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## **Consumers' Appreciation of Product Personalization**

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Product personalization implies that consumers participate in the design process and obtain a certain degree of design authority. This study investigates consumers' attitude to and purchase intention for personalized products. Our findings suggest that although product personalization enables consumers to create products that better fit their identity, consumers may actually prefer to have less freedom. More design authority is only preferred if the personalization is visible to others. Then, the outcome is used to express one's identity to others. Otherwise, the required time and effort for accomplishing the personalization process negatively affect consumers' attitude and purchase intention.

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and women, races, marital status in the control and treatment group. We also inspected the correlations between past behavior and intention for the two groups. Past behavior is significantly associated with intentions for both the treatment group ( $r=.578$ ,  $p=.000$ ) and the control group ( $r=.766$ ,  $p=.000$ ).

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

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

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

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

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## Extended Abstract

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

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

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

Our study had a 2 (design authority: low vs. high) x 2 (visibility: low vs. high) between-subjects full factorial design. In each condition, subjects read about a company that sells wireless home phones with an opportunity to personalize the phone's appearance. The personalization process was illustrated by a written description and several color pictures of examples of personalized phones. To

operationalize design authority, the number of personalization options was varied. In the low design authority condition, subjects were presented with 4 color options. In the high design authority condition, subjects could personalize the home phone by choosing a color out of a palette of 99 options. In addition, they could select one of the 24 possible patterns, resulting in a total of 2376 personalization options for the high design authority condition. Visibility was operationalized by varying the component of the home phone that was personalized (display vs. cover). Subsequently, subjects filled out a questionnaire in which measures were obtained for attitude, purchase intention, design authority, and visibility of the personalization. All variables were measured using multiple items on seven-point Likert scales.

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

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

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

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### Introduction

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

### Study 1

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

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

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

### Study 2

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

<sup>1</sup>A 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).