

The “Albatross” Evolves

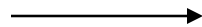
4 lessons from my thesis research

ACR 2004

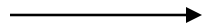
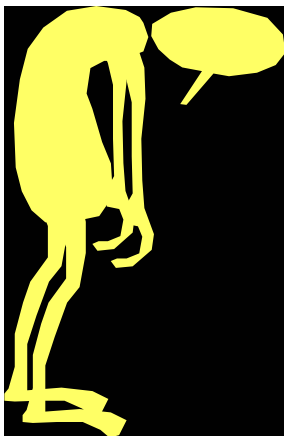
General interests

- The role of affect in consumer judgments and decisions
 - Its impact at various stages of information processing
 - Its applicability to evaluation of consumer alternatives, advertising, pricing etc.
- Very tentative ideas
 - Can one look at the effects of affect on price perception, brand perceptions etc...??
- Did what every doctoral student does
 - Read the literature

What do we know?



Evaluate products favorably

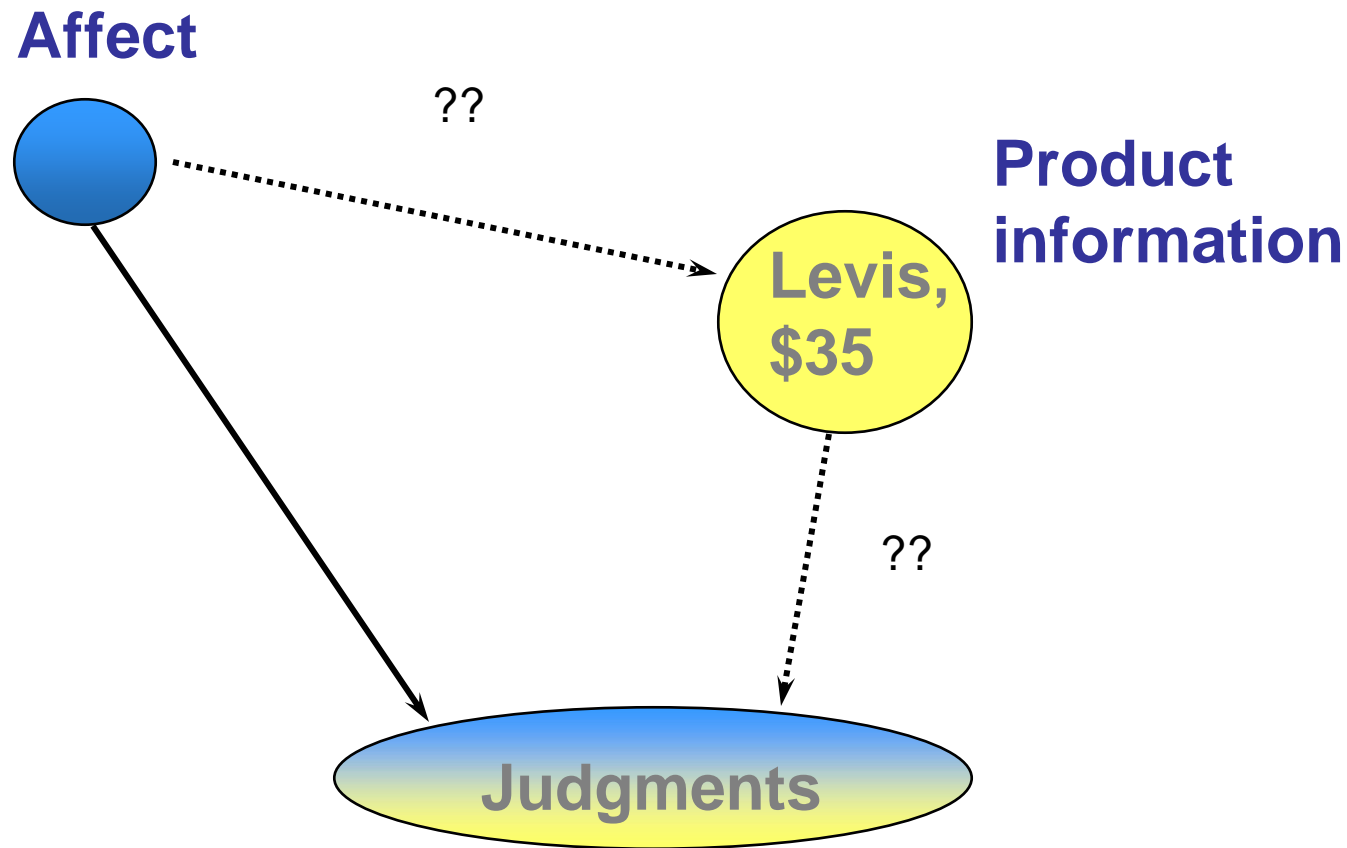


Evaluate products unfavorably

What we don't know...

- The specific cognitive mechanisms that underlie the impact of affect on judgments
 - Example, how does it have an impact on processing of product information?
 - Can affect influence consumer judgments through an indirect path (i.e., by first influencing how the information is seen, and then combined to form a judgment?)

Direct and Indirect Influences of Affect on Judgments



- Not much research in consumer behavior at that time
 - Not a “hot” topic (Relationship marketing was the “hot” topic)
 - Abandon this project?? NO!!!!!!
 - What do I cite? How do I make my predictions??
 - Look at the psychology literature
 - An explosion of new ideas

Four cognitive mechanisms

- Use of affective reactions as information (Schwarz & Clore 1989, Pham 1998)
- Use of categorical information (Bless et al. 1990; 1996)
- Interpretation of information (Roth and Rehm 1980; Forgas, Bower and Krantz 1984)
- Differential weighting of affect-consistent information (Forgas and Bower 1987; Bower, Gilligan and Monteiro 1981)

Isolating the cognitive mechanisms

- How does affect influence judgments through these different mechanisms
- Judgments are based on information (e.g., brand name and price), that is combined in some way

Assume an averaging process (Bettman, Capon and Lutz 1975, Troutman and Shanteau 1976; Johnson and Levin 1985 etc.)

$$\mathbf{J} = \frac{w_0 X_0 + \sum w_i X_i}{w_0 + \sum w_i}$$

- X_0 – initial impression (favorable or unfavorable)
- w_0 – weight attached to the initial impression
- w_i – weight attached to a piece of information (how important it is)
- X_i – scale value or interpretation of a piece of information (how favorable it is)
- *Affect can influence any of these parameters*

The Averaging Model

Effects of affect can be localized in various model parameters (Abele and Petzold 1995)

Consider judgments based on 2 types of information

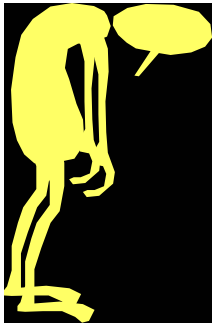
- categorical information (e.g., brand name)
- individuating information (e.g., price)

$$J = \frac{w_O X_O + w_B X_B + w_P X_P}{w_O + w_B + w_P}$$

Impact of Affect

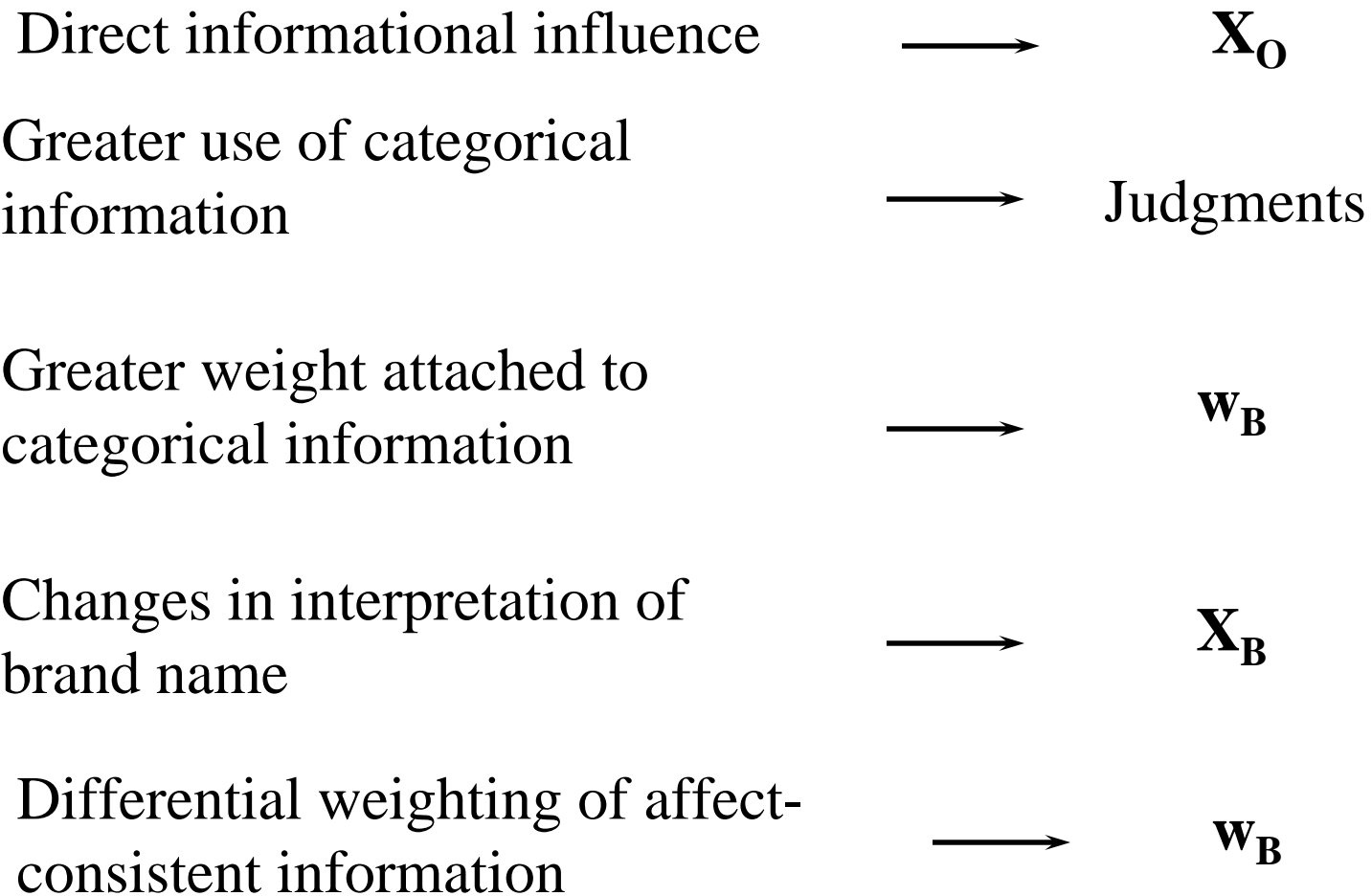


$$J_H = \frac{w_O X_O + w_B X_B + w_P X_P}{w_O + w_B + w_P}$$



$$J_S = \frac{w_O X_O + w_B X_B + w_P X_P}{w_O + w_B + w_P}$$

Localizing effects of affect



A reasonable idea??

- Yes – but what are your hypotheses?
 - Did not want to make any! Affect could enter into the picture through all these routes
 - Alternative hypotheses - maybe
 - The issue returns to haunt me later.

Lesson 1: You cannot write a paper where you make 5 different points (affect does this and this and this...)

Make sure you have a theoretical basis for your predictions but try to make one major point in a paper and make it as tight as possible.

Detecting differential weighting

- Manipulate affect (positive / negative)
- Provide information about 2 attributes
 - attribute information (favorable / unfavorable)
 - brand name (favorable / unfavorable)
- Assess whether impact of brand name is small or large when affect and attribute information are consistent
- Why? Because people attend more to information that is consistent – therefore the impact of *additional* information provided will be less.

Evaluative Consistency

- **Affect - attribute are consistent**
 - positive affect - positive attribute information
 - negative affect - negative attribute information

small

Impact of brand name



- **Affect - attribute are inconsistent**
 - positive affect - negative attribute information
 - negative affect - positive attribute information

large

Impact of brand name



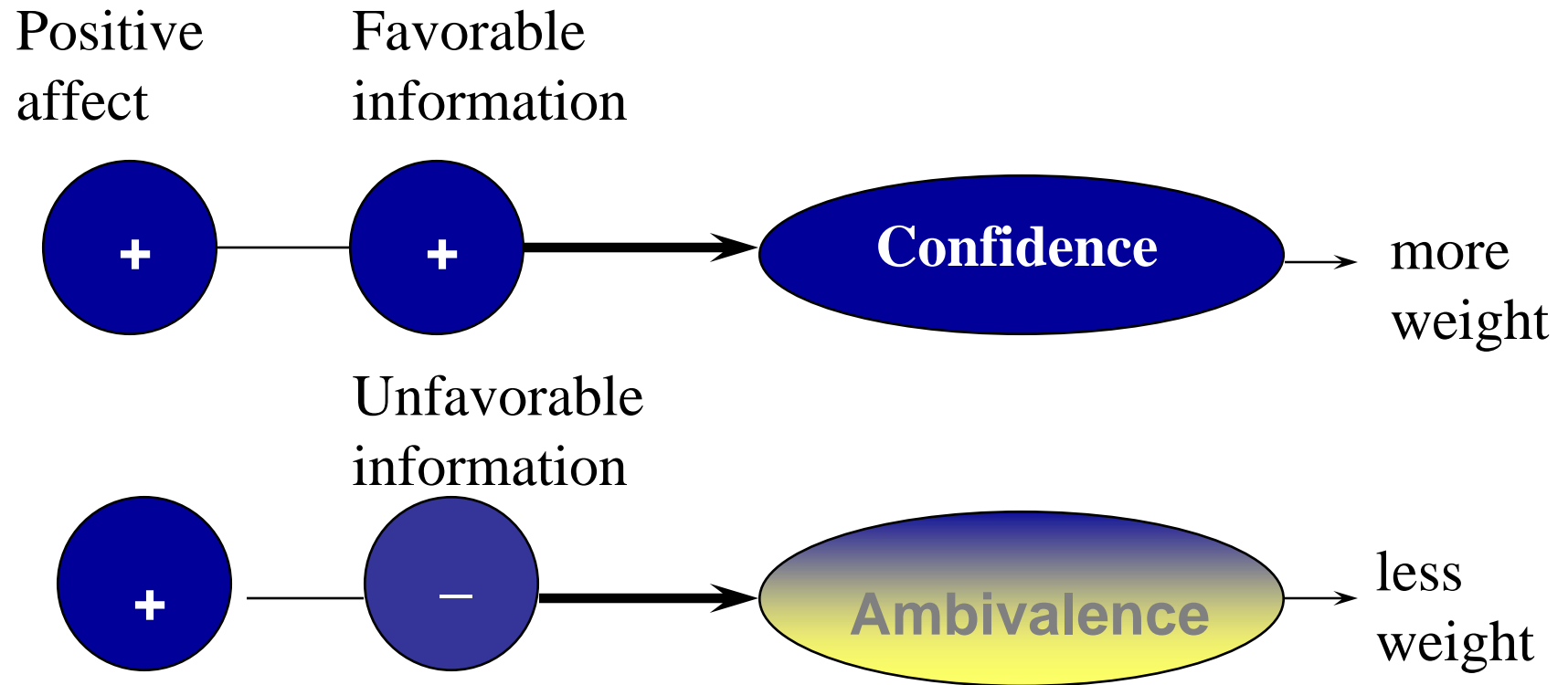
What happened?

- Effects of affect on weighting – Yes BUT
 - Contingencies with product category
- Example
 - Differential weighting of affect showed up
 - Jeans – yes
 - Backpacks – no
 - Sweatshirts and shoes – gender differences
 - Now what?? Should I bother explaining it or just put it down to knowledge differences
 - Intriguing....curiosity kills the cat – or does it??

Pushing the idea further

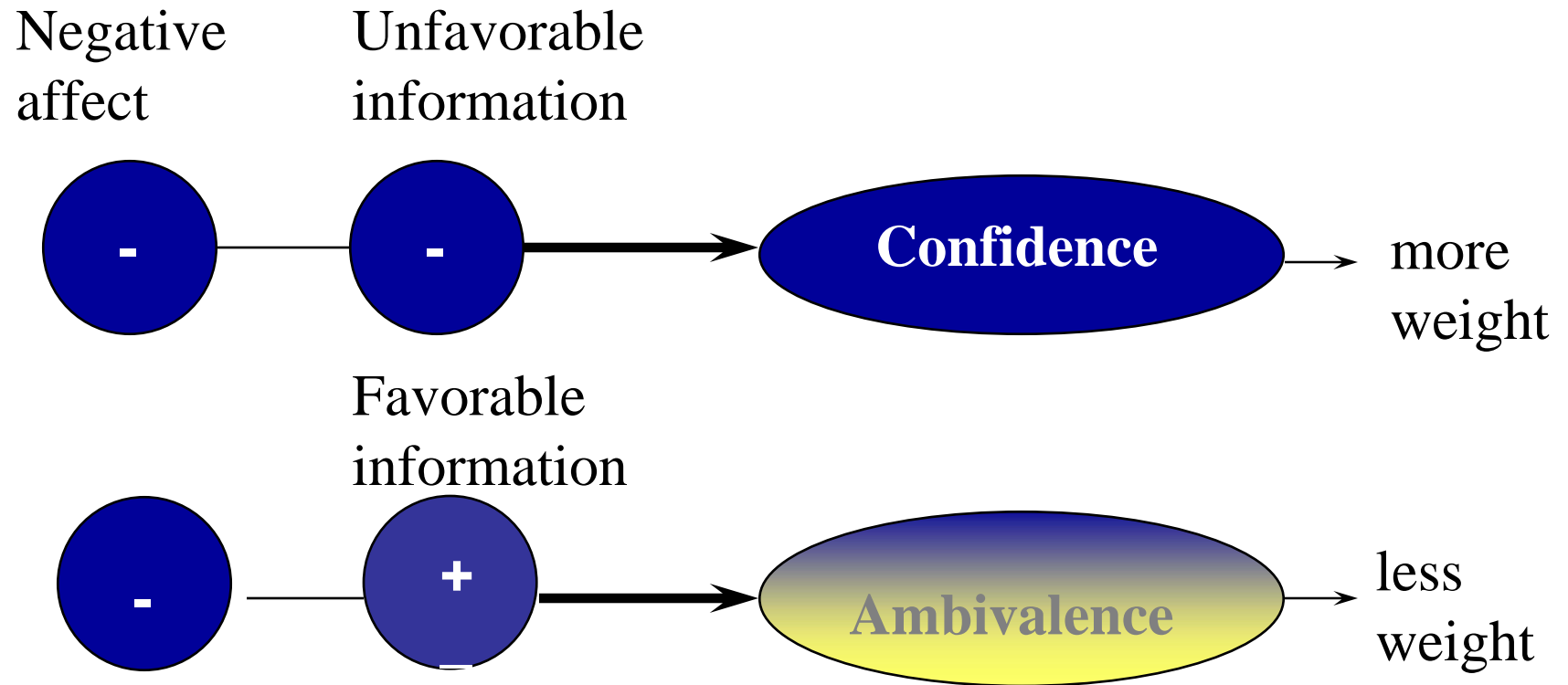
- Go back to the literature
 - Recent findings suggest that the mechanism to explain differential weighting is not as clear as I thought
 - Maybe I can come up with an alternative explanation that would also take into account some of the contingencies I am getting.
 - The idea of affect confirmation

Affect - Confirmation



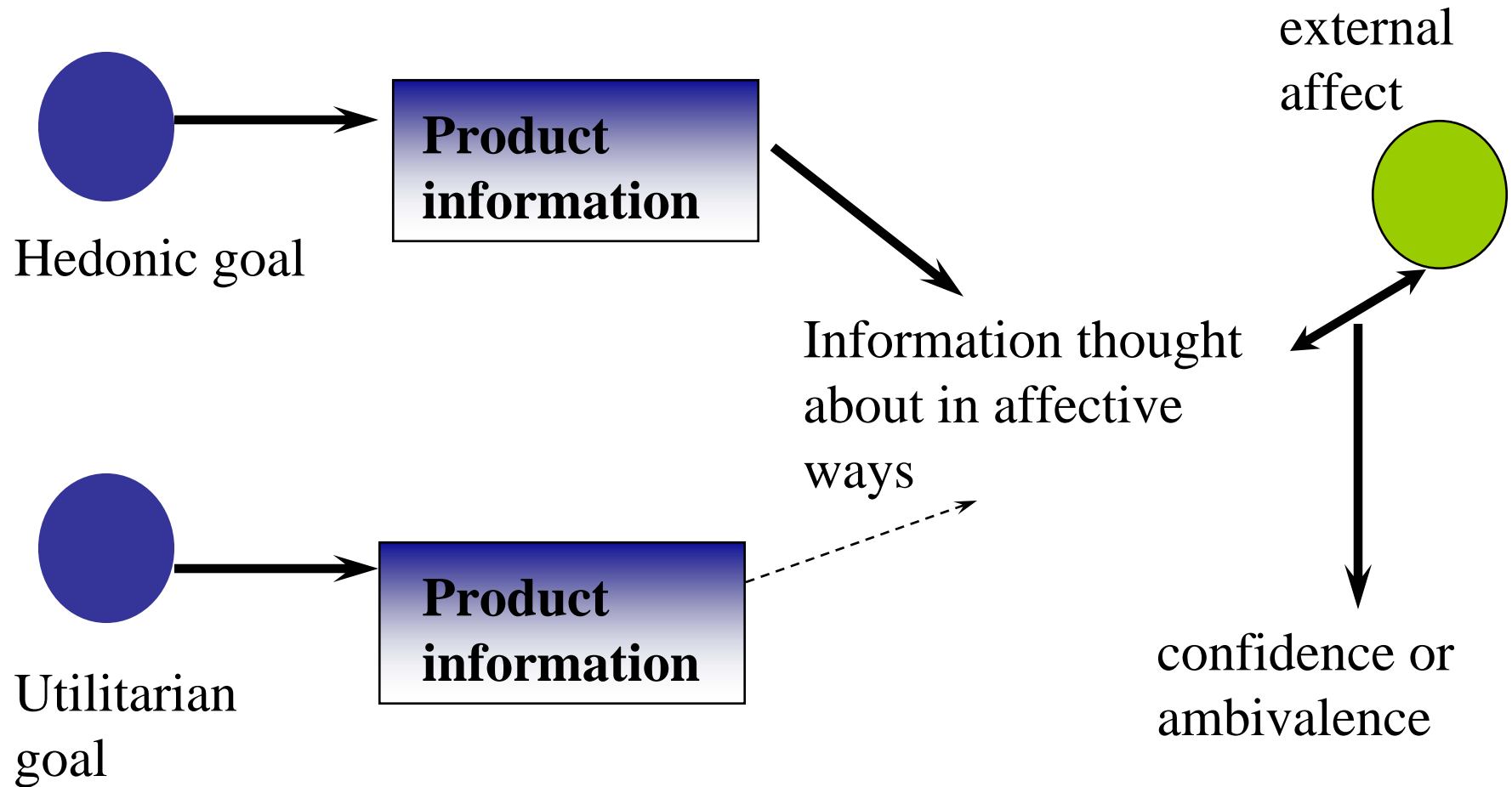
People do not distinguish between the various sources of affect.

Affect - Confirmation



People do not distinguish between the various sources of affect.

When are feelings used?



The new idea

- Cool! It works for my data
- But...don't expect reviewers to be as excited as you
- Paper rejected outright the first time it was submitted
 - More testing needed – 3 more experiments prior to acceptance

Lesson 2: Don't give up on data that doesn't look like how you imagined it would.

Find out why it looks that way. Test assumptions, push your ideas to the limit.

Final lessons – my research philosophy

- Anecdote 1
 - Gordon Bower and the HAM model
 - Separate yourself from the idea (don't be ego involved).
Let the idea be out there and stand for itself. Be critical.

Lesson 3: Be your own worst critic

- Anecdote 2
 - Bob Zajonc and the affective/cognitive separate systems debate
 - Lesson 4: If the idea has merit – be the appointed champion who will defend it because if you don't – it will die*