Investigating the Motivational Processes Underlying Bicultural Consumer Response to Cultural Product Cues

Alexandra Aguirre-Rodriguez, Bryant University
Adriana Boveda-Lambie, University of Rhode Island

This paper contributes to biculturalism research by moving beyond the realm of cognitive processes impacting biculturals’ judgment into the realm of motivational processes impacting biculturals’ behavior. We integrate the bicultural competence, chronic goal activation, and scarcity literature to develop a framework that examines the mediating role of cultural identification motive activation in bicultural consumer response to cultural product cues as moderated perceived product scarcity. A preliminary study is presented that provides initial evidence of this framework. Study results, implications, and future research directions are discussed.

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They read a message featuring either Wells Fargo (banking) or Aetna (healthcare), phrased using either the pronoun ‘we’ or the phrase ‘you and the brand’. After reading the message, participants were asked to respond to attitude and honesty measures as in study 2 and to indicate whether they were customers of the brand featured in the message.

Consistent with our hypothesis, a significant pronoun x customer x domain interaction emerged, p<.002. Bank customers rated their attitudes more favorably in the ‘we’ condition than in the ‘you and the brand’ condition, but non-customers did not. Conversely, healthcare customers rated their attitudes less favorably in the ‘we’ condition than in the ‘you and the brand’ condition, but non-customers rated their attitudes more favorably in the ‘we’ condition than in the ‘you and the brand’ condition. Finally, a mediated-moderation analysis indicated that these effects were mediated by brand-honesty perceptions, in both brand domains.

References

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Alexandra Aguirre-Rodriguez, Bryant University, USA
Adriana Boveda-Lambie, University of Rhode Island, USA

This research examines the motivational processes underlying bicultural consumer response to cultural product cues, such as ethnic brands or products symbolic of cultural meaning. Given the high percentage of immigrants in the United States population, understanding how biculturals respond to marketing stimuli that carry cultural meaning is an important subject.

As immigrants undergo the acculturation process they internalize the dominant culture, which is a learned knowledge system consisting of values, ideas, symbols, and customs, while maintaining the cultural knowledge system of their culture of origin. Both cultural knowledge systems co-exist in biculturals’ minds (Benet-Martinez and Haritatos 2005; Haritatos and Benet-Martinez 2002). According to the dynamic constructivist approach, the issue then becomes: which cultural frame of reference guides the individual’s judgment and decision making and, under which conditions will one culture dominate versus the other (Hong et al. 2000).

Hong and colleagues (2003; 2000) examine a process called cultural frame switching (CFS), which is a cognitive process by which a bicultural’s mindset or “frame” with respect to the dominant culture or culture of origin is activated by situational cues and applied in processing the given situation. An important concept overlooked in CFS research is cultural identity, which refers to “a sense of self in relation to a culture of origin and who one is within and without that cultural context” (LaFramboise et al. 1993, p. 402). Although biculturals appropriately use their dominant culture to process many situations, it may be appropriate in certain situations to access their original culture mindset to maintain a healthy cultural identity and self-concept. Balancing one’s identity with respect to culture of origin and the dominant culture is important because not only is the knowledge system still embedded in the individual’s mind, but he/she may still maintain contact, loyalty, and/or involvement with the culture of origin as evidenced throughout existing theories of second-culture acquisition (Berry 1986; Gleason 1979; Gordon 1964; Ogbru and Matute-Bianchi 1986). As part of a bicultural’s ongoing acculturation process, maintaining a healthy cultural identity will be important to ensure psychological well-being. As such, we classify it as a chronic goal that biculturals pursue as part of their bicultural experience (Bargh and Barndollar 1996).

Our framework addresses the role of cultural identity in bicultural consumer’s response to cultural product cues. As a chronic goal, maintaining one’s cultural identity is highly accessible for priming by situational cues (Chartrand and Bargh 2002). In particular, the means to pursue this goal can activate the goal and the motivation to pursue it (Kruglanski et al. 2002; Shah and Kruglanski 2003). Because purchase and usage of culturally-laden products (i.e., products representing the individual’s original culture or the dominant culture identity) can serve the goal of identification with that culture, we posit that cultural products can serve as cues that trigger this cultural identification motive. This goal priming increases the individual’s propensity to pursue products that advances the goal of identification with the culture of origin or the dominant culture.

We predict that cultural identification motive activation mediates the product cue culture-purchase behavior relationship. We also hypothesize that situational product cue characteristics will affect its likelihood of priming a cultural identification motive. Particularly, scarcity research suggests that an object’s perceived scarcity increases the salience of its attributes (Folger 1992). Thus, we predict that perceived product scarcity increases the salience of product’s associated culture and thus, scarcity moderates the product-cultural-cultural identification motive activation relationship. Our paper contributes to bicultural research by moving beyond the realm of cognitive processes impacting judgment into the realm of motivational processes impacting behavior.

To ensure that differential effects exist between biculturals and monoculturals, we conducted a preliminary study focusing on the moderation of perceived scarcity on the product culture-purchase intention relationship. Because scarcity increases the salience of the culture symbolized by the product and its likelihood of activating a cultural identification motive, biculturals’ purchase intentions should
be greater toward the scarce product cue versus the non-scarce product cue, but given biculturals’ chronic cultural identity goal their intentions toward the scarce non-dominant culture (Hispanic) product should be greater than for the scarce dominant culture (American) product.

The stimuli were fictitious movie promotions: the movie title and plot theme was Hispanic (“Los Hermanos Garcia”) or American (“The Murphy Brothers”). The movie premier was a select city limited engagement (scarce) or a nationwide (non-scarce). Purchase intention was operationalized as likelihood of seeing the movie and biculturalism was assessed with a single-item self-report measure. Manipulation checks were successful.

A 2(Product: Hispanic v. American) x 2 (Scarcity: high v. low) x 2 (Participant: bicultural v. monocultural) between subjects factorial ANCOVA was conducted on purchase intentions. To eliminate potential extraneous influences psychological reactance and movie quality are covariates.

The product culture x scarcity x biculturalism interaction was only marginally significant (F(2, 74)=2.78, p=.10), perhaps due to the heterogeneity of the biculturals in our sample (e.g., African American, Portuguese, Hispanic, etc.). Biculturals are more likely to see the scarce Hispanic movie (M=3.31) than the scarce American movie (M=2.04) and more likely to see the non-scarce American movie (M=2.46) than the non-scarce Hispanic movie (M=1.99). Biculturals were more likely to see the scarce (M=3.31) than the non-scarce Hispanic movie (M=1.99). Monoculturals were more likely to see the scarce American movie (M=2.48) than the scarce Hispanic movie (M=1.96) and slightly more likely to see the scarce (M=2.48) versus non-scarce (M=2.67) American movie.

These results support our cultural identification motive activation account. Both biculturals and monoculturals reported greater purchase intentions toward scarce movies matching their cultural background than toward non-scarce movies matching their cultural background, supporting the idea that scarcity increases the salience of product culture and its likelihood of triggering a cultural identification motive resulting in greater purchase intention. More importantly, consistent with the culture identity activation hypothesis, biculturals had greater purchase intentions toward the non-dominant cultural product (i.e., Hispanic movie) than the dominant culture product (i.e., American movie) and monoculturals had greater purchase intentions only toward the dominant culture product than the non-dominant culture product, suggesting that differential effects for the cultural identification motive activation by the cultural product cues exist between bicultural and monocultural consumers.

References

Country-of-Origin Effects on Consumers’ Attributions and Word-of-Mouth Communications about Services
Kachat Andrew Wong, University of Southern California, USA
Valerie Folkes, University of Southern California, USA

What do you think of when you hear about a person’s bad experience with a Japanese bank, a French airline or a Turkish hotel chain, as opposed to an American counterpart? Research on country-of-origin (COO) effects suggests that consumers’ inferences about the experience should differ depending on beliefs about the country (e.g., Leclerc, Schmitt, and Dubé 1994; Maheswaran 1994). Knowledge of a product’s COO promotes category-based processing, which influences cognitive inferences about quality and performance (Hong and Wyer 1989, 1990). Whereas past research focuses on products, there is little research on service-related COO effects. Yet, consumers’
inferences about services may differ in some important ways from inferences about products, depending particularly on stereotypes about individuals. Our research examines COO effects on consumers’ attributions for service quality. Further, we relate those inferences to consumers’ descriptions of a service encounter to shed light on COO effects on consumers’ word-of-mouth communications.

We propose that the congruency between service quality (good vs. bad) and COO stereotypes (favorable vs. unfavorable) influences the types of causal attributions consumers make about a service encounter as well as how they describe those encounters to others. Stereotype-congruent scenarios lead to dispositional as opposed to situational attributions, which, in turn, reinforce existing COO beliefs. Drawing on the linguistic bias literature (e.g., Maass, Montalcini, and Biciotti 1998; Wigboldus, Semin, and Spears 2000), we further propose that such congruency leads to greater use of abstract language as opposed to concrete language when describing that encounter to others.

The linguistic bias model has shown a tendency to describe expectancy-consistent information at a higher level of abstraction than inconsistent information. The definition and operationalization of language abstraction are based on the linguistic category model (Semin and Fiedler 1988), which categorizes words into different levels of abstractness. At the most concrete, verbal descriptions maintain an immediate reference to concrete behavioral events. At the most abstract, descriptions maintain an abstract reference to a person’s psychological properties (i.e., their traits and dispositions). For example, a service episode can be described in concrete terms (“it takes the server 5 minutes to get the bill”) as well as in abstract terms (“the server is slow and forgetful!”). Testimonials that differ in abstraction level may prompt recipients of that information to differ in their conclusions about and use of the information. We hypothesize that COO stereotype-congruent scenario will be encoded abstractly whereas incongruent scenario will be described concretely. We conducted two experiments to examine COO effects on evaluations, attributions and linguistic biases.

In study 1, 80 undergraduate students were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (COO: USA vs. Japan) x 2 (quality: positive vs. negative) between-subjects design. Participants were given brief background information about a fictitious bank, which was based in either USA or Japan. Separate pretests confirmed that USA was a favorable whereas Japan was a less favorably COO for banking services. Participants then listened to a recording of a telephone conversation between a customer and a bank representative. The service encounter rolls were enacted by two Caucasian voice-talents who remained constant throughout all conditions. Service quality was manipulated via the manner in which the employee handled the caller’s complaint. In the good service condition, the way the employee handled the problem was polite and empathetic, whereas in the poor service condition, she was rude and unconcerned. After listening to the recording, participants received a questionnaire asking for evaluations of service quality and causal attributions for the outcome (e.g., causality attributable to the bank versus to the employee).

Causal attributions ratings were submitted to a 2 (COO) x 2 (quality) ANOVA. The expected 2-way interaction ($F(1, 76)=9.83, p=.002$) emerged such that the positive service was more likely to be attributed to the employee’s traits in the American bank compared to the Japanese bank ($M_{USA}=7.38$ vs. $M_{Japan}=6.00$; $t(76)=2.26$, $p=.03$). Conversely, the negative service was less likely to be attributed to the employee in the American bank compared to the Japanese bank ($M_{USA}=6.39$ vs. $M_{Japan}=7.56$; $t(76)=2.19$, $p=.03$). The results suggest that when the service was congruent with the COO stereotypes, consumers are inclined to make dispositional inferences and attribute the cause to the intrinsic traits of the agent (Reeder et al. 2004). An activated COO stereotype on the firm level should have triggered a corresponding stereotype about individuals.

We conducted another study ($N=68$) to further explore the COO effects on consumers’ communication. The procedure and manipulations were the same as in study 1. In addition, participants provided a verbal description of the service encounter immediately following the telephone conversation. The descriptions were transcribed and coded using the linguistic bias model. The results showed that the congruence between service quality and COO stereotypes influenced the level of abstraction used in the descriptions.

![FIGURE 1](image_url)
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after they listened to the recording. Their open-ended responses were classified as to whether they were bank or employee-specific and then coded on the basis of the linguistic category model (Semin and Fielder 1988). The mean levels of abstraction were computed for the bank and employee-specific descriptions respectively, ranging from 1 (the most concrete) to 4 (the most abstract). A 2 (COO) x 2 (types of description) ANOVA revealed a significant interaction ($F(1, 64)=8.15, p<.006$). Whereas the average abstraction level of the bank-specific descriptions was not statistically different between the American and Japanese bank ($M_{USA}=2.62$ vs. $M_{Japan}=1.97; p=.12$), employee-specific descriptions exhibited a significant difference in abstraction level ($M_{USA}=1.72$ vs. $M_{Japan}=2.89; t(64)=-3.22, p=.002$). The descriptions associated with the Japanese bank’s employee were high in abstraction, implying a stable, dispositional attribution to the employee. The positive correlation between the abstraction levels of employee-specific description and employee attribution ($r=24, p=.05$) provides converging evidence to support the effects of attributions on linguistic biases.

In conclusion, consumers evaluate service quality through the tinted glass of COO stereotypes. When the outcome is congruent with existing beliefs, they tend to make a stronger dispositional attribution and describe the encounter more abstractly than when the outcome is incongruent. Future research should explore how the match/mismatch between the ethnicity of employee and COO moderates the effects. An important implication of this research is that the biased use of language by communicators may prompt recipients to make stronger dispositional attributions. Additional research should investigate the role of biased use of language in stereotype maintenance and dissemination in consumer’s networks.

References
Role of Incongruity and ‘Aha’ Effect in Positive Affect Experienced from Visual Metaphors

Praggyan Mohanty, University of Missouri, USA

A recent ad for Microsoft Office showed a female standing in an office setting with the head of a dinosaur. The ad copy read as “Microsoft Office has evolved have you?” This is an example of a visual metaphor, a type of rhetorical figure that is used extensively in advertising and communication (Phillips 2003). A visual metaphor makes an analogical comparison between two terms, by stating that one term is figuratively like the other term, even though the two are literally different (Stern 1990). The visual of a dinosaur’s head on a female’s body is incongruous, it does not make sense at a literal level. This incongruity in the visual attracts attention and one is drawn towards reconciling the incongruity. Only at a figurative level, can one interpret that the ad is suggesting that the female is “outdated, anachronous” and needs to upgrade to newer versions of Microsoft Office. The incongruity in the visual makes the ad stimulating (McQuarrie and Mick 1996; McQuarrie and Mick 1999; Peracchio and Meyers-Levy 1994), elicits some level of exploratory behavior (Berlyne 1960) and subsequent resolution of incongruity with meaningful perceived comprehension yields what is termed in semiotics literature as ‘pleasure of the text’ (Barthes 1986). ‘Pleasure of the text’ is conceptualized as the positive affect that the viewer experiences due to the viewer’s subsequent perceived comprehension of an initially incomprehensible text.

We embark on a journey to address two unanswered questions in advertising and marketing literature: (i) What is the nature of relationship between incongruity in visual metaphors and affect? (ii) What is the mechanism by which incongruity in visual metaphors leads to positive affect? First, the relationship between incongruity in visual metaphors and positive affect has not been examined empirically in the marketing literature. Research has demonstrated the “figures effect” i.e. rhetorical figures versus literal expressions have a significant positive effect on attitude toward-the-ad (McQuarrie and Mick 1999; Mothersbaugh et al. 2002). But we are still uninformed about the effect of different levels of incongruity in rhetorical figures (visual metaphors in our study) on ad evaluations. Second, the process by which incongruity in visual metaphors leads to positive affect though has attracted theoretical discussions; it still has not been empirically examined.

We propose a process model to empirically examine the effect of different levels of incongruity of visual metaphors on affect. We define, incongruity in a visual metaphor as the degree to which there is the lack of structural and semantic correspondence between the source and target elements in the visual metaphor in the presented context and the pre-existing knowledge structures associated with source and target elements in the given context. There are two routes that account for the effect of incongruity of visual metaphors on affective evaluations. One is the perceptual route and other is the comprehension route. Perceptual route is the direct effect of the incongruous stimuli on affect. On the other hand, comprehension route is the effect of incongruity of visual metaphor on affect mediated by comprehension. The perceptual route can be understood in terms of arousal boost concept and comprehension route can be understood in terms of arousal jag concept introduced by Berlyne (1971; 1960) in context of collative variables. The two routes can be reconciled to understand the overall effect of incongruity in an ad on advertising evaluations. We propose a non-linear relationship between incongruity in a visual metaphor and affect. This argument is informed by theoretical paradigms proposed by Berlyne (1971; 1960) and the schema incongruity theory (Fiske and Taylor 1991; Mandler 1982). The perceived comprehension and perceived certainty of comprehension play a crucial role in the intensity of affect experienced from the metaphor.

H1: Incongruity in visual metaphors will have a non-linear relationship with affect. Moderate level of incongruity versus low level of incongruity in a visual metaphor should lead to a greater level of positive affect. Also, moderate level of incongruity versus high level of incongruity in a visual metaphor should lead to a greater level of positive affect

A mediatery process of interest in this process model is the ‘aha experience’. The ‘aha experience’ is a transition from a state of incomprehension to that of comprehension of the stimulus. The ‘aha experience’ therefore is an outcome of the combination of arousal boost caused by perceptual route and arousal jag caused by the comprehension route. ‘Aha’ is experienced in case of visual metaphors because the incongruity is meaningful or metaphorical comprehension resolves the incongruity. We propose that incongruity in a visual metaphor will have a non-monotonic relationship with the ‘aha experience’. That is moderate level of incongruity should lead to maximum intensity of ‘aha’. It is the ‘aha experience’ that leads to the ‘pleasure of the text’. Pleasure of the text is the positive affect that a viewer experiences due to the viewer’s perceived successful comprehension of an initially incomprehensible text. ‘Pleasure of the text’ is like the thrill one experiences from cracking a puzzle (Peracchio and Meyers-Levy 1994). The stronger the ‘aha experience’, the greater should be the ‘pleasure of the text’.

H2: Incongruity in a visual metaphor will have a non-linear relationship with the ‘aha experience’

H3: The ‘aha experience’ will mediate the relationship between incongruity of visual metaphor and pleasure experienced from a visual metaphor

H4: The ‘aha experience’ will have a linear relationship with pleasure experienced from a visual metaphor
We hope to make the following contributions to research, both in the area of rhetorical figures and interplay of emotions and cognitions. We propose to empirically examine the relationship of incongruity in visual metaphors and affect. Our study will throw light on the process by which incongruity in a visual metaphor leads to positive affect. In attempting to study the ‘aha experience’, we intend to introduce a relevant mediator to advertising studies. Also, we hope to make a contribution by presenting a method of operationalizing incongruity in visual metaphors. All of the above are gaps in the current marketing literature. Given the preponderance of visual metaphors in advertising, our research would make a managerially as well as academically relevant contribution.

References

**The “Kick Him While He’s Down” Effect: Consumers’ Responses to Unfortunate Leaders when Judging Corporate Crime**

Morgan K. Ward, University of Texas, USA
Julie R. Irwin, University of Texas, USA

In an era in which corporate crime is an increasingly common occurrence, the issue of how a company that has committed a crime should approach its media relations and PR is both relevant and important to practice. Companies that are found guilty of corporate crimes risk erosion of brand equity, consumer boycotts and other forms of consumer punishment. However, consumers’ judgments about and subsequent actions towards a criminal company are often influenced by information beyond the simple facts of the case. In two studies, we investigate how people’s perceptions of a company’s leader influences their feelings and judgments (e.g. anger at, forgiveness for) and purchase decisions.

One of the moral tenants guiding legal judgments of guilt is that all individuals are to be judged by the purposeful actions they commit and not by the random events that befall them”. (legal requirement of “mens rea”). In practical terms, a man should not be judged negatively for being unlucky (e.g. getting cancer).

However, there are many examples in which a person’s unfortunate circumstances partially “excuse” him of wrongdoing in the eyes of others. Companies leverage this idea and often act in accordance with their lay theory that highlighting the misfortune of their leader may create consumer empathy and lessen consumers’ punitive actions in response to the company’s crime. A recent example of this occurred when the felony charges of spying on employees were dropped against the CEO of Hewlett-Packard, after news of her advanced ovarian cancer was released to the public. MSNBC reported that “authorities said [her] battle with cancer was at least partly responsible for their decision to drop the case against her.”

Though it is intuitive, that featuring the misfortunes or bad luck of a leader will garner consumer sympathy, the inference-making literature predicts the opposite. Research on the Imminent Justice Hypothesis (Piaget 1965, Fein & Stein 1977) and the Just World hypothesis indicates that people harbor the (irrational) belief that “a fault will automatically bring about its own punishment” (Piaget 1965).

In other words, if an individual commits a criminal act, he will inevitably receive just retribution. Using this rationale, people may be less sympathetic to criminal CEOs who have suffered misfortune and rather than empathizing, conclude that they have “gotten what they deserve.” Moreover, recent research on children’s judgments of unlucky vs. lucky people (Olson et al. manuscript) indicates that children have a natural preference for lucky over unlucky people and often discriminate against people deemed less lucky.

In two studies, we examine whether highlighting the misfortunes of a CEO creates empathy and forgiveness for a company embroiled in a corporate crime, or if highlighting the “unluckiness” of the CEO simply causes people to like the CEO and take punitive actions, or conversely, take pity and purchase more. In a 2 (CEO Luck: Unlucky vs. Control) x 2 (Crime Severity: High vs. Low Crime) design, we test how the luck of the CEO influences people’s judgments of the crime, the company and the CEO.

In study 1 we presented participants with a hypothetical crime scenario in which a company underpays its workforce (minor crime scenario) or underpays, harasses and abuses its workforce (severe crime scenario). We crossed the severity of the crime with the luck of the CEO. In both conditions we described the CEO’s background (e.g. age, number of children, past positions); in the Unlucky condition we added that the CEO’s wife had recently been killed in a hit and run accident. The results supports corporate intuition that people are
more willing to forgive a company for corporate crimes if the company is headed by an Unlucky vs. Control CEO when the crime is small but less forgiving for large crimes.

In Study 2, we further investigate how consumers differentially respond to Unlucky CEO vs. Control CEO in low vs. high crime scenarios. We presented participants with a hypothetical the high vs. low crime scenarios described above in the form of a newspaper. The articles describe the crime of a hypothetical cell phone company (MobiFon). In the Unlucky condition the article also explains that the CEO has recently been diagnosed with cancer.

After reading about the article, participants filled out a conjoint study indicating their preference ratings of cell phones from MobiFon (vs. another hypothetical cell phone company called Connex). We varied the phones on the attributes of brand, price and styling. We then collected participants’ attitudes about the crimes, CEO and the company. We find that in low crime conditions, participants indicate they are not very angry at the CEO, are more willing to forgive the MobiFon brand and are more likely to purchase a product from MobiFon if the CEO has cancer than if he has no health problems. These results confirm corporate intuition of consumer empathy and forgiveness. However contrary to this corporate lay theory, in high crime conditions (where participants indicate feeling more angry and less forgiving), they display a “kick him while he’s down effect”. Specifically, they indicate that they are much less willing to purchase a product from MobiFon if the CEO is diagnosed with cancer than if he has no health problems.

Our results expose several contextual and individual factors that contribute to consumers’ responses to Unlucky leaders. The results corroborate the notion that people are influenced by CEO’s personal attributes and misfortunes when making judgments about a company after a corporate crime has been committed. Moreover, it appears that while people are motivated to make decisions based on the direct actions of a CEO in the corporate crime, they ultimately allow non-diagnostic factors to influence their decision. Finally, the results confirm that companies’ lay theory that revealing the misfortunes of their leaders is a good tactic in mitigating consumer anger at the company after a crime has been committed in small crimes but when the crime is more egregious, this may ultimately undermine the company’s attempt to reinvigorate business.

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### Examining the Effects of Narrators’ Accents When Informational Programming Has Verbal and Visual Cues

Juliana Renovato, San José State University, USA  
Therese A. Louie, San José State University, USA  
Erica Melissa Medina, San José State University, USA  
Cynthia A. Enriquez, San José State University, USA  
Janalee Velasquez, San José State University, USA

Imagine that an overseas documentary has a narrator who speaks like a North American national news anchor. For added authenticity, the show’s producers added a second reporter whose native language influences heavily his or her English-speaking accent. This research examines how accents influence viewers’ evaluations of informational programming.

Research findings suggest that the responses to accents depend in part on the listeners’ contexts (Fuertes, Potere, and Ramirez 2002). Although accents can draw favorable attention in entertainment programming, they have had less positive effects on informational materials. The distinction may be due to a greater need for comprehension in learning, than in leisurely, environments. Gill (1994) asked American students to listen to tape recordings of male teachers who spoke with one of three accents. Instructor perceptions were more favorable when he had a North American—rather than a British or a Malaysian—accent. Participants’ level of understanding and degree of recall also were highest with the North American speech.

Building upon past research, this study more directly analyzed the link in Gill’s (1994) work between the evaluation of the speaker and the degree to which participants felt they could understand him. Somewhat surprisingly, the connection between evaluations and perceived comprehension has not been a primary focus in studies showing deleterious accent effects. Also, unlike the studies noted above, this work provides information in visual, as well as in auditory, form.

An actor skilled in accents provided the narration for a documentary-style program about a Latino celebration called a “Quinceañera.” Pretests revealed that he could convincingly speak with both a North American accent and with speech that reflected native fluency in Spanish. Thirty-seven undergraduates were randomly assigned to view the video with the North American (n=16) or with the Spanish-language influenced speech. The unseen actor’s voice described parts of the ceremony simultaneously shown on tape.

An initial set of analyses examined if findings of accent derogation (e.g., Gill 1994) were replicated. When not accounting for the audience members’ perceived ability to understand the narrator, the participants preferred the video with the North American accent rather than the Spanish-influenced accent upon noting (a) the video’s informational value (t(35)=2.39, p<.03), (b) the narrator’s knowledge of the video topic (t(35)=2.15, p<.04), (c) the ease of understanding the narrator’s voice (t(35)=6.60, p<.001), and (d) the total number of open-ended recalled items (t(35)=3.83, p<.002).

Then, a second round of analyses was conducted to determine if the significant effects were due to participants’ perceived comprehension of the narrator. When examining the data using “ease of understanding” his voice as a covariate, the differences between the accent conditions are not significant (p>.10) for all variables but the mean total recalled items (F(1, 36)=7.11, p<.02).

Hence, in informational programs with both visual and aural stimuli, a preference for non-accented voices could be due largely to the perceived ability to understand the presented style of speech. Of course, comprehending a non-native speaker depends largely upon the strength of—and upon listeners’ familiarity with—his or her accent. Depending upon those factors, according to this research, there may be drawbacks to the practice of adding narrators with foreign accents to increase cultural programs’ authenticity. Rather than enhancing credibility, the narrator’s foreign accent reduced his perceived knowledge of the program topic.
It is important to note that the five-minute video used in this research did not give audience members much time to adapt to the speaker. Longer exposure to the accents might facilitate comprehension. Advertising legend David Ogilvy used this strategy, noting, “I am particularly nervous about the impact of my English accent... I therefore open with axioms which nobody can question. By the time the audience grows accustomed to my accent, I launch into more controversial judgments” (Ogilvy 1964).

Researchers can investigate factors affecting the “ease of understanding” variable influential in this study. Aside from the ability to comprehend heavily accented words, there are a number of framing issues that influence listeners. Work on “fluency” suggests that messages that are subjectively difficult to decipher produce compromised choices (Novemsky, Dhar, Schwarz, and Simonson 2007). Even if an individual’s speech is understandable, the presence of an accent may prime listeners to anticipate comprehension difficulty, which subsequently could lower their evaluations (Rubin and Smith 1990). In addition, prior associations with accents might affect fluency, as might the ability to watch the narrators’ expressions and body language.

The program topic may shape viewers’ responses. If individuals presenting material related to their home countries appear biased (Ryu, Park and Feick 2006), it might decrease listeners’ attention. Also, while cultural content may make a narrator appear more ethnic, it is possible that programming prompting expectations for a mainstream voice reduce or eliminate perceptions of foreign accents (Rubin and Smith 1990). Research can further investigate how message content frames audience members’ evaluations.

Media technology continues to expose audiences to speakers around the world. It is hoped that this research sheds insights into the perceptions of accents when segments and shows have informational content.

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The Lifestyle Consumer Confidence Index: Detecting the Undercurrents and Dynamics of Consumer Confidence
Michael Merz, University of Hawai‘i, USA
Qimei, Chen, University of Hawai‘i, USA

Businesses, private investors, and public policy makers have long noticed that anticipating future consumer spending and saving behavior is key in today’s marketplace (Georgoff and Murdick 1986; Kotler 1994; Lawson, Todd, and Boshoff 2001; Lilien and Kotler 1983). For example, anticipating consumers’ future expenditures can help managers assess the general mood of the market and plan their marketing activities accordingly. Furthermore, private investors can benefit from such information to assess the right moment to make great investments. More importantly, such information can give public policy makers early warnings about whether the economy is moving towards recovery and growth or recession.

While early predictions of consumer consumption behavior solely focused on objective, economic variables—such as income, interest rate, and inflation rate—Katona (1951, 1960) suggested that consumer expenditures do not only depend on consumers’ ability to buy but also on their willingness to buy, and thus on more subjective, psychological factors. This notion has become known as the theory of psychological or behavioral economics (Curtin 1982; Katona 1974). It has stimulated the development of many indexes, which have in common the goal to measure consumer confidence, or sentiment, as an indication of the future course of the national economy (Curtin 1982; Linden 1982; Roper 1982).

Prior research has focused on comparing the predictive value of different consumer confidence indexes (Batchelor and Dua 1998; Eppright, Arguea, Huth 1998; Huth, Eppright, and Taube 1994) and on explaining variance in such measurements (Garner 1981; Vuchelen 2004). A similar research stream has developed in marketing (Barksdale and Darden 1972; Barksdale, Darden, and Perreault 1976; Barksdale and Perreault 1980; Gaski and Etzel 1986) and assessed consumer confidence towards marketing in the international marketplace (Chan, Yau, and Chan 1990; Wee and Chan 1989).

While these prior research streams have led to interesting and helpful findings, several limitations (such as measurement items, methodology, and applicability) of existing consumer confidence/sentiment indexes are yet to be addressed (Didow, Perreault, and Williamson 1983; Weiss 2003). In particular, it has been argued that psychographic or lifestyle variables are needed to help explain the undercurrents, that is, the variation in consumer confidence across the population (Lawson, Todd, and Boshoff 2001) and that the dynamics of consumer confidence—and thus the movement in optimistic and pessimistic directions over time—need to be understood further (De Boef and Kellstedt 2004; Garner 1981).

The purpose of this article is to develop an index that facilitates our understanding of the consumer confidence construct and that helps capture its undercurrents and dynamics. Specifically, we aim at (1) developing a lifestyle consumer confidence index (LSCCI), (2) applying this new index to demonstrate the importance for public policy makers to conduct cross-sectional analyses to understand the undercurrents,
that is, the current composition of consumer confidence, and (3) revealing the significance for public policy makers to conduct longitudinal analyses to detect the dynamics of consumer confidence over time.

To develop our index that projects consumers’ perceived confidence, a secondary data analysis was undertaken. Factor analysis revealed that the total LSCCI can be divided into two sub-indexes: one sub-index that measures consumers’ present confidence (our Present Lifestyle Consumer Confidence Index; PLSCCI) and another sub-index that measures consumers’ future confidence (our Future Lifestyle Consumer Confidence Index; FLSCCI).

For our analyses, we calculated consumers’ confidence from 1997 until 2001, based on the data available from the DDB Needham Life Style Study. By doing so, we obtained several interesting and important preliminary results in respect to our cross-sectional, micro-level as well as our longitudinal analyses. These findings have important implications especially for public policy makers. Overall, we demonstrate that the regular screening of cross-sectional consumer confidence helps identify the undercurrents, that is, the momentum that takes place below the aggregated surface of the overall consumer confidence. As such, the segmenting variables as well as the problematic groups within a particular variable that constitute potential threats to the local economy can be identified. Further, to perform a regular screening over time helps chart the dynamics of those undercurrents. As such, consumer segments showing negative or highly fluctuating trends over time can be identified and addressed to avoid potential recessions, and instead strengthened to prompt economic recovery or stability. Hence, our proposed LSCCI helps discover challenging segments that (1) are low in consumer confidence in a particular year, (2) show a continuously decreasing level of consumer confidence, and (3) are very unstable over time. By discovering such challenging segments, public policy makers will be able to form preventive policy and are, to a certain extent, able to direct the local economy into the desired direction.

Selected References


Parenting, Peer Influence, and Role Model on Compulsive Buying Tendencies of Early Adolescent Consumers
Chuanlan Liu, Louisiana State University, USA
Robert Laird, University of New Orleans, USA

Researchers have proposed to take different approaches to investigate the phenomenon of compulsive consumption (d’Astous, Maltais, & Roberge, 1990; DeSarbo & Edwards, 1996; Hassay & Smith, 1996; Roberts & Pirog Iii, 2004). d’Astous, Maltais and Roberge (1990) argued that a generalized urge to buy characterized all consumers at different levels and probably at different times, and therefore compulsive buying tendency may be a continuum with one end specifying normal buyers and the other specifying compulsive buyers. Compulsive buyers are at the extreme of the urge to buy continuum all the time. However, the research to date focused only on the most extreme form of compulsive buying and neglected to recognize individuals who have not yet reached full-blown addiction (DeSarbo & Edwards, 1996).

DeSarbo and Edwards (1996) argued that compulsive buying is related to different forms of drives and degrees of urge to buy and therefore compulsive buyers are heterogeneous groups. However, previous research adopted a uniform dichotomous compulsive treatment of buying behavior and thus leaves open the key issue of whether individuals classified as compulsive buyers have different internal or external drives. In fact, recent research suggested that consumer researchers should pay attention to the purposive element of compulsive behavior and to consider that compulsive buying may be viewed as a logical outcome for people who have personal goals rather than just being caused by psychological tension (e.g., Roberts & Pirog Iii, 2004).

Compulsive buying is not only linked to individual psychological traits such as dependence, denial, and depression but also linked to circumstantial factors such as avoidance coping, and family influences such as divorce (Roberts, Manolis, & Tanner, 2006). However, there is insufficient research related to exploring circumstantial and family related factors on compulsive buying behavior.

This research focused on compulsive buying tendencies of early adolescent consumers. Although common depictions of adolescence as a time of “storm and stress” appear to be exaggerations, adolescence is a period of great transition both for individuals and their families (Arnett, 1999; Hamburg, 1985, 1974). The transition from childhood to adolescence brings with it a new set of issues and concerns for children as children try to establish an identity separate from parents during this transitional development stage (Gecas & Seff, 1990) and for parents (Pasley & Gecas, 1984; Small, Eastman, & Cornelius, 1988) as parents approach mid-life, and the parent-child relationship becomes more egalitarian (Baumrind, 1991; Steinberg & Steinberg; 1994). This group of consumers provides rich potentials for us to
understand more on compulsive buying. For instance, this group of consumers enables us to investigate compulsive buying at the early/ light stage and to identify different types of motivations for compulsive buying other than psychological tension.

For early adolescents the personal goal to establish an identity separate from parents or others may be a more salient drive to develop compulsive buying tendencies than reducing psychological tensions. Previous research found that peers’ influence on teenagers’ identity establishment is reflected through impacted teenagers’ consumption (Mangleburg, Doney, & Bristol, 2004). For instance, peer groups are voluntary in nature and are not directly responsible for monitoring teens’ actions, but peers may provide an early forum in which teens can try out various aspects of the social self. In terms of buying and consumption, studies have shown that communication with peers positively affects teens’ social motivation for consumption, materialistic values, and tendency to use peer preferences in making a product choice. Therefore, we propose that peer influence has significant impact on compulsive buying tendencies.

Another factor having significant impact on identity establishment may be role modeling. A role model for an adolescent can be anyone with whom the individual comes into contact, either directly or indirectly, who potentially can influence the adolescent’s decision or behaviors (Bandura, 1986). Parents are the “assigned” role models for adolescent. However, most adolescents choose their own “vicarious” role models which can be television and movie stars, athletes, or even best friends, as opposed to the role models of parents. Role models may influence adolescents on adopting their own set of self-image, lifestyle, and consumption pattern, and therefore have influence on adolescents’ compulsive buying tendencies. Furthermore, parenting factors (e.g., parental solicitation, spending supervision) in this transitional stage may have significant influence on compulsive buying tendencies of early adolescent consumers. Specifically, parental solicitation may reduce adolescents’ psychological tension. However, parents’ over solicitation may create some psychological tension for adolescents and hence increase their compulsive buying tendencies. Supervision of spending helps adolescents to control spending, however, it may increase adolescents’ desire to be independent from parents and therefore, increase the degree of urge to buy.

The primary objectives of this exploratory study were to (1) estimate the incidence of compulsive buying in an early adolescent population, (2) investigate the impact of parenting factors (parental solicitation, spending supervision), role model, and peer influence on compulsive buying of pre-teens.

Data from the Baton Rouge Families and Teens Project (BRFTP) were used to test the hypothesized research model. The BRFTP sample includes 133 parent-child dyads that were recruited at the end of grade 6. The sample is 45% female and 64% of the adolescents live in a two-parent home. 42% of the adolescent are White, non-Hispanic, 48% are African-American, and .8% are Hispanic. Measures were derived from questionnaires administered verbally to the adolescents during a summer visit to each family’s home.

Because of the present study’s focus on adolescents, the 11-item adolescent Compulsive Buying Scale developed by d’Astous et al. (1990) was used. Higher scores on the Likert-type items were associated with higher levels of compulsive buying. The measure of role model influence was adopted from Martin and Bush’s research (Martin & Bush, 2000). The scale of susceptibility to normative peer influence was adopted from Mangleburg et al (2004). Two monitoring processes described and tested by Stattin and Kerr (2000) were used with slight modifications of the items to make them appropriate to early adolescents. Parental solicitation as measured with 5 items and supervision of spending were measure with 6 items.

Factor analysis on compulsive buying tendencies found that this construct was multidimensional. Three dimensions were identified: (a) urge to buy, (b) lack of impulse control, and (c) post purchase guilt. Path analysis results revealed significant and positive paths from urge to buy to lack of impulsive control, and to post purchase guilt, paths from susceptibility to normative peer influence to the three dimensions of compulsive buying tendencies, paths from role models to susceptibility to normative peer influence, and urge to buy, and a path from supervision of spending to lack of impulsive control. The paths from parental solicitation to the three dimensions of compulsive buying tendencies were not significant. However, there was a significant negative path from parental solicitation to susceptibility to normative peer influence. Results show that early adolescents’ compulsive buying tendencies are mainly influenced by peer and role mode. Influence of parenting is mediated by peer influence. These findings indicate that compulsive buying tendencies may be developed by the early adolescent stage. At early stage of compulsive buying tendency, purposive element such as identity establishment may be a more salient factor than psychological tension on moving this tendency toward the extreme point of the compulsive buying continuum.

References
Consumer Inferences about Hybrid Goods and Services from Pricing and Innovation

Nita Umashankar, University of Texas, Austin, USA
Raji Srinivasan, University of Texas, Austin, USA

As services become a key source of differentiation, a growing number of new products exhibit the inclusion of both goods and service components. Assuming that firms operate under budget constraints, the decision to introduce new services versus new goods for hybrid products becomes a key strategic variable. Three studies examine how consumers balance their desires for goods versus service innovation in hybrid products and under what conditions these preferences shift. Findings reveal that consumers prefer the locus of innovation to reside on the goods component and this preference is strengthened by positioning the hybrid as a physical product. However, designing for customization and social networking shifts preferences towards innovation of the services component. Further, pricing the two components differentially produces asymmetric effects of perceived benefits for each element of the hybrid. The results suggest that firms can design and price the goods and services components uniquely to maximize overall profitability.

The Good, the Bad, and the Red: Does “Giving” through Buying Replace Direct Giving?

Aner Tal, Duke University, USA
Paul Bloom, Duke University, USA

Product Red is just the latest in an ongoing procession of charitable promotions led by for-profit companies. Naturally, such activities are highly publicized and integrated with companies’ promotional activities, which leads some to doubt the altruistic intentions of the companies involved (Fry et al., 1982; Varadarajan & Menon, 1988) or even assume utilitarian motives for company donations (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998; Bloom & Novelli, 1981).

Of course, whether or not the reasons for corporate donations are pragmatic, a dollar is a dollar, and donations stand to increase public well-being regardless of what motivated them. Further, common sense would lead one to assume that corporate donations increase the social salience of donations, potentially increasing donations overall. But what if corporate charitable leadership leads people to feel that by buying charity-tied products they have “done their job” and need not contribute more? Could giving through buying actually replaces direct giving?

The possible substitution of direct charitable donation by “donation” through buying is especially pertinent in one particular kind of cause-related marketing: the donation of a percentage of sales or profit to charity (POS). Here, it is the consumer rather than the company who is directly responsible for the donation. Through buying a $20 Product Red sweater, the consumer might feel that they have given to charity and thus satisfy the need to give. The result might be a reduction in the overall sum transferred to charity, since psychologically the person feels they “gave” $20, while in fact they have only given the 5% of the price that is transferred to charity. Thus, a donation of $4 (5% of $20) feels greater than it actually is, and might substitute what would have been a greater direct donation (see Olsen et al., 2003).

The current paper explores the potential effect of projects such as “Red” on subsequent contributions. In two studies, we demonstrate the basic “Red” effect: charitable giving through a “percentage of sales” (POS) leads to a reduction in subsequent giving. Followups are planned to explore boundary conditions. Additional studies will further explore the mechanisms underlying the phenomenon: The “Red” effect could be due to (a) an overvaluation of sums donated through POS and/or (b) a satisfaction of the motives that would otherwise lead to donation behavior.

Study 1. Participants in this study (N=132) engaged in simulated online shopping on Amazon.com. Each participant was asked to imagine they had a gift certificate for Amazon.com, and continued to browse Amazon and list items that they would like to buy using the certificate. In one condition (control), no further instructions were given. In the other condition (POS), participants were informed that on the same day “Amazon has a special promotion where they give X% of their sales proceeds to United Way” (including gift certificate sales).6

Following the shopping task, participants were told that Amazon was also receiving donations for the Red Cross, and asked how much if anything they would want to donate. After some demographic questions, participants were also asked if they would want to donate books to the library for a local charity sale occurring around the time of the studies. A sub-sample (n=87) of participants were asked about willingness to donate to a local homeless shelter following a fire, another real event that occurred at the time of the studies.

Results and Discussion. Mean donations to Red Cross were lower for the POS condition ($7.08) than for the no POS condition ($11.39). In other words, participants contributed less to charity if they had previously purchased items proceeds from which were donated to charity. Note that the difference between the two conditions ($4.31) far surpasses the maximum proceeds donated through purchase (average $1.82). Thus, a POS promotion similar to Product Red resulted in reductions in overall levels of charitable donations.

6While these conditions were the same for the entire sample, the study was conducted in three different waves. For the first (n=37), the gift certificate was for $70 and the percent given for charity was 5%. For the second (n=50), the gift certificate and percent given were $50 and 2% accordingly. For the third (n=45), the certificate was also for $50 but the percent given was 5%. Since there were no significant interactions for date-wave and condition we collapse observations across waves, distinguishing only between percent-of-sales donation (Red) and no donation conditions.
Since the results contained outliers, the data was transformed using a log transformation. An ANOVA model controlling for self-perceived charitability found a significant effect of condition on donation ($F(1, 122)=3.96, p=.05$).

Further support for the hypothesis that donation through buying would reduce subsequent charitable behavior was found through examination of the other DVs, though results here were directional but not significant. POS participants were less likely to want to contribute books (17.5%) than control participants (27%). Similarly, only 14% of POS participants expressed willingness to donate food cans to the local shelter, versus 36.4% in the control condition.

**Study 2.** The study aimed to replicate study 1 with a few alterations. First, a different merchant and shopping medium was used (catalog shopping for J Crew). Second, the subsequent, post-shopping trip donation opportunity was separated from the shopping trip by presenting it as an unrelated event occurring later on the same day. Third, another control condition was added where participants could donate directly during the transaction as part of their shopping trip (n=34). The certificate sum participants could spend in this task was greater than before ($200), and the percent donated was 5% for half the participants in the Red condition (n=16), and 10% for the other half (n=16). Due to shortage in participants only 13 participants were assigned to the original control condition, though condition assignment was random. Total sample consisted of 79 participants.

New measures were added as well. First, we measured the amount of money participants spent in the trip. This served to ensure participants indeed chose items and it also permitted a more precise evaluation of POS donations. Second, several attitude measures were taken regarding the retailer, the charity collaborating with the retailer, and POS and direct donation as charity raising efforts. Attitudes for each object were gathered using three 7-point semantic differential scales (Good-bad, warm-cold, like-dislike).

**Results and discussion.** Replicating the results of study 1, participants in POS conditions donated less (M=$10.83) than participants in either control condition (M=$14.45). There was no significant difference between the two control conditions (p>.1), which suggests the reduction in donations following Red donation wasn’t merely due to the fact that in POS conditions participants had already donated whereas in the control condition they had not. Participants evidently donated less in POS than in either direct donation or no donation in all conditions, though these findings require replication.

The study also contributes in revealing potential boundary conditions on the Red effect: when the percent of sales given was high enough (10%), donations thorough the Red promotion ensured there was no reduction in overall donations over control. Further, the higher POS ensured no loss to the non-profit due to lower donations than in a parallel direct-donation situation. Donation in the shopping trip itself through either POS or direct donation was higher in direct donation ($13.89) than in the 5% POS condition ($9.07), but lower than the amount given to charity in the 10% POS condition ($16.81). In both cases donations come at the expense of the retailer, but might lead to higher sales given shopping that is not restricted to a particular sum as it was in our experimental task.

Attitudes towards the retailer did not differ between Red and control conditions. Attitude towards the non-profit for which donations were raised was directionally, though not significantly, lower in the Red condition (Δ=.27 on a 7 point scale, p=.19). Attitude towards POS as a way of raising donations, however, was significantly lower in the POS condition: 5.13 vs. 4.34; $F(1, 77)=6.59, p=.01$. This suggests participants supported percent of sales donation in principle, but not when actually subjected to it, though further study is needed to ensure the robustness of this finding.

**Proposed studies.** The Red effect might be driven by an overestimation of donations given through POS promotions. People might bias their perception of the amount donated in the direction of the full sum of the purchase, rather than calculating the actual sum given to charity (Olsen et al., 2003). Since people might thus replace direct donation with a lesser indirect donation this might lead to an overall reduction in subsequent donations. This could be examined by asking for people’s estimation of the amount donated through POS.

An additional psychological factor that might lead to decreased donations following “buying donations” is a satisfaction of people’s selfish motivations for helping behavior (Harbaugh et al., 1998; Manner et al., 2002). If people are motivated to donate for reasons such as self-esteem (Crocker et al., 2003) or mood management (Cialdini et al., 1973; Bauman et al., 1981), satisfaction of these motives through the (lower) POS donation might lead to subsequent lower direct contribution. Further studies could explore this mechanism by manipulating selfish motivation to help (e.g., mood) and observing the impact on the Red effect.

**References**


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7 Differences were directional but not significant due to high variance and small sample size at the point of writing.
Think Fast, Feel Good? Thought Speed Enhances Mood and Product Trial

Brittany Duff, University of Minnesota, USA
Ronald J. Faber, University of Minnesota, USA

The impact of emotions in advertising is generally examined by manipulating message content (e.g. fear appeal, humor) or imposed through context (neutral ad appearing in an uplifting program). Less common, but perhaps equally important, is the creation of emotion through the use of medium features of ads such as zooms, edits and cuts (Lang 1990). Recently, Pronin and Wegner (2006) found that simply speeding up the time in which people were given to read a series of statements aloud induced positive mood. In addition to increasing positive mood, this effect of fast thinking was found to also increase feelings of energy. This work suggests that speed of presentation can affect both arousal and valence.

Prior research with media messages has tended to focus just on the impact of these features on the arousal dimension of emotion and its impact on attention and information processing. Features, such as number of cuts in a commercial have been found to elicit orienting responses and increased arousal (Lang 1990). Moving images have been found to increase arousal over still images (Lang, Dhillon and Dong 1995). Research on the speed of animated banner ads has found that fast animation increases attention and elicits increased physiological arousal. In turn, this may increase resources for information processing (Fox et al 2004, Sundar and Kalyanaram 2004).

Pronin and Wegner’s work, however, suggests that that animation speed might not only influence arousal and recall, but also alters the valence of feelings. This is similar to theories such as perceptual fluency, where faster processing elicits more positive mood (Winkielman, et al 2003), or clinical cases such as manic episodes which are characterized by ‘racing thoughts’ along with elated mood. If faster speeds in banner animation do indeed create more positive feelings, this positive mood may influence brand evaluations.

However, some research shows that arousal may not always cause positive emotions. For example, arousal can serve to enhance judgments of an ambiguous ad in the direction of one’s prior (positive/negative) mood (Gorn, Pham and Sin 2001). If this is the case, animation speed may not influence brand attitudes. However, it may still influence brand trial through the effect of arousal alone. Here, arousal may serve to tax self-regulatory resources and provide fewer resources to control subsequent desire (e.g. Vohs and Faber 2007).

To better understand the role of animation speed in banner ads can play, an experiment was conducted using a method similar to that employed by Pronin and Wegner. Because their message statements were highly valenced (positive or negative) it is difficult to dissociate induced mood from speed of thought. In order to overcome this problem, and to make the task more applicable to advertising, informational banner ads were used.

Eight banner ads, each with approximately 40 words and a visual brand logo, were put into a PowerPoint slideshow format. The ads were adapted from existing ads, with brands that were largely unfamiliar to the participants. The PowerPoint was programmed to progress at a speed of 40ms per letter in the fast condition (with an additional 400ms between slides) and at 160 ms per letter in the slow condition (with an additional 1,600 ms between slides). These speeds match those used by Pronin and Wegner and pretesting showed people correctly perceived the pace as fast or slow.

Participants filled out a pretest which included a baseline mood scale (PANAS; Watson, Clark, and Tellegen 1988) as well as some filler tasks. They were then shown to a room and told that they would be participating in an advertising study. Participants were instructed view and read out loud the content of the banner ads. They were told that this would be recorded to ensure that they had actually read all the information. Though this decreases external validity, this was necessary in order to ensure that the banners were being completely read at the speed shown. After going through a practice ad, they viewed the 8 ads in succession and then filled out a questionnaire which assessed their perceived speed of thoughts, feelings of energy and mood state. When that packet was completed, they were given a second packet with a previously unseen print ad and asked to complete additional questions related to this ad. This was done because work in arousal (e.g. excitation transfer) and mood has shown that it is transient and more likely to attach itself to objects and judgments apart from the cause. Thus it was believed possible that arousal from the fast animation would not influence the banner ads themselves, but would instead affect a subsequent message.

Participants in the fast condition rated their subjective feeling of thought speed significantly higher than those in the slow condition (t(b54)=−5.02, p<.001). A significantly heightened sense of energy was also found in the fast group (t(b53)=−2.21, p<.05). Interestingly, mood was significantly higher in the fast group for both positive mood (t(b53)=−1.81, p<.05) and negative mood (t(b53)=−3.27, p<.005). For ad evaluation there was no effect of speed of banners on attitude toward the subsequent ad (t(b51)=−1.35, p>1), however those in the fast condition were significantly more likely to indicate that they would try the product (t(b51)=1.91, p<.05).

As would be expected from a generalized arousal effect, those in the fast banner group reported a significantly higher sense of energy. Additionally, positive mood states showed an increase after viewing the fast banner ads relative to the slow condition. Interestingly, negative moods also increased more after viewing the fast banner ads. This contradicts the findings of Pronin and Wegner who only found an increased positive mood for their fast condition. Speed of presentation did not impact attitude toward the subsequent ad. In spite of a lack of difference between the groups in ad attitude, those in the fast group were more likely to say they would try the product. This finding is in line with work on self-regulation and impulsivity showing that cognitive, behavioral and attentional tasks that reduce self-regulatory resources all lead to an increase in impulse buying (Vohs and Faber 2007). The impact of arousal from fast banner ads may have similarly increased the likelihood of trial in response to a subsequent ad.
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**It Tastes Better Conscious: The Role of Attention in Hedonic Consumption Experience**  
Aner Tal, Duke University, USA

Imagine it’s Thursday evening and you’re enjoying dinner along with NBC’s comedy night. The show is great and you’re laughing and enjoying yourself. At the same time, though, are you enjoying your food? Would you enjoy your food more were you paying attention to eating rather than to the TV?

Surprising findings in recent consumer behavior research suggests that people might enjoy hedonic stimuli more when distracted. In two papers Shiv & Nowlis (2004; Nowlis & Shiv, 2005) demonstrated that consumers chose one of two options more and evaluated an option more highly after trying it under distraction than under no distraction. In Shiv & Nowlis’ general procedure, participants tasted a food sample under high or low cognitive load, and subsequently evaluated the sampled item or chose between the item and an alternative. Participants consistently displayed enhanced preference for items tasted under distraction.

Shiv & Nowlis claimed this effect occurred due to the dynamics of two additive and independent elements of evaluation: affective and informational. Under the authors’ assumption that the informational component is valenced lower than the affective component for hedonic items, a summation of the two should lead to reduced evaluation over a consideration of affect alone. Without distraction both elements add up to determine overall evaluation, whereas under distraction only the affective element effects evaluation. Thus, evaluation under distraction should be higher than evaluation under no distraction.

A vast literature in the psychology of pain perception, however, paints a different picture (for reviews see Cioffi, 1991; McCaul & Marlott, 1984). Under psychological models of pain perception, cognitive elements play an integral and interactive part with sense data in determining hedonic experience (e.g., Dar & Leventhal, 1993; Melzack & Wall, 1965). A similar role for conscious cognition and attention has been found in other domains, including consumer behavior (Lee. et al., 2006; Levin & Gaeth, 1988; Wood & Quinn, 2002). Under these conceptions attention is crucial to hedonic experience. Consequently, these models predict—and extensive research verifies—that distraction leads to a muting of hedonic experience.

How does one reconcile the conflicting results described above? We propose that memory processes, often neglected in both streams of research, might hold the answer. People’s memory for hedonic episodes is often lacking, and is based on either selective recall for particular elements of the experience (Kahenman, 1999; Ariely & Zauberman, 2006), or on reconstructions based on beliefs and expectations rather than on actual recall (Novemsky & Ratner, 2003; Wilson & Gilbert, 2003). Thus, online judgments of experience might produce markedly different results then judgments following delay (Lee, 2002).

In Shiv & Nowlis’ (2004; Nowlis & Shiv, 2005) studies, choice normally followed sampling after some delay. Consequently, participants under load (i.e., the distraction condition) might not have encoded their experience from working memory to long-term memory (e.g., Craik et al., 1996; Baddely & Craik, 1984). Thus, participants in the distraction condition might have based their evaluations or choices on beliefs or expectations, while participants in the no distraction condition might have based their evaluations or choices on actual experience. Thus, evaluations in the two conditions have different bases and are consequently rendered incomparable in regards to participants’ actual hedonic experience (see Lynch & Srull, 1982; Lee, 2002). Further, the results obtained in Shiv and Nowlis’ sampling studies make sense in light of the differential reliance on memory versus beliefs, since given the “high-quality chocolate” context of the experiments participants were likely to expect high quality from the sampled brand.

If these ideas are correct, a reversal of Shiv & Nowlis’ results should be obtained given reliance on actual experience. This can be obtained by including an online evaluation, which will make the basis of evaluation for distraction and non distraction comparable. In sum:

**H1a:** Participants will prefer the tasted over the non-tasted items more with high (rather than low) distraction when evaluation is delayed.

**H1b:** Participants will prefer tasted over non-tasted items less with high (rather than low) distraction when evaluation occurs during tasting.

**Study 1.** The study closely paralleled previous studies of distraction and sampling. Participants (N=30) tasted chocolate and granola bars under high or low load (shopping list memorization), and subsequently indicated their preference between the tasted snack and a second, comparable alternative. In the online condition, participants indicated their preference during tasting, whereas in the delay condition participants indicated their preference after a minute’s delay during which they recalled memorized lists. The design was a 2  

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N = 30. The sample size was determined by the need to have a significant number of observations for each of the conditions. The results were analyzed using a two-way ANOVA with the factors of distraction (high vs. low) and evaluation (online vs. delay). The main effect of distraction was significant, F(1, 28) = 4.23, p = .049, indicating that participants under load (i.e., the distraction condition) preferred the tasted over the non-tasted items more than those under no load (i.e., the no distraction condition). The main effect of evaluation was also significant, F(1, 28) = 4.03, p = .053, indicating that participants preferred the tasted over the non-tasted items more when evaluation was done online than when it was delayed. The interaction between distraction and evaluation was not significant, F(1, 28) = 1.82, p = .193.
(snack type: chocolate and granola-bar) X 2 (distraction: high or low load) X 2 (delay: delay or no delay) within-participants foldover design.

Results and Discussion. We ran an ANOVA model predicting choice from delay and distraction with snack-type as a covariate. No main effects or interactions were found for either snack-type or for the separately examined order of conditions (distraction, delay). There was no main effect of either distraction or delay ($p=.2$). The predicted pattern of delay and distraction was obtained, with the delay X distraction interaction significant at the .01 level ($F(1, 52)=7.12$).

When there was delay between sampling and preference indication, participants preferred the tasted snacks more under distraction (73.33%) than under no distraction (46.67%). The pattern was reversed when preferences measures were taken during sampling. Here, participants chose the sampled snacks more (80%) under no distraction than under high distraction (40%).

Study 2. Participants (N=87) tasted unidentified crackers under high and low distraction conditions similar to study 1. After tasting, participants received negative information about the crackers. This included a low consumer panel rating (4.6/10 points) and display of a cheap-looking cracker box (rated low in pretests) from which the crackers were ostensibly taken. Participants then rated the crackers on a scale of 1-7, anchored by “not at all tasty” and “very tasty”, as well as rating the crackers on a 5-item evaluative measure taken from Shiv and Nowlis’ studies.

Note that in this study all participants were essentially in a delay condition. Under our conceptualization, participants should weight the information they received (i.e., show lower evaluation) more under high, rather than low, distraction, reversing the normal delay/distraction pattern found in study 1 and in Shiv and Nowlis’ research. This was indeed the case: participants evaluated crackers as less tasty on a 7-point scale under distraction (3.98) than they did under no distraction (4.67)-$F(1, 93)=6.09; p=.015$. Similar results were obtained using the 5-item measures employed by Shiv and Nowlis ($p=.05$). Note that these results are the opposite of the prediction of Shiv and Nowlis’ framework, where information should be weighted more highly under low, rather than high, distraction.

The next study planned will examine the moderating role of the intrinsic valence-level of the consumption experience using high and low (taste quality) rated snacks. Under the predictions of the current model, experience should weigh more heavily under low, rather than high, distraction.

References
The Sins of the Father Shall Be Visited Upon the Sons: The Effect of Corporate Parent Affiliation on Consumers’ Perceptions of Corporate Societal Marketing

Andrew E. Wilson, Florida State University, USA
Peter R. Darke, York University, Canada

Abstract
This research investigates how affiliation with a corporate parent affects consumers’ perception of corporate societal marketing (CSM). It also examines whether this effect is more pronounced when the affiliation is perceived to be hidden, and therefore in violation of the norm of openness. Lastly, the study examines whether any of the effects flow back to the parent company. Findings include that corporate parent affiliation does not necessarily lead to decreased evaluations of the niche marketer brands. However, when consumers see the affiliation as hidden, evaluations are negatively affected. Evidence suggests effects may depend on prior track record of parent firm.

Conceptualization
Corporate societal marketing is an increasingly popular method of building brand equity (Hoeffler and Keller 2002). Some niche brands have been successfully built by firms appealing to socially concerned consumers. Several such firms have been acquired by larger firms. Examples of this phenomenon are reviewed and discussed. In each case, a large firm acquired a smaller firm and continued to operate the brand unchanged. This strategy seems to assume that consumers will continue to value the brand based upon its CSM characteristics. It is possible, however, that consumers devalue the brand upon learning of such an affiliation, especially if the parent brand is perceived to lack similar commitment to the cause. The purpose of this paper is to examine how consumers evaluate CSM based brands of a niche marketer affiliated with a larger firm.

The study is informed by three principle areas of theory: 1) corporate societal marketing, 2) the correspondence bias in attribution theory, and 3) fairness in marketing. The correspondence bias refers to the attributional bias in which people make judgments about others based upon their behavior, even in the presence of situational constraints that offer alternative explanations. Fein, Hilton, and Miller (1990) found that the presence of ulterior motives acts as an antidote to the correspondence bias. When behavior may be motivated by an ulterior motive, observers become suspicious, and are therefore less inclined to make attributions based on that behavior. In the present research, it is expected that upon learning of the affiliation, the ulterior motive of image management, or of the profit motive, will become accessible as a ulterior motive for the CSM activities, causing consumers to lower their evaluations of the firm and brand.

Fairness is an important component of exchange (Oliver and Swan 1989; Campbell 1999). Ashworth and Darke (2006) found that consumers’ perceptions of fairness are affected by violations of prescriptive norms—such as openness—even when the outcomes of the exchange were perceived to be distributively fair. Consumers expect to be treated fairly in the marketplace, not only because of material concerns, but also as a matter of principle. In the present research, it is expected that consumers’ perception of openness will affect their evaluation of the companies and their brands.

Corporate Societal Marketing (CSM) has been defined by Drumwright and Murphy (2001) as marketing initiatives that have at least one non-economic objective related to social welfare and use the resources of the company and/or one of its partners. There is evidence that consumers’ evaluation of CSM efforts depend partly upon their perceptions of the marketers’ motivations or intentions. It is expected that consumers will find it more credible that a niche focused firm is sincerely motivated by social objectives than is a larger, more diversified firm.

Study 1
Method
A total of 268 participants (131 males) with a mean age of 32, ranging from 18 to 80 participated. A mixed sample of students and non-students was sought to increase external validity. The study employed a three-group posttest-only randomized experimental design, and was conducted by means of an online website.

Participants viewed materials consisting of an abridged version of the niche brand website, and mocked up news stories ostensibly from an online business news service. Affiliation with a corporate parent was manipulated by exposing the participant to different levels of information about the affiliation in each of the three conditions (control, open, hidden). The effectiveness of the manipulation, as well as the intended interpretation of the other materials, were confirmed through checks.

Established scales were used to measure brand beliefs, attitude towards the brand, organizational associations, and brand sincerity. Reliability was shown through an assessment of Cronbach’s alpha.

Major Findings
Repeated measure ANOVA was conducted for each of the dependent measures treating brand as a within-subject factor. In the norm of openness violation condition, the following effects were found: 1) brand beliefs of the parent brand (product effectiveness) are reduced, 2) attitude towards the niche brand were (marginally) reduced, 3) brand sincerity were reduced for the niche brand, and 4) organizational associations were reduced for both the parent and the niche brand. In the open condition there were no such effects.

Consumers’ perceptions of a niche brand are not necessarily effected by knowledge of an affiliated with a corporate parent, even though the parent’s behavior is at odds with the CSM values. When the social norm of openness is violated, however, the results are quite different. Openness is an important consideration for consumers when forming evaluations. Some evidence was found that these effects flow back to the parent company. This may be because a norm violation leads to distrust, which generalizes to the consumers’ brand beliefs.

Study 2
The objective of study two was to replicate the findings of the first study, while extending them by investigating whether the effects depended upon the prior social responsibility track record of the parent firm. Parent company track record was manipulated by the text of the news story.
Method
A total of 235 participants (125 females) with a mean age of 20, ranging from 18 to 29 participated. The study was a 2(track record: good or bad) x 3(disclosure of affiliation: none, open, or hidden) and was conducted by means of an online website. Because the manipulations involved subtle differences in written language, non-native English speakers were eliminated from the sample, resulting in a useable sample of 207.

Major Findings
As in study one, repeated measure ANOVA’s were performed, treating brand (parent or niche) as the within subject factor. It was found that when the parent company has a good track record, disclosure of the affiliation does not effect perceptions of parent brand sincerity. However, when the parent company’s track record is poor, hidden disclosure lowers perceptions of parent brand sincerity. A similar pattern of effects were found for attitude towards the parent firm.

References
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Experts, Novices, and Non-consumption among Appalachian Trail Thru-hikers
Jon Littlefield, Berry College, USA
Robert A. Siudzinski, Skillshops, Inc., USA

We study consumer expertise among thru-hikers of the Appalachian Trail (AT). The AT, a 2,175 mi. trail that extends along the Appalachian mountain range from Georgia to Maine, is the site of a four- to six-month trek of 2,000 hikers annually. Consumption decisions in preparation for this trip are constrained by the ability to physically carry what is purchased. Also, the confined juxtaposition of novices and experts on this extended hike creates a site in which adaptive, situational learning takes place. We document this process and suggest a conceptualization of consumer expertise that extends beyond that seen in the consumer research literature.

An extensive literature exists in judgment and decision making that describes how experts and novices differ. For instance, Johnson and Russo (1984) found that consumers familiar with a product category had increased ability to code and organize new information related to that product category and limited their search activities for that category. Sujan (1985) found that experts and novices used different categorizing processes when faced with discrepant information in an advertisement. Experts in Maheswaran and Sternthal’s (1990) study processed attribute information (as opposed to benefit information) more extensively than did novices and also found that detailed processing by experts was more evaluative in nature, while that done by novices tended to be more literal, suggesting that category knowledge influences not only the amount of processing done, but also the qualitative nature of that processing.

Alba and Hutchinson (1987) suggest that consumer knowledge is comprised of both product familiarity, which they define as “the number of product-related experiences that have been accumulated by the consumer,” and expertise, defined as “the ability to perform product-related tasks successfully” (p.411). They suggest that the former leads to the latter and that expertise has five different dimensions: cognitive effort, cognitive structure, analysis, elaboration, and memory. Common to these studies is a paradigmatic focus on the psychological inputs into and moderators of the individual decision-making process. In contrast, we focus on the lived experiences of expert and novice hikers as they progress. We define an expert as “someone who has acquired domain-specific knowledge through experience and training” (Spence and Brucks 1997, p 233), and operationalize it as a hiker who has covered at least 2,000 miles on the AT, while a novice hiker has hiked at least 200 miles. Our focus is on the social interactions and the learning processes exhibited by expert and novice hikers, and specifically their gear- and equipment-related decision processes.

We used a focused ethnographic approach consistent with past research in the consumption literature (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994; Spiggle 1994). Data were collected using depth interviews with thru-hikers with variation sought on gender, age, hiking experience level, and degree of involvement in the AT thru-hiking community. Additional sources of data included informal discussions with thru-hikers, participating in the annual Trail Days gathering, and conducting of video-ethnographic interviews with hikers about their equipment. Lastly, we have both backpacked on the AT extensively since childhood. The data were analyzed hermeneutically (Thompson 1997)—initial categories were iteratively challenged and restructured as the study progressed and as themes emerged.

We find a conceptualization of expertise, distinct from that found in the judgment and decision-making literature that is characterized by Reflective Choice Adaptation (RCA). RCA consists, first, of self-reflection sited in both private (individual) and public (social) spheres. Public journaling allows experts to share the benefit of their experiences with both novices and other experts, and allows learning to be scaffolded through the discursive process of public feedback and evaluation. Adjustment to dynamic environmental conditions is the second characteristic of expertise. This ability to make choices within the contextually rich decision context, rather than dogmatically, allows the expert to adjust rapidly to changes in the environment. The final characteristic of expertise we found was that of adaptation. Adaptive expertise involves the marshalling of resources (in both cognition and equipment) in situ to adapt to the demands of a given situation, and includes the modification or creation of personalized technologies. Several experts we met along the trail carried shelters, clothing, or tools that they had made themselves because no product existed, or because the available tools failed to satisfy the hikers’ needs.

We find that RCA more completely characterizes experts than do previous conceptualizations of expertise in the consumer research literature when the context examined is more social in nature, and we suggest that there might be applications to not only other recreational contexts, such as performance musicians and live-aboard sailors, but also other decision contexts such as purchase situations where the act of purchase is more social in nature.

References


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