was considered. In the low-knowledge group, the decoy significantly increased the choice of the target (.208 vs. .536), ($B=-1.46, Wald=6.03, p<.05$), which was not contingent upon the no-brand name vs. real-brand name conditions ($B=-0.02, Wald=0.01, p>.10$). In the high-knowledge group, by contrast, there was a significant two-way interaction of *brand name* and *decoy* ($B=-1.31, Wald=4.26, p<.05$). Further analyses indicated that the decoy effect was significant only in the no-brand name conditions (.333 vs. .184), $z=1.80, p=.07$, whereas in the real-brand name conditions, the decoy had no effect on choices (.457 vs. .586), $z=1.09, p>.10$. In sum, these results were generally consistent with the implications of the category-based processing view.

DISCUSSION

In this paper, we investigated the role of brand names in the effect of a decoy on preference construction. The averaging view and category-based processing view were considered to make predictions. Both views predict a general reduction in the decoy effect if the real brand names are provided along with attribute information about choice alternatives. On the other hand, the two views make different predictions regarding the moderating role of

TABLE 2

Relative Attractiveness Ratings and Choice of Target as a Function of Decoy Type, Brand Name, and Brand Knowledge

	No brand name		Brand name	
	No-decoy	Decoy	No-decoy	Decoy
<i>Attractiveness ratings of each alternative</i>				
Target (T)				
Low knowledge group	5.23	6.40	5.73	6.91
High knowledge group	5.37	6.36	7.22	6.52
Total	5.31	6.38	6.81	6.69
Competitor (C)				
Low knowledge group	6.55	6.34	6.82	6.50
High knowledge group	6.37	6.76	6.52	6.91
Total	6.44	6.58	6.60	6.74
<i>Proportions participants choosing target</i>				
Low knowledge group	.161	.457	.273	.618
High knowledge group	.184	.333	.586	.457
Total	.175	.388	.500	.525

consumer brand knowledge. That is, the category-based processing view predicts a significant moderating role of brand knowledge (i.e., a significant reduction of decoy effects by presenting real brand names only for high brand knowledge conditions), but the averaging view predicts no such role.

Results from a field experiment supported the category-based processing view. Specifically, both attractiveness ratings and choices data revealed that providing real brand names eliminated the decoy effects only when participants possessed extensive knowledge of various brands in the market.

In addition, in the brand and decoy condition and for high-knowledge consumers, we actually found that the target share or evaluation was reduced in the decoy condition. This surprising opposite pattern for a decoy effect could be explained by the role of "persuasion knowledge" in a context effect (Friestad and Wright 1994). That is, consumers who are knowledgeable about a product category are also likely to be equipped with a substantial amount of persuasion knowledge. When an inferior decoy product has the same brand as the target product, these consumers would activate their persuasion knowledge and infer a negative motive about that brand. This will lead to no effect or even a negative effect of the decoy.

This study has several limitations that suggest the direction for future studies. First, in this study we did not include any measures or methods to further explore the underlying mechanisms (such as "averaging view" and "category-based processing view"). Second, we need more concrete evidence for explaining the unexpected decoy effect for high-knowledge consumers in the brand and decoy condition. Finally, our study focused only on the presence or

absence of brand name information, and used the same brand for the target and decoy product. In future research, we can systematically vary the strength of, as well as location of, brands in the set to further enhance our understanding about the role of brands in the decoy effects.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Time and Decisions: Attention Based Perspective on Temporal Effects in Judgment and Choice

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SESSION OVERVIEW

Consumers are constantly faced with decisions about the timing of their consumption. These decisions involve tradeoffs between costs and benefits that are distributed over time, and are prevalent in almost every consumption context. How consumers make such decisions has been of interest to researchers from several disciplines. Prior research has consistently shown that people have a bias toward the present (e.g., Thaler 1981). That is, individuals overweight the near outcomes compared to the later outcomes. This pattern of behavior has been attributed to impulsivity (Loewenstein 1996), to differences in cognitive representations between near and future events (e.g., Trope and Liberman 2003; Zauberman and Lynch 2005) or to an individual difference in time orientation (e.g., Zimbardo and Boyd 1999). The three papers in this special session propose a different mechanism that leads to present-biased and time inconsistent preferences. Specifically, these papers offer a novel attention-based process to account for consumer preferences over time and demonstrate that drawing attention to the “time” component of the decisions moderates intertemporal preferences.

First paper, by Urminsky and Kivetz show that preferences favoring smaller-sooner outcomes over larger-later ones can be altered if the options are coupled with an immediate, but common outcome. Their results indicate that when an immediate outcome is added to both options, consumers are more willing to wait for a larger reward. Importantly, segregating the common immediate reward from the options eliminates this effect, indicating that drawing attention to the timing of common reward helps facilitate a reduction in tradeoff conflict, reducing present bias.

Second paper, by Ebert and Prelec, examines the role of attention to future time in time inconsistent preferences. They show that making mental resources available during decision making increases attention to future time, attenuating the hyperbolic pattern in consumers’ preferences. Their results consistently show that with greater mental resources and greater attention to future, individuals show relatively less discounting of near outcomes and relatively more discounting of far outcomes, leading to increased time consistency in preferences.

Third paper, by Zauberman, Bettman and Malkoc, shows that consumers do not naturally consider the duration over which decisions take place, unless it is made accessible. Authors demonstrate that consumers use succession cues (i.e., number of transactions) and are insensitive to duration cues. However they display heightened sensitivity to the time horizon when duration is made accessible. Authors further demonstrate that present-biased preferences can also be attributable to time horizon neglect, by showing that making duration accessible decreases this tendency.

Collectively, the papers in this session provide new insights about the cognitive psychological mechanisms underlying consumers’ time-inconsistent preferences and offer an attention based process as a novel explanation. This perspective is distinct from the previous explanations, which focused on affective or cognitive differences regarding time, but assumed no changes in attention to time.

Following presentations, Drazen Prelec, the session discussant, provided an overview of how these papers inform and qualify the findings of previous research, as well as noting some of the ways

in which the session offers diverging perspectives on intertemporal preferences.

EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

“The Effect of Common Rewards on Tradeoff Conflict: The Case of Inter-temporal and Risky Choice”

Oleg Urminsky and Ran Kivetz

Consumers often face timing decisions involving tradeoffs between smaller-valued outcomes that would be acquired sooner and higher-valued outcomes that would require waiting a longer time. Such choices represent an interpersonal conflict between the opposing goals of immediacy and magnitude of gain. The literature on intertemporal choice models this tradeoff using systematic discounting functions to account for the effect of time delay on utility. As an alternative to the normative exponential discounting model, Strotz (1956; see also Ainsle 1975) proposed the hyperbolic discount function to account for intertemporal preference reversals. The hyperbolic discounting model was extended to account for the magnitude effect (Thaler 1981, Loewenstein and Prelec 1992) and for the asymmetry between speed-up and delay of gains (Loewenstein 1988). These models generally assume that utility is a monotonically increasing function of amount and immediacy (but see Loewenstein and Prelec 1993; Kivetz and Simonson 2002).

In this paper, we demonstrate a systematic bias in intertemporal choices that violates prior models of consumer time discounting. We consider a fundamental choice between two outcomes involving a tradeoff between the timing and magnitude of gains, such as choosing between: (a) \$400 in one week, (b) \$1000 in one year.

We show that in such choices between a sooner-smaller reward and a later-larger reward, the addition of a common reward to both options (shown below) systematically alters consumer preference. (a) \$100 in 3 days *and* \$400 in one week, (b) \$100 in 3 days *and* \$1000 in one year.

In a series of studies we had subjects make a single choice, either with or without a common reward (manipulated between subjects), and we demonstrate that the addition of the common reward to both options significantly increases choices of the later-larger reward. We argue that this effect occurs because the common reward disrupts the tendency to adapt to the more psychologically proximal option (Hoch and Loewenstein 1991), in this case the sooner-smaller reward. When adaptation is disrupted, the absence of experienced loss aversion favors the more psychologically distant later-larger option. This common reward effect represents a violation of the principle of separable additivity in discounting, which underlies both exponential and hyperbolic discounting.

In the first study, conducted in the lab with a student sample, we demonstrate the effect of a common reward on intertemporal trade-offs across a range of sooner-smaller and later-larger amounts. We find a significant increase in choices of the later-larger reward when both options are bundled with an early common reward. This finding was then successfully replicated in a second study and extended to a wider range of reward sizes, using a large sample of over 3000 consumers. In this second study, we also confirmed that common reward effect is robust, holding across a variety of demographic groups.

In a third study among consumers, we employed a series of tests designed to rule out alternative explanations for the observed bridge effect. First, we demonstrate that the results cannot be attributed to the magnitude effect in hyperbolic discounting. Second, we show that segregating the common reward in the text of the question eliminates the effect. Specifically, when we inform consumers that they will receive the common reward regardless of their choice and then have them make a choice between sooner-smaller and later-larger rewards, consumer preferences are unaffected by the common reward. This is a violation of the invariance axiom and suggests that the common reward reduces the experienced conflict between the options (rather than relaxes a liquidity constraint.)

In a fourth study, we demonstrate that the common reward effect can be induced in a way that holds constant the net present value of the proffered rewards. Specifically, we show that, for a reasonable empirical range of interest rates, a common reward can be introduced while proportionately reducing the amounts of the sooner-smaller and later-larger rewards, enhancing preference for the later-larger reward. Therefore, an institution providing a choice between two payoffs (e.g. two bonds) can restructure the payoffs and shift preference for the later-larger payoff without changing (or even reducing) the net present value of its expenditures.

In a series of additional studies, we provide further evidence that the common reward effect operates by disrupting a process of adaptation to the sooner-smaller reward and loss aversion relative to that reference point. We show that increasing psychological distance of both options (by making rewards uncertain) debiases the common reward effect. Further, we show that endowing participants with the sooner-smaller option enhances the common-reward effect, while endowing participants with the larger-later reward debiases the effect. Finally, we show that a trait measure of delay aversion predicts the common reward effect, with only delay averse participants exhibiting the common reward effect.

Lastly, we note that a body of literature has demonstrated the underlying commonalities between uncertainty and delay (e.g. Prelec and Loewenstein 1991; Rachlin et al 1991). Accordingly, in a series of studies, we extend the common reward effect to the domain of risky choice. Consumers made choices between a smaller lottery reward with a higher probability of winning and larger lottery reward with a lower probability of winning. Consumers who made a choice between the two options bundled with a small certain common reward were more likely to choose the larger-riskier lottery than those whose choice options did not include the common reward. This effect was debiased when the common reward was segregated in the text of the question. We argue that this effect is due to a similar process, in which the common reward disrupts the process of adaptation to the smaller-more certain option. In three studies, we provide evidence that the common reward effect for risky choice is moderated by temporal distance, endowment and the loss aversion trait.

“Time Insensitivity: The Impact of Time Pressure and Attention on Discounting of Near and Far Future”

Jane E. J. Ebert and Drazen Prelec

It is a basic finding in economics and psychology that people heavily discount future events relative to the present (Gately 1980; Loewenstein and Thaler 1989), and we can see evidence of it in many areas of our lives. In financial decisions, people fail to save adequately in the present for the distant prospect of their retirement (Laibson 1998). They fail to take proper care of their health—putting off exercise, eating unhealthy snacks, avoiding vaccinations or the dentist, smoking a cigarette or having unprotected sex. An influential explanation of high temporal discounting is that people would

discount less if only they applied more mental effort and resources.

In this paper, we suggest an alternative hypothesis: that people are naturally somewhat insensitive to time and discount “casually”. This means they discount heavily for the near future, but show relatively little discrimination between times in the more distant future. We predict that both mental effort and resources and attention to future time will have a similar effect, increasing time-sensitivity with reduced discounting for the near future and increased discrimination of more distant future times. One potentially surprising consequence of this hypothesis is that, while mental effort and attention to future time should reduce discounting for the near future, they may actually increase discounting for the more distant future. Overall, the result is increased time-consistency, i.e., a discount function that is less hyperbolic, moving closer to the exponential discounting norm.

In this paper we test this hypothesis that mental effort and resources and attention to future time result in increased time-sensitivity and hence a more time-consistent, i.e., less hyperbolic and more exponential discounting function. Under conditions of restricted mental resources or with less attention to future time people are likely to be time-insensitive: overdiscounting near future events and underdiscounting distant future events.

We use three types of experimental manipulation to test our hypothesis. The first restricts the time available for judgment. (Time pressure has frequently been used in judgment research as a mental resources manipulation (Gilbert 2002)). In experiment 1, participants valued a set of hypothetical restaurant certificates that vary on several attributes including future time. Some participants completed this task while under time pressure, while others had extended time. We applied conjoint analysis to analyze the influence of the future time and other attributes in participants’ valuations of the restaurant certificates. (Sultan and Winer (1993) is, to our knowledge, the only previous application of conjoint analysis to discounting.) Consistent with our hypothesis, our analyses revealed a Future time X Valuation time interaction where participants with restricted time for evaluating the certificates showed relatively more discounting in the near future and relatively less discounting in the far future compared to those with extended time for evaluating the certificates. Furthermore, while participants in both conditions showed hyperbolic temporal discounting, the discounting for those with extended time was more time-consistent or “rational” (i.e., it was more exponential). Thus, we also identified a moderator of hyperbolic temporal discounting, a fundamental tendency shown by people and other animals, while also confirming the robustness of this tendency.

The second type of manipulation, employed in experiments 2 and 3, compared between-subjects and within-subject judgments of present value. The premise here is that a within-subject design highlights the time dimension, drawing attention to it. (Griffin, Dunning and Ross (1990) and Abele and Petzwold (1998) use a similar presentation mode method to manipulate the salience of a dimension.) Finally, in experiment 4, we manipulated subjects’ attention to the future time dimension directly using explicit instructions.

The results of these 3 experiments (Experiments 2-4) were consistent with those of Experiment 1. In each experiment there was a significant interaction between the primary experimental manipulation (effort or attention) and future time. Compared to those subjects in the lower mental resources or attention conditions, subjects in the higher mental resource or attention conditions showed relatively lower discounting of near future rewards and higher discounting of far future rewards. Put another way, those subjects with greater mental resources and attention to future time

showed greater sensitivity to future time. Also, as in Experiment 1, while participants in both conditions showed hyperbolic temporal discounting, those participants in the higher mental resource or attention conditions were more time-consistent or exponential in their discounting.

The difference in time-sensitivity was also tested more formally in experiments 1 and 4, where the constant-proportion hyperbolic function fitted to the data gave a significantly higher time-sensitivity constant for the data of the higher resource or attention subjects than for the lower resource or attention subjects. The time-sensitivity constants obtained for the two attention conditions in experiments 2 and 3 showed a corresponding directional difference, i.e., a higher time-sensitivity constant for the higher attention subjects than for lower attention subjects, but it was not possible to test this difference statistically in these experiments.

It comes as no great surprise that people become more sensitive to a dimension when it is made more salient for them. What is more surprising is the effect of their attention to the dimension of future time on their valuations. We might expect that people would show less discounting for all future times, consistent with previous explanations of heavy discounting, or that they might simply weigh the time dimension more heavily in their valuations of the future resulting in greater discounting for all future times. However, the increase in sensitivity resulted instead in less discounting for some times (the near future) and greater discounting for others (the far future). Furthermore, these experiments demonstrated the moderating effect of mental resources and attention on hyperbolic temporal discounting. To our knowledge this research and that by Zauberman and his colleagues (also presented in this Special Session proposal) provide the first demonstrations of moderation of this fundamental and important human tendency.

“Time Horizon Neglect: Prospective Duration Insensitivity in Consumer Preference”

Gal Zauberman, James R. Bettman and Selin A. Malkoc

Consumers often make decisions about events that occur over time. For instance, in choosing between two online pharmacies, consumers may consider setup costs, how long they intend to use the service, and their expected frequency of future transactions. A consideration of prospective duration is necessary in these instances. However, attempts to understand how consumers’ perceptions of duration itself (i.e., the time horizon over which a decision takes place) affect their intertemporal preferences have been limited. The focal issue for our research is to understand the degree to which consumers are sensitive to the time duration relevant to their decisions and what factors influence such sensitivity.

Building upon ideas from philosophy and psychology of time (Heidegger [1924] 1992), we hypothesize that in forming their preferences, consumers make use of the cues that represent succession (i.e., number of transactions within a period) and are not sensitive to the duration over which events take place. That is, consumers display time horizon neglect. Such insensitivity to time horizon can be attenuated, however. Prior research has demonstrated making duration more salient increases participants’ judgments of elapsed time (Block and Zakay 1997, 2001). We expect the same attention-based mechanism to affect the way that prospective duration is incorporated into preferences and hypothesize that making duration more accessible not only increases attention given to time horizon in making decisions, but also helps consumers to display more consistent preferences over time.

We test these ideas in two contexts: decisions about selecting between providers with different types of costs over time and consumption timing decisions. In a set of three experiments, we

show that consumers neglect time horizon unless they are primed to think about prospective duration, and that this tendency has implications for intertemporal preferences. In experiments 1 and 2, participants had to select between two online retailers that differ in their relative cost structure. Each provider was defined by two temporally distinct time cost categories: a one-time initial setup cost and ongoing usage costs that apply every time a transaction takes place (Zauberman 2003). Assuming no delay discounting, in our experimental setup, a short time horizon or a small frequency of favors the low setup and high usage cost retailer. But in the long term or with high frequency, the reverse is true.

Experiment 1 (N=112) tested the question of consumer sensitivity to time horizon when frequency cues are present in the decision context. Time horizon (3 vs. 12 mos.) and purchase frequency (3 vs. 12 purchases) were manipulated orthogonally. Participants choose between two retailers described above and responded to a subtle manipulation check of time processing by answering “how likely is it that a new superior on-line retailer would enter the marketplace in that time frame?”. The analysis produced a main effect of time horizon manipulation on the manipulation check ($F(1, 108)=16.78, p<.0001$), indicating that participants indeed understood the manipulation. The results also showed that time horizon over which multiple transactions were expected to occur had no effect on choice ($\chi^2(1)=0.04, p=.85$) and attractiveness of the high setup option ($F(1, 108)=.03, p=.87$). Instead, frequency of purchase influenced the preferences ($F(1, 108)=24.31, p<.0001$) and choice ($\chi^2(1)=19.05, p<.0001$). Thus, the data support the idea that consumers select the low initial cost option because they attend more to frequency cues than to time horizon.

Experiment 2 used a similar task but added a supraliminal priming manipulation of duration accessibility, holding purchase frequency constant. Time horizon (3 and 12 mos.) and priming (control vs. duration) were manipulated between subjects. Priming was implemented by having participants estimate either the duration of seven activities (duration-prime) or the number of calories contained in seven food items (control-prime). We find the expected 2-way interaction ($F(1, 103)=.47, p=.50$), indicating that in the control condition, time horizon had no effect on preferences for the high-setup option ($t(1, 51)=-.62, p=.54$) (replicating experiment 1), but had an increased effect on preferences when duration is primed ($t(1, 52)=2.38, p=.02$). Our results suggest that it is not that individuals lack the ability to take duration into account, but that people normally do not attend to it.

Experiment 3 was aimed at extending our findings to situations where duration is the only available cue (i.e., timing decisions) and tests the moderating role of duration accessibility in stability of preferences over time. Specifically, we examine whether priming duration would moderate one of the most robust effects in research on intertemporal choice, hyperbolic discounting. We employed the supraliminal priming task used in the previous experiment, but used a common intertemporal preference task in which participants indicate their preference for the timing the usage of a \$75 gift certificate as a function of time delay. Both priming (duration vs. control) and time horizon (1 vs. 3 mos.) was manipulated between-subjects. The analysis provided the expected 2-way interaction, demonstrating that the degree of hyperbolic discounting is diminished when duration is primed ($F(1, 188)=3.96, p<.05$). This experiment shows that even in the absence of succession cues, consumers neglect time horizon but making duration accessible attenuates this tendency.

In sum, we show that participants reacted to the number of events (experiment 1) and were insensitive to the time horizon in

many circumstances (experiments 1, 2 and 3). Experiment 1 shows that participants were aware of the differences in time horizon (manipulation check), but did not incorporate duration into their decisions. Experiments 2 and 3 confirmed that when time horizon is not accessible (the control-prime), participants are insensitive to time horizon; however, when duration is primed, they display heightened sensitivity to future time horizon. Thus, it appears that people do not naturally consider prospective duration unless it is made more accessible. We suggest that the recent trend in incorporating psychologically accurate individual behavior into economic models of intertemporal choice would benefit from considering individuals' insensitivity to prospective time horizon.

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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Investigating Neural Correlates of Consumer Judgments

Jim Bettman, Duke University
Carolyn Yoon, University of Michigan

SESSION OVERVIEW

The past decade has seen a virtual explosion of research in the cognitive and social neurosciences that is transforming our understanding of mental functioning and human behavior. Imaging technology allows us to directly observe and report the brain activity of individuals engaged in a variety of experimental tasks, and to study psychological constructs and processes at the neural level. This offers the potential to move us closer to a coherent understanding of everyday thoughts, emotions, decisions, and behavior.

In particular, functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) has become increasingly accessible to investigators, and offers a powerful platform for answering research questions across a wide range of academic disciplines, to complement more traditional methods of inquiry (see, for example, Smidts (2002) and Zaltman (2003) in marketing; Camerer, Loewenstein & Prelec (2005) in economics). Despite the potential benefits associated with fMRI, few consumer research studies have as yet adopted it. The main goals of this session are to bring together three fMRI papers that demonstrate the usefulness of neuroimaging to study consumer behavior and decision making, and to encourage the use of fMRI to inform and complement findings from behavioral studies.

The papers in this session focused on different task domains and, consequently, separate (albeit interrelated) neural regions. The first paper, "Relative vs. Absolute Rewards: Evidence from Experimental Tasks and Neuroimaging," by Dan Ariely, Gregory Berns, Rosa Chávez-Eakle, and Nina Mazar, dealt with an important issue in behavioral decision theory. Prior work raised the hypotheses that the nucleus accumbens, subthalamic extended amygdala, amygdala, and hypothalamus may produce responses related to reward (Aharon et al., 2001). In the current paper, the authors examined the activity in these neural regions in order to better understand the way reward is encoded in the brain. In particular, they tested how relative versus absolute reward values produce differential behavioral responses and activate the limbic areas of the brain. They manipulated the mixture of positive and negative stimuli using a "keypressing" paradigm in a set of behavioral and fMRI studies, and found converging evidence that individuals have high sensitivity to relative, but not absolute, rewards.

In the second paper, "Why Celebrities are Effective: Brain Mechanisms of Effective Advertising," Vasily Klucharev, Guillen Fernandez, and Ale Smidts tackled the issue of whether neural regions are differentially activated during judgments of products that are featured with celebrities either with or without expertise relevant to the product. Recent behavioral research on celebrity presenters has suggested that their effectiveness critically depends on celebrities having a readily perceivable 'expertise hook' with respect to the product they are endorsing. In line with behavioral results, they found better memory and higher purchase intentions for products paired with the expert celebrity than non-expert celebrity. This 'expertise hook' effect on brain activity was examined in an event-related fMRI study. Whereas activity in a distributed network of prefrontal and cingulate cortex was associated with buying intention for everyday products, differential activation in dorsal posterior cingulate cortex reflected negative subjective evaluation of the product. They further found that the effect of 'expertise

hook' on buying intention was mediated by an evolutionarily old emotional neuronal network (i.e., orbitofrontal cortex).

The third paper, "A fMRI Study of Neural Dissociations between Brand and Person Judgments," by Carolyn Yoon, Angela Gutches, Fred Feinberg, and Thad Polk, investigated whether a common presumption in the field—that descriptors for human and for brand 'personality' are essentially interchangeable—is supported at the neural level. Individuals are readily able, when asked, to indicate the degree to which various trait adjectives are descriptive of a target object or brand. The authors suggested that because assessments of products' qualities and attributes have thus far been universally carried out using this sort of protocol, it is of fundamental importance to determine whether qualities ascribed to brands (and more generally, everyday objects) are processed as they are in their typical, human-related usages. In an event-related fMRI study, they compared personality judgments of self relevant and non-self relevant brands and persons and obtained neural dissociations. Specifically, greater activation in the medial prefrontal cortex region obtained for person judgments; for brand judgments, activation was greater in the left inferior prefrontal cortex, an area known to be involved in object processing. Based on these findings, they cautioned against the tendency to view the processing of products and brands as being akin to that of humans.

Finally, Richard Gonzalez led a discussion on how each of the three papers provided insights about processes underlying consumer judgment that would be difficult or impossible to obtain using standard behavioral research methods (e.g., experiments, participant observations, surveys). He discussed how neuroimaging is expected to play an increasingly larger role in understanding psychological and social processes. The next decade will undoubtedly see rapid growth in the adoption of neuroimaging methods by consumer researchers.

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“Ethically Concerned, yet Unethically Behaved”: Towards an Updated Understanding of Consumer’s (Un)ethical Decision Making

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ABSTRACT

The paper complements existing research on ethical consumer behavior by examining how people cope with the psychological tensions that arise when they behave in ways that are in apparent contradiction to their expressed ethical concerns. It advances the concept of neutralization – justifications that soften or eliminate the impact that norm-violating behavior might have upon self-concept and social relationships – and presents hypotheses on the role of neutralization in ethical consumer decision making processes.

INTRODUCTION

Research into ethical consumer behavior has grown substantially since the 1990s (Vitell 2003) and has provided valuable insights, yet it remains a relatively small body of literature and we still lack a unified understanding of the role of ethics in consumer behavior. One of the key challenges identified by researchers in this field relates to the fact that people’s ethical concerns are often not manifest in their behavior (e.g. Carrigan and Atalla 2001; Strong 1996). Here we address the attitude-behavior discrepancy in ethical consumer behavior, advancing the concept of neutralization – a process through which people justify or rationalize their behavior as a means of coping with decision conflict and insulating themselves from blame and guilt. We start with a review of extant literature on ethical consumer behavior; then introduce the concept of neutralization and consider its application to consumption contexts. Subsequently the paper examines the theoretical tenets of neutralization with a view to integrating the concept with existing models of ethical consumer behavior.

ETHICS AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Ethical consumer behavior can be broadly defined as the “decision making, purchases and other consumption experiences that are affected by the consumer’s ethical concerns” (Cooper-Martin and Holbrook 1993, 113). Earlier research on ethical consumer behavior was prompted by the consumerism movement of the 1970s, and investigated specific topics in the context of “environmentally concerned/conscious consumption” (e.g. Anderson and Cunningham 1972; Webster 1975; Brooker 1976; Antil 1984; Haldeman, Peters, and Tripple 1987; Alwitt and Berger 1993; Jackson et al. 1993). Similarly, studies emerged for issues such as self-restraint (Horowitz 1985), voluntary simplicity (e.g. Leonard-Barton 1981; Shaw and Newholm 2002), ethical investing (e.g. Irvine 1987; Lewis 1999), consumer boycotts (e.g. Smith 1990; Burke, Milberg, and Smith 1993) and shoplifting (e.g. Kallis, Freeman, and Zelditch 1986; Moschis and Powell 1986; Cox, Cox, and Moschis 1990).

More general treatments of ethical consumer behavior can be grouped under two headings: “ethical consumerism” and “consumer ethics”. “Ethical consumerism” (e.g. Shaw and Clarke 1999; Creyer and Ross 1997; Carrigan and Attalla 2001; Roberts 1996; Straughan and Roberts 1999) can be seen as an evolution of green consumerism. In contrast, “consumer ethics” (e.g. Vitell and Muncy 1992; Vitell et al. 1991; Fullerton et al. 1996; Albers-Miller 1999; Singhapakdi et al. 1999) refers to misconduct, mainly in retail settings (e.g. failing to declare undercharging).

Central amongst this research have been attempts to develop theoretical models of consumers’ ethical decision making either in particular contexts (e.g. Fullerton and Punj 1993; Jackson et al. 1993; Tan 2002; Thong and Yap 1998; Whalen et al. 1991; Nebenzahl et al. 2001) or the broader domains of ethical consumerism (Shaw and Clarke 1999; Shaw et al. 2000; Shaw and Shiu 2002a, 2002b, 2003) and consumer ethics (Marks and Mayo 1991; Vitell et al. 2001; Fukukawa 2002). In this endeavour, the two most prominent theoretical approaches have been Hunt and Vitell’s (1986) general theory of marketing ethics and Ajzen’s attitude models (Ajzen 1985, 1991). Hunt and Vitell’s model (1986, 1992) was applied to ethical consumer contexts by Marks and Mayo (1991) and Vitell et al. (2001) (see also Thong and Yap 1998). They propose that the ethical decision process begins with the consumer perceiving an ethical problem (exogenous variables include the consumer’s cultural environment, reference groups and past personal experiences; Marks and Mayo 1991). Subsequently, s/he combines a deontological and a teleological evaluation to arrive at a judgment, i.e. attitude about the ethical problem¹ which, in turn, influences the consumer’s behavioral intentions. It is suggested that teleological evaluations affect intentions indirectly through ethical judgments but also directly. That is, an individual may not choose the most ethical alternative due to desirable consequences of a less ethical one. Furthermore, intention may differ from actual behavior due to situational conditions enabling consumers to engage in unethical behavior (e.g. the opportunity to adopt an alternative). Finally, the consequences of the consumer’s behavior become part of the consumer’s learning experiences. In the case of choosing an unethical alternative, the consumer might have guilt feelings that will affect future behavior.

The theory of planned behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1985, 1991) applied in ethical consumer contexts by Fukukawa (2002) and Shaw and colleagues (Shaw and Clarke 1999; Shaw et al. 2000; Shaw and Shiu 2002a, 2002b, 2003), suggests that behavior in a specified situation, is a direct function of behavioral intention, which in turn is a function of attitude and subjective norm. Perceived behavioral control refers to the individual’s control beliefs and is suggested to impact both behavioral intentions and behavior. Both of the above models are established on the fundamental premise that an individual’s intentions are consistent with ethical judgments in most cases (Fukukawa 2002). However, as in other consumption contexts, there is clear evidence of attitude-behavior discrepancies: consumers’ ethical concerns and attitudes are not always manifest in actual behavior (e.g. Carrigan and Atalla 2001). For example, consumers have been found to buy environmentally hazardous products regardless of their expression of concern for greener alternatives (Strong 1996) and to shoplift regardless of their adherence to societal and economic norms of behavior that guide

¹Teleological ethical theories hold that the moral worth of actions is determined solely by their consequences. Deontological theories hold that one or more fundamental principles of ethics differ from the principle of utility; they are based on principles of duty such as “never treat another merely as a means to your own goals” (Beauchamp and Bowie 1988, 37)

marketplace behavior (Strutton, Vitell, and Pelton 1994; Strutton, Pelton, and Ferrell 1997). Generally, attitude-behavior discrepancies have been accounted for by sampling, operationalization and behavior-specific issues (see e.g. Ogden 2003; Luzar and Cosse 1998) or by the addition of further constructs. For example, in the context of consumer ethics, Fukukawa (2002) has proposed the addition of a fourth construct affecting intentions, namely "perceived unfairness"; while in the ethical consumerism field, Shaw and colleagues (Shaw and Clarke 1999; Shaw et al. 2000; Shaw and Shiu 2002a, 2002b, 2003) have proposed the addition of two constructs, namely "ethical obligation" and "self identity". The additional influences that are apparent in the context of ethical consumer behavior point towards the internal tensions that consumers feel when balancing their own desires with moral behavior that favors societal well being. However, both models inevitably fail to account for the psychological realities of consumers who consistently behave in ways that are in apparent contradiction to their expressed ethical concerns.

Theories of cognitive or attitude-behavior consistency within social psychology, in general, have left the diverse modes of restoring equilibrium without attitude change unexplored (Hazani 1991). Even within the cognitive dissonance literature, where attitudes after performing a counter-attitudinal behavior have been found to remain in striking opposition to that behavior, the focus has largely been on the arousal of dissonance, as opposed to the subsequent processes that lead to attitude change; hence generating little evidence regarding the nature of those processes (Kunda 1990; Holland et al. 2002). Accordingly, Holland et al. (2002) observe that there is surprising little research on the different ways in which people justify their attitudinally-incongruent behavior: "Although many different examples of self-justification have been documented in the psychological literature, this has not produced a comprehensive taxonomy of self-justification strategies" (Holland et al. 2002, 1714). The concept of neutralization and the associated taxonomy of neutralization techniques is one theoretical contribution that promises to fill this gap.

INTRODUCING TECHNIQUES OF NEUTRALIZATION

Social norms play a crucial role in guiding ethical behavior (e.g. Davies et al. 2002). When social norms are not internalized to the degree that they guide behavior under all circumstances, consumers may develop coping strategies to deal with the dissonance that they experience. Neutralization theory represents a conceptual approach that has been applied to understand how individuals soften or eliminate the impact that their norm violating behavior might have upon their self-concept and social relationships (Grove et al. 1989).

In 1957, Sykes and Matza published their seminal article on juvenile delinquency criticising the predominant theoretical viewpoint that delinquency is a form of behavior based on the values and norms of a deviant sub-culture in the same way as law-abiding behavior is based on the norms and values of the larger society. These authors suggested that rather than learning moral imperatives, values or attitudes standing in a complete opposition to those of his/her society, the delinquent learns a set of justifications or rationalizations, i.e. the techniques, which can insulate him/her from self-blame and the blame of others. This perspective can be attributed to the flexibility of the normative systems in contemporary societies: rather than being categorical imperatives, social norms or values are "qualified guides for action, limited in their applicability in terms of time, place, persons, and social circumstances" (Sykes and Matza 1957, 666). For example, the

moral injunction against killing does not apply in time of war and so on. Thus, the delinquent learns patterns of thought that help him/her to remain committed to the normative system and qualify his/her actions as "acceptable" if not "right". While neutralization techniques may be viewed as following unethical behavior, ultimately they can precede it, and make unethical behavior possible. That is, once successfully internalized, they can truly become neutralizing devices (Grove et al. 1989). The five techniques, as adapted by Strutton *et al.* (1994, 254) in a consumer context, are listed below:

- 1) Denial of responsibility (DoR): A circumstance in which one argues that s/he is not personally accountable for the norm-violating behavior because factors beyond one's control were operating; e.g. "It's not my fault I don't recycle, the government should make it easier".
- 2) Denial of Injury (DoI): A circumstance in which one contends that personal misconduct is not really serious because no party directly suffered as a result of it; e.g. "What's the big deal, nobody's gonna miss one towel!"
- 3) Denial of Victim (DoV): A circumstance in which one counters the blame for personal actions by arguing the violated party deserved whatever happened; e.g. "It's their fault; if the salesman had been straight with me I would have told him he undercharged me".
- 4) Condemning the condemners (CiC): A circumstance in which one deflects accusations of misconduct by pointing out that those who would condemn engage in similarly disapproved activities; e.g. "It's a joke they should find fault with me after the rip-offs they have engineered".
- 5) Appeal to higher loyalties (AtHL): A circumstance in which one argues that norm-violating behavior is the result of an attempt to actualize some higher order ideal or value; e.g. "I'd like to buy more environmentally friendly products but the choice is limited and I like trying out different stuff".

Since its original formulation by Sykes and Matza, neutralization theory has been one of the most widely known and frequently cited theories in sociology of deviance, either incorporated into or rebutted by most subsequent theories of crime and norm-violating behavior (Minor 1981; Copes 2003). Examples of its application include a variety of juvenile (e.g. Ball 1966; Minor 1981; Costello 2000) as well as adult deviance contexts (e.g. Levi 1981; Eliason and Dodder 1999; Fox 1999). Further, neutralization theory has been the subject of more intuitive applications, both within and beyond the boundaries of what is typically labelled as deviant behavior. Examples include the role of neutralization techniques in the victimization of battered wives (Ferraro and Johnson 1983), genocide and the Holocaust (Alvarez 1997), organizational rule enforcing (Fershing 2003), abortion (Brennan 1974), religious dissonance (Dunford and Kunz 1973) and the management of the "temporary deviant" label of pageant mothers in the United States during the peak of negative press in 1997 (Heltsley and Calhoun 2003).

Neutralization has been applied to consumption contexts, but research in this domain remains very limited. Grove et al. (1989) advanced the concept as a basis for understanding non-normative behavior, mainly in retail settings while empirically, neutralization has only been applied to investigate quite extreme 'criminal' behavior (Strutton et al. 1994, 1997) or more obliquely, as an explanation for reported unethical behavior (Mitchell and Chan 2002) and in relation to anomie and subsequent fraudulent behavior

(Rosenbaum and Kuntze 2003). More recently, an exploratory study has illustrated the theory's applicability in a wider array of consumer ethical choices (Chatzidakis et al. 2004). Thus, the usefulness of the concept is recognized but, to date, no attempt has been made to carefully examine and relate neutralization's theoretical tenets with existing theories of ethical consumer behavior.

COPING WITH UNETHICAL CONSUMPTION: A PLACE FOR NEUTRALIZATION?

The need for neutralization assumes that behavior violates social norms. Yet, in many instances, the contemporary ethical dilemmas facing consumers do not involve the violation of conventional or universal social norms (Reiss 1951; Sartorius 1972) to which neutralization theory was originally applied. For example, there is not an absolute norm that "one ought to buy fair trade products". Nevertheless, as an arena of behavior, consumer activities offer the opportunity for the expression of a wide range of norm types (Grove et al. 1989).² Failure to behave ethically may involve the violation of different group norms (Bettenhausen and Murnighan 1985; March 1954) or subcultural norms (Yinger 1960) or, what Jackson et al. (1993) describe as "felt" norms. It is these felt norms that affect activities such as recycling and buying fair trade products. People may also make individual ethical judgments (e.g. Beauchamp and Bowie 1988; Sartorius 1972), as neither all non-normative behaviors are unethical nor all unethical behaviors normative (e.g. Beauchamp and Bowie 1988; Strutton et al. 1997). Individuals may view certain consumer choices as wrong for themselves, but not necessarily wrong for others (Baron 1999). Nonetheless, even these individual judgments may be violated in some circumstances. In sum, it is important to recognise the nature of the norms relevant to particular consumption contexts, but neutralization can nevertheless be used in any circumstance in which a consumer has a desire to commit (or has committed) a questionable activity but has an ethical concern that requires neutralization (Minor 1981, 300-301).

The relative negligence of neutralization theory to account for how people cope with dissonance in ethical decision contexts is not surprising given that its origins are sociological (see Eagly and Chaiken 1993). Nonetheless, the potential usefulness of neutralization theory in this domain (Minor 1984; Hazani 1991) stems from the fact that it is a well-established and relatively comprehensive conceptual framework, which describes and predicts which self-justification strategies may be employed as a defense against dissonance and feelings of guilt consumers might otherwise experience when violating their internalized norms and values. Therefore, it represents a psychological process capable of restoring equilibrium without attitude change.

Despite its sociological origins, neutralization shares similar theoretical tenets with recent advances in psychology. For example, in opposition to the more traditional social cognition models, which assume a rational and unbiased consumer, proponents of motivated cognition argue that an individual's motives on a particular occasion bias reasoning processes and the resultant judgments. A number of studies (e.g. Kunda 1990; Ditto et al. 1998; Baumeister 1996) have made a strong case to suggest that directional goals, as opposed to accuracy goals, "may affect reasoning through reliance on a biased set of cognitive processes: strategies for accessing, constructing and evaluating beliefs" (Kunda 1990, 480). Similarly, one of the dominant models within persuasion and attitude change, i.e. the heuristic-systematic model (Chaiken 1980, 1987; Chaiken,

Liberman, and Eagly 1989), assumes that three different types of motivation – accuracy, impression and defence – may affect the type (heuristic versus systematic) and final outcome of a certain information processing task. Indeed, even the mainstream attitude models themselves (e.g. Ajzen 1991; Eagly & Chaiken 1993; Fazio 1990), have been recently criticized for not incorporating explicit or at least adequate, motivational content (see Perugini and Bagozzi 2004).

The theoretical developments outlined above share similar ground with neutralization theory in that a range of enduring and situational motives affect the final behavioral outcome, but also the cognitive strategies deployed before and afterwards. Of course, neutralization is specifically concerned with ethical reasoning processes, where motives such as self-esteem maintenance and self-worth are of dominant importance. Moreover, although neutralization is likely to co-occur with other modes of reasoning and effortful cognitive processing, it should be particularly pertinent in cases where the motive is to maintain self-esteem as opposed to arriving at a valid ethical judgment (see e.g. Eagly and Chaiken 1993). The lack of effort devoted to many ethical decisions was highlighted by Irwin (1999, 212) who claimed that most individuals are unlikely to "incorporate a complex hedonic calculation of the greatest utility for society into (their) weekly supermarket trip". However, involvement can fluctuate as ethical concerns are continuously influenced by contingencies such as peer pressure and availability of information (Clarke 2004). Nevertheless, neutralization represents a very specific theoretical proposition, which is most easily applied to less deliberative decision making and describes and predicts which cognitive "heuristics" or strategies may be employed when there are motives to maintain self-worth and at the same time violate personal ethical beliefs and values. This relatively effortless mode of cognitive processing is most likely to occur in everyday, low-involvement contexts, where consumers downplay ethical considerations.

TOWARDS A MODEL OF "UNETHICAL" CONSUMER DECISION MAKING

The foregoing discussion proposes that the cognitive process of neutralization can help consumers to cope with feelings of guilt or dissonance when their behavior in ethical contexts is not consistent with their beliefs and attitudes. The ensuing model and discussion elaborate on how neutralization complements existing models of ethical decision making, thus moving towards a model of unethical consumer decision making.

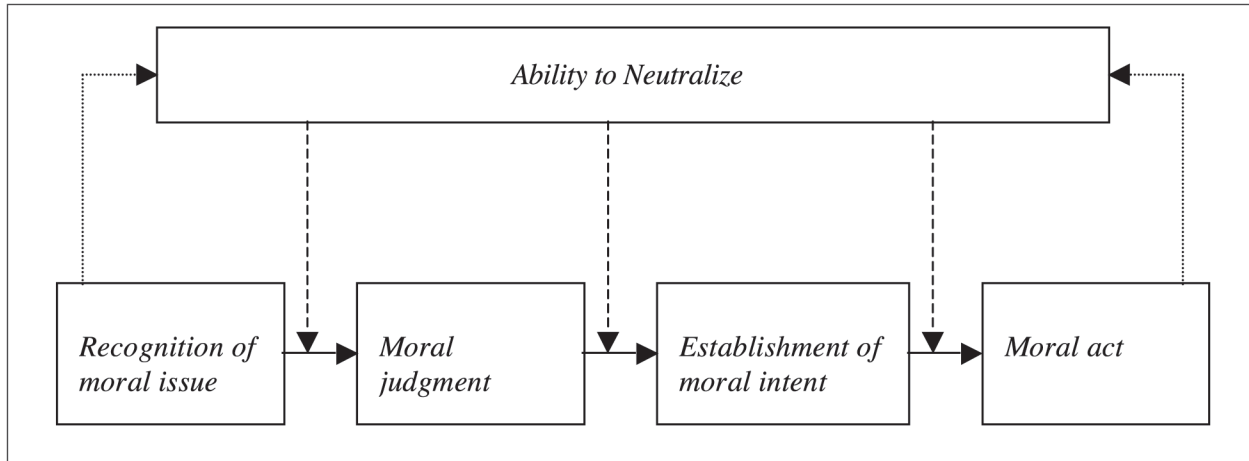
Figure 1 depicts the basic four-stage model of ethical decision making advanced by Rest (1979). This model is consistent with the core elements of many subsequent models on ethical decision-making (e.g. Hunt and Vitell 1986; Ferrell and Gresham 1985; Tan 2002), which focus on one or more of the stages outlined (for an overview, see Jones 1991). Thus, we adopt this model here for the sake of simplicity and comparability.

Rest's model proposes that in the ethical decision process an individual must a) recognize the moral issue, b) make a moral judgment, c) resolve to place moral concerns ahead of other concerns, and d) act on the moral concerns. Each of these stages is conceptually distinct and success at one stage does not imply success in subsequent stages. We propose that individuals can bring to bear neutralization techniques between each and/or every stage of the ethical decision process to mitigate potential dissonance and feelings of guilt. The hypotheses presented below detail the proposed moderating effect of a person's ability to neutralize between each stage of the process.

At the beginning of the process, an individual recognises that there is a moral dimension to the decision. In the process of making

²Grove et al. (1989, 132), refer to three different norm types, i.e. "folkways", mores and laws.

FIGURE 1
The Influence of Ability to Neutralize on the Ethical Decision Process



a moral judgment on the issue, the degree to which a person considers it acceptable, if not right, to deviate from the relevant norm or value will be influenced by his or her ability to apply neutralization techniques to the situation. For example, within the domain of consumer ethics (e.g. acknowledging being given the wrong change), it has been widely documented that beliefs about whether the consumer or the seller is at fault underlie consumer moral judgments (Fukukawa 2002). Vitell and Muncy (1992) have linked this type of rationalisation to the neutralization techniques of "condemning the condemners" and "denial of victim".

H1: Where an individual recognises that there is a moral dimension to a decision, the ability to neutralize will have a negative effect on moral judgments (attitudes) and will make unethical alternatives more acceptable

When a moral judgment or attitude towards the ethical issue has been formed, a consumer does not necessarily establish an intention to pursue what s/he perceives to be a morally superior course of action because other competing concerns/desired consequences sometimes take priority (e.g. Hunt and Vitell 1986). In such cases, neutralization techniques can serve as self-defence mechanisms that mitigate the virtues of ethically superior choices. For example, a consumer may have shaped an ethical judgment in favour of recycling. At the same time however, s/he may not be willing to undergo the inconvenience of keeping separate bins, driving to the recycling station and so on. By employing neutralization techniques such as "no one else is doing it in the neighbourhood" or "it is the council's responsibility for not having a better infrastructure in place", s/he can avoid dissonance or feelings of guilt that might otherwise arise due to the inconsistency between his/her moral judgments and intended behavior.

H2: When a moral judgment is in favor of ethically superior choices, the ability to neutralize will a) increase the likelihood that a consumer will form inconsistent moral intentions and b) reduce the likelihood that an individual will experience dissonance or guilty feelings.

Even if the consumer has established an intention to pursue an ethically superior course of action, situational constraints or the existence of an opportunity might affect actual behavior (Ferrell and

Gresham 1985; Hunt and Vitell 1992). Again, the techniques can guard against any feelings of guilt or dissonance that might arise due to the inconsistency. For example, a consumer may be willing to pay a higher price for fairly traded goods but when s/he goes to the supermarket the fair trade brand is out of stock. Similarly, an individual may have no intention to engage in any sort of consumer "transgressions", but when s/he is undercharged in a large chain retail store, s/he may "overlook" the incident. In both cases, techniques such as attributing responsibility to the retailer and claiming that "no one else would do it" can effectively guard against the anticipation of feelings such as remorse or shame, and thus smooth the process of not acting on previously established moral intentions.

H3: When moral intentions are in favour of more ethical choices the ability to neutralize will a) increase the likelihood that a consumer will submit to situational constraints or opportunities that inhibit him or her from acting upon those positive intentions and b) reduce the likelihood that an individual will experience dissonance or feelings of guilt.

Actual (unethical) behavior might lead to the employment of neutralization techniques on a *post hoc* basis, indicating the consumer's sensitivity to its unethical nature and becoming part of his/her experience. If successful, the techniques might be internalized and thus they will affect the recognition of an ethical issue in subsequent decisions on an *ad hoc* basis. That is, if they have become genuine neutralizing devices, on similar occasions in the future an individual will not consider there to be a moral dimension to the problem (Vitell and Grove 1987; Grove et al. 1989). Indeed, by making the unexpected expected, the untoward either justified or inconsequential, neutralization techniques essentially make things "right" (Massey, Freeman, and Zelditch 1997, 238).

H4: The use of neutralization techniques following behavior (if successfully internalized) will reduce the likelihood that a consumer will recognize a moral dimension to a similar problem in the future.

Following Vitell and Grove's (1987) related endeavor in the business ethics field, it is further proposed that both the type of

ethical problem and various background characteristics of the consumer act as moderating variables upon the proposed relationships between the “ability to neutralize” and (un)ethical behavior. While some indications of possible interrelationships already exist in the literature (for type of ethical problem see e.g. Strutton et al. 1994; Chatzidakis et al. 2004; for individual characteristics see e.g. Strutton et al. 1997; Holland et al. 2002), a further elaboration on those issues would move beyond the purpose of this paper, which is to illustrate how the techniques may affect any of the basic steps in the consumer’s ethical decision-making process.

The proposed construct can be readily added in the context of Hunt and Vitell’s (1986, 1992) general theory in marketing ethics since it is based in all steps of Rest’s ethical decision-making process and also accounts for moderating or exogenous factors. Furthermore, it can also be adjusted in the context of theory of planned behavior. It can represent a new construct, in the same way that Fukukawa (2002) argued for “perceived unfairness”, and Shaw and Shiu (2002a, 2002b) for “ethical obligation” and “self identity”; thus affecting attitude, behavioral intention as well as behavior. Clearly however, those conceptualization issues await future investigation.

CONCLUSIONS

Neutralization theory offers to significantly complement existing knowledge of ethical consumer behavior by outlining ways in which consumers can mitigate the negative impact of their ethically questionable activities. In addition to the theoretical contribution of neutralization theory to understanding unethical consumer behavior, the arguments and hypotheses advanced in this paper, if empirically verified, have implications for both public policy and marketing practice. Most notably, given an understanding of how consumers use neutralization techniques to justify pursuing their more selfish goals in particular contexts, marketing communications and persuasion activities can be designed to counter the arguments that consumers use to justify unethical choices. Investigations into which neutralization techniques are mostly employed to justify, for example, shoplifting, drink driving or declining to give to charity, could provide the basis for initiatives that seek to manipulate, negate and pre-empt the deployment of those techniques in particular (e.g. Strutton et al. 1994, 1997). In relation to shoplifting, statements such as “everybody loses from shoplifting” and “shoplifting does make a difference because at the end it increases the final cost for the consumer” may work against the “denial of injury” neutralization technique. Yet, more research is needed to empirically validate all of the hypotheses advanced and to identify the more effective approaches to communication. For example, while it is possible that communication attempts that target at disrupting a cognitive adaptation (via neutralization techniques) will ultimately lead to behavioral adaptation (via more ethical behavior; Peretti-Wattel 2003), it is also possible that consumers may counterbalance it by inventing a series of new neutralizing beliefs (Minor 1981).

Furthermore this research can have important implications for the lives of consumers. Awareness and understanding of how individuals use neutralization techniques could provide valuable insights for consumers on their own everyday behavior. A more critical stance on the ethical rationalizations that consumers intuitively employ in so many daily consumer contexts could perhaps be powerful enough to uplift change. For example, being aware of the widespread employment of certain neutralization techniques, a consumer would probably think twice about whether his own internal dialogues concern real expressions of situational or utilitarian ethics or somewhat self-deceptive “excuses” (see Bersoff 2001, 1999). Is it sensible and valid to argue that “I do not recycle paper

because the council does not provide a collection service”, or is it the case that we have a responsibility to recycle the waste produced through our consumption, even if doing so is not as convenient as we would like? It has been suggested that relatively small, non-duress driven social breaches are likely to be the most strongly influenced by self-presentation and self-esteem needs, and indeed, these are the types of questionable behaviors that are the most common (Bersoff 2001). Recognising and readdressing some of these minor violations may have positive consequences for consumers in terms of their freedom from guilt and peace of mind as well as broader societal benefits.

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Explicit and Implicit Determinants of Fair-Trade Buying Behavior

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INTRODUCTION

Although the consumers' commitment to environmental issues, animal testing, working conditions, fair trade, and other ethical issues has gained more attention in recent years (Nicholls 2002), ethical consumer behavior remains a relatively under-researched consumer domain (Folkes and Kamins 1999; Uusitalo and Oksanen 2004). Evidence of a growing market for ethical products is often inferred from the results of opinion polls indicating increasing concern with the ethical features of products (Tallontire, Rentsendorj and Blowfield 2001). However, this raising concern does not seem to translate into actual purchase behavior. More specifically, several authors have reported an attitude-behavior gap (Bird and Hughes 1997; Boulstridge and Carrigans' 2000; Carrigan and Attalla 2001; Folkes and Kamin 1999) and pointed out that most of the ethical labeling initiatives with respect to, for instance, organic food, products free from child labor, legally logged wood, and fair-trade products, have market shares of less than 1% (MacGillivray 2000).

The purpose of this study is to propose and test a measurement technique of implicit attitudes that can partly account for the attitude-behavior gap in ethical consumer behavior, to investigate to what extent implicit attitudes determine ethical buying behavior, and to discuss the marketing implications of the findings.

THE ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOR GAP AND IMPLICIT ATTITUDES

There are two plausible explanations for the reoccurring discrepancy between attitudes towards ethical issues and buying behavior as measured in survey research and actual buying behavior. The first relates to characteristics of ethical products, while the second is related to measurement problems. Primarily, the low attitude-behavior consistency in ethical consumer behavior may be ascribed to the fact that ethical products may well be desirable because they are environmentally friendly or serve a social cause, but still a premium price has to be paid or extra effort has to be exerted to find the products (Hurtado 1998). Previous research indicates that higher prices and efforts are the main reasons that ethically-oriented consumers mention when their attitude-behavior inconsistency is pointed out to them (De Pelsmacker, Driesen, and Rayp 2005). Moreover, the majority of people evaluate product attributes jointly in making purchase decisions. Price, quality, convenience, availability in regular supermarkets, and brand familiarity are often still the most important factors affecting the buying decision (e.g. Boulstridge and Carrigan 2000; Carrigan and Attalla 2001; De Pelsmacker et al. 2005a; Tallontire, Rentsendorj and Blowfield 2001). Thirdly, consumers may still need to be convinced that their purchase behavior can make a difference in ethical terms in order to be persuaded to buy them (Bird and Hughes 1997).

With respect to the measurement problems in ethical consumer research, there is the heavy reliance on self-report measures that assume that people are *aware* of their attitudes and that they are *able* and *willing* to reveal them if asked appropriately. However, these assumptions are not always valid (Greenwald and Banaji 1995). Ulrich and Sarasin (1995) somewhat cynically claimed not to do any research and not to ask the public any question on ethical buying behavior, because the answers are never reliable, and often

useless if not misleading. Especially in situations in which respondents want to make a good impression on the researcher or want to conform social norms, attitudes tend to be more positive than actual behavior (King and Bruner 2000). Typically in questionnaires on sensitive topics such as ethical issues this could be the case. (La Troobe, Helen, and Acott 2000).

Furthermore, self-report attitude measures operate on the assumption that people have a-priori attitudes towards all attitude-objects or that they are able to form them on the spot (Schwarz and Bohner 2001). Consequently, even when respondents are unfamiliar with the attitude-object (and do not have a-priori attitudes), they will still answer the question in order not to seem *ignorant*. Especially, the presence of an interviewer, monetary and physical inducements or the expectation of knowledge may motivate respondents to provide uninformed responses or "guessing" at answers (Hawkins and Coney 1981). In other cases, previously formed attitudes may not be easily accessible to the individual (Fazio et al. 1986). Thus, even when individuals have a previously formed attitude, they may report a newly created one.

Finally, substantial research on social cognition suggests that a large portion of our daily activities is the result of cognitive processes that occur outside conscious awareness and control (Bargh 2002; Greenwald and Banaji 1995). As a result, traditional self-report measures are not well suited to capture these implicit processes. Related to the latter point is the renewed interest in the "unconscious" (Weinberger 2000) and the distinction between explicit and implicit attitudes. Explicit attitudes are attitudes that operate in a controlled conscious mode and are typically measured by self-report tasks. Implicit attitudes can be defined as "introspectively unidentified (or inaccurately identified) traces of past experience that mediate favorable or unfavorable feeling, thought, or action towards social objects" (Greenwald and Banaji 1995, p. 8). Given these insights, several authors have argued that automatic processes should also be considered in order to fully understand consumer attitudes and decisions (e.g. Brunel, Tietje, and Greenwald 2004; Maison, Greenwald, and Bruin 2004).

The arguments discussed above suggest that the discrepancy between ethical consumer behavior and self-reported attitudes could partially be due to problems with self-report tasks. Recently, researchers have developed a number of alternative measures that do not rely on self-report. These measures are assumed to register implicit attitudes and to be less sensitive to social desirability effects. One of these measures, the Implicit Association Test (IAT), is perhaps the most promising upcoming solution to these measurement problems.

IMPLICIT ATTITUDE MEASUREMENT

The Implicit Association Test

The IAT, developed by Greenwald et al. (1998), is presumably the most well-known implicit measurement technique in psychology (Fazio and Olson 2003). The IAT is a computerized task that measures the strength of association between two contrasted target concepts (e.g. flower and insects) on the one hand and an attribute dimension (e.g. positive and negative words) on the other hand. The idea behind the IAT is that it should be easier to map two concepts

onto a single response when those concepts are similar or associated in memory than when the concepts are unrelated or dissimilar. The difference in reaction times between these two tasks is taken as an indication of the degree of association between concepts (Greenwald et al. 1998). A substantial number of studies have demonstrated the reliability and validity of the IAT in psychological research (Greenwald and Nosek 2001). For example, IAT-effects were shown to be indicative of in-group preference with respect to ethnic groups (e.g. Japanese-American and Korean-American, Greenwald et al. 1998), spider and snake phobics (Teachman et al. 2001), homosexuals (Banse et al. 2001), vegetarians, cigarette smokers (Swanson et al. 2001), etc. Further, convergence has been reported between IAT measures on the one hand and semantic priming measures (e.g. Cunningham et al. 2001) and physiological measures such as the fMRI (Phelps et al. 2000) on the other hand. Although less work has been conducted concerning the prediction of behavior from IAT scores, different studies demonstrated the IATs' ability to predict behavioral leakage. For instance, Asendorp et al. (2002) showed that the IAT significantly increased the prediction of spontaneous (but not deliberative) shy behavior in a realistic situation.

IAT in Consumer Research

According to Bargh (2002) "the realm of consumer research would seem to be the ideal playing field on which to establish whether the new models of automatic goal pursuit and automatic evaluation processes do, indeed, apply to the real world, [...]". However, only a few researchers have accepted this challenge by introducing the IAT into consumer research. Maison, Greenwald and Bruin (2004) examined implicit attitudes towards different types of products (juices and sodas; low and high calorie products) and brands (brands of yoghurt, fast food restaurants and cola). The results showed positive correlations between implicit attitudes and both explicit attitudes and behavior (self-reported and observed). Generally, heavy users of a particular product or brand demonstrated more positive implicit attitudes towards that product or brand than light users. Further, there are some indications that implicit attitude measures may reveal evidence of unique contribution to the prediction of behavior (i.e. consistently positive beta coefficients, Maison, Greenwald, and Bruin 2004).

Brunel, Tietje, and Greenwald (2004) obtained similar results. On the basis of the results of their first study, they concluded that in situations where implicit and explicit attitudes were expected to converge (attitudes towards Macintosh versus PC Windows based machines), IAT measures of brand attitude and brand relationship showed strong, positive correlations with explicit measures of brand attitude, ownership, and usage. Moreover, they found that the IAT effectively discriminated between consumers with more favorable explicit attitudes, ownership, and usage of one brand versus those with unfavorable explicit attitudes, ownership and usage of the same brand. In a second study on the race of advertising spokespersons, they demonstrated that under some conditions the IAT could uncover consumers' attitudes that traditional measures did not detect. In this second study, explicit and implicit attitudes towards ads for sportswear advertisements portraying African-American (Black) and European-American (White) athlete-spokespersons were measured. The results showed that at the explicit level there was no difference between attitudes towards the ads with White spokespersons compared to ads with Black spokespersons. However, the IAT revealed a strong preference for ads containing White spokespersons. When analyzing White and Black participants' subgroups, divergent results arose. White participants showed an in-group (=pro-White) IAT preference, but no significant ex-

PLICIT preference. Opposite results were found for the Black group: Black respondents showed a pro-Black preference at the explicit level, but no significant implicit preference. However, in consumer research, it has until now not yet been examined whether the use of the IAT in combination with explicit measures predicts behaviour more accurately than self-report measures alone in situations where consistently weak explicit attitude-behavior relationships have been found. This is the main purpose of this study.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS AND DATA COLLECTION

In an experiment we measured explicit and implicit attitudes towards Fair Trade and traditional (non-Fair Trade) products in participants who did (buyers) or did not (non-buyers) regularly buy Fair Trade products. The purpose of Fair trade products is to establish trading partnerships that aim for sustainable development of excluded and/or disadvantaged producers in the Third World. In a narrow sense, Fair Trade products can be defined by their best-known component: fair prices for the products of producers in developing countries (Krier 2001). Explicit attitudes toward the two assortments ('assortment with traditional products' vs 'assortments with Fair Trade products') were measured using semantic differential scales whereas implicit attitudes were measured using the IAT. The specific attitude-objects were coffee and rice, two commonly used fast moving consumer goods. This allowed us to examine whether implicit measures can differentiate between buyers and non-buyers. More specifically, we expected that IAT scores would reveal less positive implicit attitudes towards Fair Trade products (as compared to traditional products) in non-buyers than in buyers. Because we also included explicit measures, we could examine whether implicit measures are related to actual purchase behavior even when explicit attitudes are taken into account.

Method of analysis

Participants and procedure. Eighty-six people (52 women, 34 men) participated in the experiment in exchange for a coupon with a monetary value of approximately 6 euro (a coupon for purchases in Fair Trade shops for the 'buyers' of fair trade and a movie ticket for the 'non-buyers' of fair trade). Thirty-seven participants were recruited at the time of fair-trade purchase and conducted the experiment in a room next to a Fair Trade shop. The other participants (N=49) were selected by means of street interviews and completed the experiment in a meeting room of the University. All participants questioned at the Fair Trade shop and 11 participants questioned at the University reported to buy Fair Trade products at least a few times a year, whereas the remaining participants indicated never to buy Fair Trade products. As a result, we labelled the former participants 'Buyers of Fair Trade products' (N=48), while the latter participants were considered 'Non-buyers of Fair Trade products' (N=38). All respondents were between 18 and 64 years old ($M_{buyers}=29.79$, $SD=11.84$; $M_{non-buyers}=30.66$, $SD=13.10$, $F(1, 85)=0.103$, $p=0.749$).

The experiment consisted of three phases: (1) a learning phase, (2) an IAT and (3) a paper-and-pencil questionnaire. The IAT preceded the explicit measure to minimize potential, if any, carry-over effects (Egloff and Schmukle 2002). The entire study was conducted individually and each individual session took about 20 minutes.

Learning phase. The purpose of the learning phase was to ensure that every respondent knew the products in the experiment as well as the category that a product was meant to represent ('Fair Trade' versus 'traditional, open market'). During the learning phase, the assortment labels 'Fair Trade' and 'traditional' were

paired together with their (1) specific characteristics (fair price for the producer and control of production and trade, price premium due to the fair price and restricted number of outlets [Fair Trade], or striving for maximum profit, normal price and large number of outlets [traditional]) and (2) four illustrative (pictures of) Oxfam products (the best known fair-trade brand in Belgium): coffee 'dessert', coffee 'mocha', 'white' rice, and 'basmati' rice; and the two leading coffee and rice brands in Belgium respectively). Respondents were instructed to memorize the assortment labels, characteristics and products. In the memory test following the learning phase, respondents had to indicate to which assortment the product presented on the computer screen belonged by pressing the appropriate key. When the memory test was error free (which was the case for all respondents), the IAT was initiated. The order of learning the concepts and/or products was counterbalanced.

IAT. The IAT was designed to measure implicit attitudes towards the Fair Trade and traditional products in the experiment. The target stimuli were the individual pictures of the Fair Trade and traditional products shown during the learning phase. The attribute stimuli were positive (e.g. smile, paradise) and negative (e.g. pain, murder). Stimuli were presented in the centre of the computer screen and the respondents' task was to assign each stimulus to one of four categories. The IAT procedure comprised five blocks. In the first block, respondents discriminated between positive and negative words on 20 trials. Block 2 consisted of a target discrimination task (20 trials) in which respondents had to classify the pictures of the products in 'Fair Trade' and 'traditional' categories. In Block 3 (24 practice and 48 data collection trials) respondents were asked to categorize items by pressing one of the two keys (pictures of Fair Trade products and positive words assigned to one key versus pictures of traditional products and negative words assigned to the other key). Block 4 included once again a target discrimination task, but now with a reversal of the side of the screen on which the two category labels appeared (20 trials, the reverse of task 2). Block 5 (24 practice and 48 data collection trials) consisted of the reversed combined categorization task of block three (pictures of Fair Trade products and negative words assigned to one key versus pictures of traditional products and positive words assigned to the other key). The order of performing block 3 and 5 was counterbalanced between subjects. Before and during each phase, category labels were displayed on the left and right sides of the screen. Respondents were asked to respond as quickly but also as accurately as possible.

Explicit measures. A four-item seven-category semantic differential scale measured explicit attitudes towards the Fair Trade and traditional products ($\text{Alpha}=0.66$).

RESULTS

Explicit attitudes

Overall, explicit attitudes towards Fair Trade products ($M_{\text{Fair Trade}} = 5.43$, $SD = 1.08$) were significantly more positive than towards traditional products ($M_{\text{traditional}} = 4.79$, $SD = 1.07$, $t(85) = 3.96$, $p < 0.001$). An ANOVA with type of consumer (buyers or non-buyers) as a between subjects variable and type of product (Fair Trade products or traditional products) as a within-subjects variable revealed a main effect of type of product, $F(1, 84) = 14.85$, $p < 0.001$, and a significant interaction effect between type of consumer and type of product $F(1, 84) = 40.80$, $p < 0.001$. Moreover, t -tests indicated that buyers of Fair Trade products showed explicit attitudes towards these products ($M_{\text{Fair Trade buyers}} = 5.93$, $SD = 0.93$) that were significantly more positive than towards traditional products ($M_{\text{traditional buyers}} = 4.55$, $SD = 1.18$, $t(47) = 6.83$, $p < 0.001$), while non-buyers ($M_{\text{Fair Trade non-buyers}} =$

4.79 , $SD = 0.90$, $M_{\text{traditional non-buyers}} = 5.09$, $SD = 0.93$, $t(37) = -1.82$, $p = 0.08$) only showed a trend in the opposite direction.

Implicit attitudes

Prior to analysis, IAT data were treated following the procedure outlined by Greenwald and colleagues. (1998). The average error rate was 2.28% (0%- 12%) and all respondents were included in the analysis. We conducted an ANOVA with type of consumer (buyers or non-buyers) as a between subjects variable and IAT task (fair trade-positive or fair trade-negative) as a within-subjects variable. The ANOVA revealed a main effect of IAT task, $F(1, 82) = 5.43$, $p = .022$, and a significant interaction between type of consumer and IAT task $F(1, 82) = 45.64$, $p < 0.001$. Further t -tests showed that buyers performed significantly better in the fair trade-positive block ($M = 841$, $SD = 165$) than in the fair trade-negative block ($M = 1012$, $SD = 210$), $t(47) = 7.20$, $p < .001$, whereas non-buyers were faster in the fair trade-negative block ($M = 850$, $SD = 174$) than in the fair trade-positive block ($M = 935$, $SD = 214$), $t(35) = -2.80$, $p = .008$. These results indicate that buyers had a more positive implicit attitude toward fair trade products than toward traditional products whereas the reverse was true for non-buyers.

Logistic Regression Analysis

In order to assess the explanatory power of implicit and explicit attitude measures, a logistic regression analysis was carried out. The criterion for the logistic regression analysis was the dichotomous behavioural variable 'buying or not buying Fair Trade products', which is identical to the earlier split up of respondents into 'Buyers' vs 'Non-buyers' of Fair Trade products. For the explicit and implicit predictors (attitude measures) we calculated two difference variables that were scored in such a way that higher values indicated preference for Fair Trade products. The explicit attitude difference score (EDS) was computed by subtracting the standardized score of 'attitude towards traditional products' from the standardized score of 'attitude towards Fair Trade products'. We used an analogue procedure for the implicit attitude difference score: standardized values of the mean response time for performing the 'Fair Trade-positive' (same key for fair trade products and positive words; Combination 1) were subtracted from the 'Fair Trade-negative task (same key for fair trade products and negative words; Combination 2). The correlation between the explicit and implicit predictors was 0.43 ($p < 0.001$). In the stepwise logistic regression, the explicit difference score was entered in the first step and the IAT in the second step. This enabled us to estimate the additional predictive value of the implicit attitude measure beyond the influence of the explicit measure.

Buyer $\approx Z = B_0 + B_1$ Explicit attitudes + B_2 Implicit attitudes

The analysis yielded a significant positive relationship between the dependent variable on the one hand and the explicit ($\text{Exp}(B) = 3.89$; $B = 1.36$; Wald's statistic = 10.96; $p = 0.001$) and implicit difference score ($\text{Exp}(B) = 3.72$; $B = 1.32$; Wald's statistic = 11.45, $p = 0.001$) on the other hand. The overall $-2 \log$ likelihood difference for the fitted logistic model indicated a significant fit ($\chi^2 = 54.18$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.001$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = .63$). Moreover, we found a significant decrease of the $-2 \log$ likelihood in the transition from the first model (including only the explicit difference score; $-2LL = 78.43$, $\chi^2 = 37.98$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.001$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = .48$)¹ to the full model (including both difference scores; $-2LL = 62.23$, $\chi^2 = 16.20$;

¹When including only the implicit difference score in the regression analysis a Nagelkerke R^2 of .45 is obtained with $-2LL = 81.53$, $\chi^2 = 34.88$; $df = 1$ and $p < 0.001$

$df=1; p<0.001, \Delta Nagelkerke R^2=0.15$). This result implies that the IAT accounts for 15% unique contribution to the prediction of behaviour. In fact, the full model was able to classify 83.5 % of the respondents correctly, while the model based on the explicit measure alone assigned only 76.5 % of the respondents to the right category.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The purpose of this research was to examine the usefulness of implicit attitude measurement with respect to ethical consumer behavior and to better investigate its relevance for the prediction and establishment of ethical buying behavior in society. Our results support the relevance of implicit measures such as the IAT as a useful tool in this context. First, we found that the IAT effects for buyers and non-buyers of Fair Trade products were significantly different, showing that the IAT can be used to differentiate between buyers and non-buyers. Moreover, it is suggested that to incite non-users to consume in a socially responsible way, not only explicit, but also implicit attitudes need to be changed. Thirdly, the logistic regression analysis demonstrated that IAT effects partially predicted ethical consumer behavior even when the influence of the explicit measure was controlled for. In other words, the IAT provided an independent contribution to the prediction of behavior. This conclusion is consistent with previous research that suggested independence in predictions of behavior by IAT and explicit measures (e.g. Egloff and Smukle 2002; Maison, Greenwald, and Bruin 2004). Although Maison, Greenwald and Bruin's (2004) study 3 already indicated significant positive beta-coefficients for the IAT in multiple regression analysis, so far no formal statistical test was used to validate a predictive pattern of behavior (e.g. Nosek 2004). The present study is the first demonstration of the usefulness of implicit attitude measurement for the prediction of consumer behavior in general, and ethical buying behavior in particular. More specific, the data suggest that in ethical consumer behavior research the combined use of explicit and implicit attitude measures could lead to a better prediction of behavior as compared to when only explicit attitude measures would be used. This finding is in line with the dual attitude model of Jarvis² et al. (2001) suggesting that, in certain situations, old and new attitudes can be jointly activated and influence subsequent thought and action. However, we also need to point to the fact that in the regression analysis the explicit attitude measure had larger β values and accounted for the largest part of the variance explained in the behavioral intention variable. This means that the explicit measure predicted behavior better than the IAT. A possible explanation for the importance of the explicit measure in current experiment is that social desirability distortion did not form such a big problem as could be expected on the basis of previous research. That is, it is suggested that not measurement problems, but rather the discordant character of ethical consumer products account for the attitude-behavior gap found in our experiment. This interpretation is further confirmed by the moderate and significant correlation that was found between the two types of measures ($r=.43$). Furthermore, the correlation indicates that although there

is an overlap between the two types of measures, they may still measure different constructs.

The findings have a number of practical implications. First, to make non-users of ethical products behave more ethically, not only explicit, but also implicit attitudes need to be enhanced. As a consequence we recommend practitioners to not only attune their product strategy to the influence of explicit, but also implicit attitudes. Because especially positive affective experiences with products form the basis of implicit attitudes (e.g. Rudman, 2004) and positive affective reactions and familiarity are shown to be closely related (Janiszewski, 1990), we believe that exposure to and thus familiarity with the products should be increased. To that end, we advise an improved and extended distribution network next to a greater visibility of the products in all kind of food shops. That is, ethical products should become part of daily life by placing them next to A-brands of the same product category in supermarkets as well as bars and restaurants. Further, negative or less positive affective reactions can be altered by giving consumers positive experiential contact with the products. Free samples of ethical products in the supermarket or within the framework of a direct marketing campaign could serve this goal. In the context of fair trade, the authors found in a previous study that the indifference towards these products was substantial and that they were not particularly liked. Furthermore, in a follow-up study, an explanatory model of fair-trade buying behavior showed that these factors had a substantial effect on buying behavior. Stimulating product experiences may therefore be very important. Fair-trade organizations and other non-profit organizations promoting ethical consumer behavior should therefore develop strategies that lead to maximum trial and product experience.

As a limitation, we should point to the fact that this study was conducted in a relatively small exploratory group of Belgian consumers. Moreover, the study focused on only two product categories in one specific ethical buying situation (fair trade). Further research in different cultures and for different ethical products and issues should be conducted to corroborate our findings. Indeed, implicit attitude measurement in general and the IAT in particular could also be useful to study reactions to environmentally friendly products and initiatives and to other social marketing issues, such as smoking, drinking alcohol, speeding, not wearing a seatbelt... Secondly, although the purpose of the learning phase was to make sure that all respondents (and especially the non-buyers) knew the difference between the traditional and Fair Trade products, it remains questionable whether the distinction between buyers versus non-buyers would itself translate to differences in implicit attitudes, without the learning phase. Further research could also try to clarify what kind of variance it is exactly that is uniquely predicted by the IAT or focus on the potential moderating effects of, for instance, the amount of experience with the product and the intensity of product use, and perceived consumer effectiveness. Maybe the most interesting suggestion for further study is to try to identify the relative importance of factors such as the type of information and product experience to diminish negative implicit attitudes.

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²According to the dual attitude model of Jarvis et al. (2003) persuasion does not necessary lead to attitude change, but rather to changes in confidence with respect to prior held attitudes. That is, people may lose confidence in their prior attitude and have enhanced confidence in a new attitude. Consequently, if an individual comes to have less confidence in an attitude, even if it has not changed in valence, it should be less directive of behavior, less stable and more susceptible to subsequent persuasion.

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The Impact of Aging on Consumer Attributions of Blame for a Product Harm Crisis

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Recently, a number of articles suggest that consumer segments assess blame differently for a product harm crisis. For example, Laufer & Gillespie (2004) found in two separate experiments that women blame a company more than men for a product harm crisis in which it is unclear whether the company, consumers, or situational factors were responsible for the crisis. Studies in psychology also suggest that blame attributions can differ across consumers in different countries. In a review of studies comparing North American and East Asian perceivers, researchers concluded that the sharpest differences in attributions for the cause of an individual's behavior lie in the weight accorded to contextual constraints and to pressures imposed by social groups (Choi, Nisbett & Norenzayan 1999). In a consumer context, Laufer (2002) suggests that based on these findings, consumers in individualistic societies may be more likely to attribute product failures to a company whereas consumers in collectivistic societies may be more likely to consider situational factors external to the company.

This paper reviews the literature in marketing, gerontology and psychology to examine whether another segmentation variable, age, impacts attributions of blame for product harm crises. In the paper we explore possible differences between older and younger consumers in the relation to antecedents of attributions, as well as to the attributional dimensions associated with consumer blame attributions. Based on our review of the literature, it appears that age is likely to impact the interpretation of product harm crises in a variety of ways. The net effect of these influences on blame attributions to companies is likely to depend on the circumstances surrounding the judgment context.

Despite widespread perceptions regarding the vulnerability of elderly consumers to harm, no evidence was found in the literature to support this. In fact, studies of psychological responses to fear-based appeals show no differences based on age (Benet, Pitts and LaTour 1993). Therefore, we cannot assume that older consumers will generally be more likely to make defensive attributions and blame a company for a product harm crisis as Laufer & Gillespie (2004) found for women. However, it is possible that elderly consumers will make defensive attributions for product harm crises involving products that focus on the elderly market due to increased similarity between them and the victims of the crisis.

The role of limitations in the cognitive ability of the elderly in assessing blame for product harm crises is also likely to be context dependent. The finding that 80% of older consumers read the newspaper in the morning (Yoon 1997) suggests that when older consumers are exposed to information about a product harm crisis, they will often have the opportunity and cognitive resources to perform detailed processing of information that does not differ from younger consumers. However, when they are exposed to a product harm crisis through other media, or perhaps when they are personally affected by the crisis, older consumers are more likely to rely on prior schemas (rather than information specific to the current crisis) when making blame attributions.

Prior beliefs might play a role in differences between older and younger groups in the assessment of blame in a product harm crisis, however in the direction of reduced blame to the company. Hart, Evans, Wissler, Feehan and Saks (1997) found for example that

older consumers have better developed schemas for injury-causing situations due to their greater life experience. It is possible that this results in an accumulated understanding of the power of situational forces, and thus a tendency for older consumers to place less blame on companies than younger consumers. However, this reliance on prior knowledge also implies a lack of attention to the specifics of the immediate situation. As such, older consumers might be less responsive in unambiguous product harm crises where the evidence clearly suggests that one of the parties is to blame. Thus, when available evidence points toward company blame, older consumers might be less likely to blame the company than younger consumers, and vice versa when evidence points toward consumer or situational blame.

Finally, findings from studies examining differences between younger and older consumers in their perceptions of Weiner's attributional dimensions may suggest less blame to the company in product harm crises in certain situations. Evidence suggests that older consumers are less impacted by the fundamental attribution error in certain situations and are also less likely to infer controllability. Since the dimensions of locus and controllability impact overall assessments of blame (Weiner, 1980; Klein & Dawar, 2004), elderly consumers might be less likely to exhibit negative consequences associated with blaming the company, such as reduced purchase intentions and negative word of mouth.

Collectively, existing research comparing attributions and cognitive abilities between the elderly and younger adults suggests that studying age differences in blame attributions for product harm crises is a potentially fruitful domain for future research. Examining how the net effect of these influences impact differences between older and younger consumer segments in judgments of culpability for product harm crises could potentially enrich our understanding of the impact of aging on attributions and its implications in the domain of consumer behavior.

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Fairness in Relational Marketing Exchange

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The relationship marketing literature shows that marketing exchange is socially embedded in various exchange contexts (Price and Arnould 1999). Most research in this domain has focused on the beneficial consequences of building and maintaining long-term customer relationships for both firms and customers. Much less research has examined the roles and functions of pre-existing (i.e., prior to the occurrence of a transaction) social relations in marketing exchange. The purpose of this research, therefore, is to examine the implications of pre-existing social ties for consumers' outcome evaluations in a unique form of relational exchange—network marketing. In particular, this research investigates how interpersonal trust, social obligations, and relational norms affect consumers' post-purchase fairness perceptions when buying goods from friends.

Drawing on literature on social embeddedness (Frenzen and Davis 1990; Granovetter 1985; Halpern 1997), social justice (Lind and Tyler 1988), interpersonal trust (Geyskens, Steenkamp, and Kumar 1998; Robinson 1996), and relational contracting (Kaufmann and Stern 1988; Macneil 1980), this research hypothesizes that customers' sense of social indebtedness and trust in the seller mitigates the negative effect of an unfavorable transaction outcome on their perceived fairness. In addition, it is hypothesized that when customers firmly believe that their friends should uphold the implicit relational norms in the transaction, the negative effect of an unfavorable transaction outcome on perceived fairness is attenuated. However, when the transaction outcome is favorable, all the relational variables would have no effect on customers' perceived fairness.

To test these hypotheses, a scenario experiment was conducted in a laboratory setting. One hundred ninety-five MBA students participated in the experiment. Subjects were randomly assigned to one of the eight conditions in a 2 (transaction outcome: favorable and unfavorable) \times 2 (interpersonal trust: low and high) \times 2 (social obligations: low and high) between-subjects factorial design. Beliefs of relational norms were measured as an individual characteristic. In the experiment, subjects read a scenario about a purchase they had just made from a friend, who was a sales agent of a direct selling firm. The scenario described a situation in which the subject bought a water filter from his or her friend without knowing the exact quality of the product. However, subsequent to the purchase, the subject had a chance to read a water filter rating in *Consumer Report*. The product rating indicated the value of the brand the subject bought relative to other reference brands. In the favorable (unfavorable) outcome condition, the focal brand had a higher (lower) value than the reference brands. In the high (low) trust condition, the sales agent was described as a more (less) trustworthy person. In the high (low) social obligations condition, the subject owed a big (small) favor from the sales agent in previous social interactions. After reading the scenario, the subjects completed a questionnaire that included the dependent measures and manipulation checks.

The empirical findings show that customers' fairness perceptions in a relational exchange are determined not only by the favorability of the transaction outcome but also by their unfulfilled social obligations and trust in the seller. The ANOVA result indicates that social obligations and interpersonal trust mitigates the negative effect of an unfavorable transaction outcome on customers' perceived fairness. When the transaction outcome is favorable, the above relational factors have no effect on customers'

perceived fairness. This implies that social obligations and interpersonal trust act as buffers against the influences of negative outcomes on customers' evaluations. On the other hand, contradictory to our predictions, the ANOVA result shows that beliefs of relational norms boost customers' fairness perception when the transaction outcome is favorable. A plausible explanation is that when the outcome is favorable, customers confirm their normative expectations of benevolent acts on the part of the sales agent, which in turn increases their perceived fairness.

In this research, an explicit and unambiguous transaction outcome (i.e., a product rating in *Consumer Report*) was used as the manipulation. The empirical findings, however, provide convincing evidence that relational variables can alleviate the negative effect of unfavorable outcomes on customers' perceived fairness. In daily purchases, quality and value of some products (e.g., credence goods like dietary supplements) is more difficult to evaluate. In such cases, it is anticipated that customers would be more reluctant to blame the sales agent for any outcome that seems unfavorable. As a result, sales agents in relational exchange could act opportunistically and capitalize on customers' biased judgment for their own benefits.

In conclusion, this research provides insights into the adverse consequences of relational exchange for consumer welfare. Previous research in relationship marketing predominately addresses the positive effects of social embeddedness and considers social relations as the by-product of successful exchanges over time. On the contrary, this research conceives social relations as an exogenous variable and tests their effects on consumers' post-purchase perceptions. This research therefore reveals the potential dark side of relational exchange in consumer market.

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