Consideration of Future Consequences As a Moderator of Temporal Framing and Regulatory Focus in a Risk Domain

Jeremy Kees, University of Arkansas, USA
Scot Burton, University of Arkansas, USA
Elizabeth Creyer, University of Arkansas, USA

This research examines consideration of future consequences (CFC) as a moderator of temporal framing and regulatory focus. Findings from two experiments suggest that differences in the extent to which individuals consider the future consequences of potential behaviors moderates the influence of temporal frame and regulatory focus factors on risk-related variables. Study 1 finds that proximal framing of a risk message can be effective at raising risk perceptions of those individuals who fail to take into account the future outcomes of their behaviors. Study 2 replicates these findings and shows how differences in individuals' time orientation can interact with regulatory focus.

[to cite]:

[url]:
http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/12543/volumes/v34/NA-34

[copyright notice]:
This work is copyrighted by The Association for Consumer Research. For permission to copy or use this work in whole or in part, please contact the Copyright Clearance Center at http://www.copyright.com/.
Consideration of Future Consequences as a Moderator of Temporal Framing and Regulatory Focus in a Risk Domain

Jeremy Kees, Villanova University
Scot Burton, University of Arkansas
Elizabeth Creyer, University of Arkansas
Eric Knowles, University of Arkansas
Kyle Huggins, University of Arkansas

Introduction

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

Study 1

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

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

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

Study 2

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

---

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

Findings show a significant univariate temporal framing effect on the probability estimate (F=2.90, p<.05). Consistent with Study 1 findings, the more proximal temporal framing of the risk message resulted in higher probability estimates than the distal temporal framing. Also consistent with Study 1, CFC was found to moderate the temporal framing effects. Contrasts indicate that low-CFC individuals reported somewhat higher probability estimates (M=58.48 versus 49.37; t=1.40, p<.10) when the risk was framed in proximal rather than distal terms. High-CFC individuals reported similar probability estimates for the proximal and distal frame conditions (p>0.30). As in Study 1, similar results were found for the risk likelihood variable.

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

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

Brief Discussion

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

References


Managing Experiential Marketing: Insight from a Prototypical Experience

Elyria Kemp, University of Arkansas, USA
Jeff Murray, University of Arkansas, USA

Extended Abstract

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

2This manipulation is consistent with past studies that manipulate regulatory focus by framing outcome contingencies in terms of gains or loses (e.g., Higgins 2002; Lee and Aaker 2004, Pennington, Aaker, and Mogilner).
Experiential marketing can encompass everything from “live” product sampling to product demos. In 2004, companies spent 17.6 billion on in-store advertising and this number is expected to continue to rise (Nelson and Ellison 2005).

Limited research has explored and explained what actually occurs when experiential marketing is successful. The purpose of this paper is to provide theoretical explanation for the phenomena using Randall Collins’ Interaction Ritual Theory (1975, 1981, 1990, 2004). The paper will also present an ethnographic analysis of a prototypical interaction ritual—a live music performance. The specific purpose of this approach is to glean information from an ideal experiential context that can be applied to the management of experiential marketing phenomena.

Interaction Ritual Theory

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

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

Enhancing the Experiential Marketing Experience

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

Ecological Barriers

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

Transforming the Emotions: Focusing Attention and Creating Shared Mood

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

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

Symbols

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

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

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

Emotional Energy: Becoming a Link in the Consumption Chain

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

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

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