When and With Whom to Ally? the Influence of Cm Strategic Alliances on Consumer Purchase Behavior

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Five studies investigate the impact of two types of strategic alliances in cause-related marketing: within- and cross-industry alliances. We find consumers perceive within- (vs. cross-) industry alliance as a high entitativity group with strong commitment to a cause, resulting in greater purchase intentions. Familiarity and cause involvement moderate the effect.

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When and With Whom to Ally? The Influence of CM Strategic Alliances on Consumer Purchase Behavior
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

According to the IEG Sponsorship Report (2016), U.S. cause-related marketing (CM) spending reached $1.92 billion in 2015, representing a 135 percent increase from 2002. Recently, it is increasingly common to find firms involved in the strategic alliances with others firms to execute the CM program—CM alliance (Varadarajan and Menon 1988). For example, General Mills teamed up with the other food companies (e.g., ConAgra Foods, Kraft Foods, and Kellogg) to donate meals to Feeding America. Likewise, the Product (RED) campaign engaged companies such as Apple, Gap, and Belvedere Vodka to contribute 50% of profits from designated products to provide medicine to AIDS patients in Africa.

We refer to the former type of CM alliance as within-industry alliance (General Milles), the latter as cross-industry alliance (RED). While solo CM campaign remains dominant in the marketplace (138 campaigns, 41 percent), both within- (83 campaigns, 25 percent) and cross- (113 campaigns, 34 percent) industry alliances are viewed as important strategic alternatives for many firms (Engage for Good 2015). The above raises important questions that have not yet been fully investigated: With whom should firms ally to make CM more effective? Furthermore, the impact of within- and cross-industry alliances may depend upon firm and consumer characteristics. When firms should ally to make CM more effective?

A CM alliance can play a role in how a firm’s commitment to a cause is perceived, which can affect acceptance of the good deed (Van den Brink et al. 2004). According to attribution theory (Heider 1958), when consumers perceive that a company is making a significant effort to a cause, they are more likely to infer altruistic motives on the part of the sponsor, and thoughts of corporate profits associated with the sponsorship act can be minimized (Rifon et al. 2004). We predict that a within-industry alliance may elicit perceptions of high entitativity group with strong commitment to the cause and thus increase customer preferences to a firm’s products. Entitativity has been defined as “the perception that an aggregate of individuals is bonded together in some way to constitute a group” (Hamilton, Sherman, and Castelli 2002, p. 141). High entitativity groups share properties such as similarity, common movement, and common goals (Campbell 1958; Lickel et al. 2000) and their members are perceived as active participants in carrying out plans to achieve collective objectives (Brewer et al. 2004). These characteristics are related to the factors of greater perceived commitment: the amount of input, the durability of the association, and the consistency (stability) of input (Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh 1987).

The present work further examines firm and consumer characteristics that moderate the CM alliance effect. For a well-known company, the degree of liking for the brand is established (Bettman and Sujan 1987) so forming a CM alliance will not benefit brand attitude much. However, for an unknown company, consumers will heavily scrutinize its motive to make a judgment due to a lack of trust (Ellen et al. 2006). Thus, we predict that a within-industry alliance can enhance consumers’ confidence in the unknown firm’s intrinsic motive, thereby increasing CM product preference. Further, Grau and Folse (2007) find that compared with high-cause involvement individuals, low-cause involvement individuals rely more on CM message cues to produce favorable attitudes and participation intentions.

Therefore, within-industry alliance message can be more desirable for low- (vs. high-) cause involvement individuals.

Results from four studies and an empirical data support our hypotheses. Study 1 employs a 3 (alliance: within, cross, no) x 2 (familiarity: well-known, unknown) between-subjects design. Participants were first asked to examine a recent company announcement, named “The Fighting Hunger Project”. During the next three months the firm(s) will donate 5% of the proceeds from the sales of the participating products to help fight hunger. We chose General Mills as the well-known target company and a fictitious food company named popp as the unknown target company. In the within-industry alliance condition, the company worked together with the other three companies from the same food industry (e.g., Kraft foods, Kellogg’s, and Nestle) and in the cross-industry alliance condition, the company worked together with the other companies across different industries (e.g., Ford, Motorola, and Gap). In the no alliance condition, the company worked exclusively with the cause. As expected, participants were more likely to buy the products for within- cross-industry alliance when the company is unknown, but not when the company is well-known.

Study 2 tested the moderating effect of cause involvement on consumers’ preference toward cross-industry alliance products. The between-subjects design and stimuli were the same as before. Participants indicated their cause involvement in the end (Grau and Folse 2007). Results replicate the finding in study 1 and this effect is diminished for high cause-involvement individuals, supporting the moderating role of cause involvement.

Study 3 ruled out company-cause fit as an alternative account (i.e., lower fit between fighting hunger and partners from different industries than from the same food industry). Study 3 employed a 2 (alliance: within, cross) x 2 (fit: high, low) x 3 (product: food, detergent, calculators) mixed design with alliance and fit as the between-subjects factors and product as the within-subjects factor. We generated the high- and low-fit conditions for each product category (confirmed by a pretest). As expected, within- (vs. cross-) industry alliance leads to greater purchase intentions, regardless of high (or low) cause fit with the company.

Study 4 examined the underlying mechanism in a 2 (alliance) x 2 (product) between-subjects design. We measured participants’ willingness-to-pay (WTP) and purchase intentions. To test the underlying mechanism, participants responded to items including the perceptions of corporate commitment to the cause and entitativity regarding the alliance. As expected, within- (vs. cross-) industry alliance leads to stronger perceptions of entitativity, which leads to greater perceptions of corporate commitment to the cause. The greater perceived corporate commitment in turn leads to a greater WTP. Having observed the commitment issue of cross-industry alliance, we verified it using an empirical data. Using data from an online CM news website, we found that firms are less likely to continue cross-industry alliance when the company is unknown.

In sum, this research demonstrates novel effects of using CM alliance by showing when and what types of CM alliance are effective in influencing consumer response. By showing that entitativity affects perceived cause commitment, we demonstrate a novel process through which emotional and charitable responses can be increased.
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The Effect of Social Exclusion on Consumer Shoplifting
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Consumer shoplifting, the theft of merchandise from retail establishments, is a serious problem for retailers, representing more than $16 billion worth of lost sales each year (Allen 2014; National Learning & Resource Center 2014). Surprisingly, shoplifting is quite a ubiquitous phenomenon: an astounding 60% of consumers admit to having shoplifted at some point in their lifetime (Baumer and Rosenbaum 1984). Most shoplifters are “non-professionals” without prior criminal record, who steal not because of financial need but because of social influences (National Learning & Resource Center 2014). It is these social influences on which we focus in this research to advance our understanding of shoplifting. That is, we investigate under which conditions, shoplifting intentions and actual shoplifting behavior may ensue from social exclusion – experiencing a lack of social connection because of being alone, isolated, or rejected (Baumeister et al. 2005; Twenge et al. 2001).

Shoplifting behavior usually begins when social influence has a particularly strong effect on consumers – in adolescence (Cox, Cox, and Moschis 1990; Mangleburg, Doney, and Bristol 2004), and adolescents frequently cite social influences to justify their shoplifting behavior (Cox et al. 1990; Forney, Crutsinger, and Forney 2006). Further, because social exclusion engenders negative affect, we expect that a driving reason for the effect of social exclusion on shoplifting is that socially-excluded consumers are motivated to engage in behavior to repair and escape their negative mood through the theft of merchandise. Lastly, social exclusion is unlikely to have a uniform impact on the shoplifting intentions of all consumers alike. Instead, although socially-excluded (vs. included) consumers generally are likely to experience greater negative affect, it is only those socially-excluded consumers who have experienced shoplifting’s mood-enhancing properties (i.e., shoplifters - those who have shoplifted before) that should seek to repair their mood by shoplifting.

In this research, we argue that one way to cope with negative affect triggered by social exclusion is through shoplifting because of its perceived mood repair properties. The theft of merchandise has been linked with enjoyment and utilitarian properties (Kallis and Vanier 1985; Sarasalo, Bergman, and Toth 1997), with shoplifting providing both the pleasure from consumption and also from the acquisition of the product. Some shoplifters, for example, have self-reported experiencing hedonic pleasure from the act of successfully shoplifting (Fullerton and Punj 1993). When in a negative mood, socially-excluded (vs. included) consumers may be motivated to engage in deviant thrill-seeking in an effort to feel better, and shoplifting constitutes such a means (Fullerton and Punj 1998).

Study 1 was a one-factor, two level (shoplifting history: shoplifter versus non-shoplifter) between-subjects design. Participants arrived to the lab and were socially excluded using Cyberball (Williams and Jarvis 2006). Once the session was over, lab assistants counted the number of chocolates left in the bowl and the amount of money in the jar, so that we could examine if any chocolates had been taken without payment.

Participants who indicated that they had shoplifted before were defined as shoplifters, whereas those who had not previously shoplifted were defined as non-shoplifters. A single-factor (shoplifting history: shoplifter vs. non-shoplifter) ANCOVA, controlling for age and gender, found that socially-excluded shoplifters (M = .64) shoplifted more pieces of chocolate than did non-shoplifters (M = .21; F(1, 80) = 3.99, p < .05).

Study 2 was a 2 (social acceptance: inclusion versus exclusion) x 2 (shoplifting history: shoplifter versus non-shoplifter) between-subjects design with social acceptance manipulated and with shoplifting history measured. Social acceptance was manipulated using the Cyberball game as in study 1. Next in an ostensibly unrelated study, all participants were instructed to imagine that they were alone in a department store with an opportunity to steal a pair of jeans worth about $150.

A 2 (Social Acceptance: Social Inclusion vs. Social Exclusion) x 2 (Shoplift) ANCOVA on shoplifting intention, controlling for age, was significant (F(1,69) = 4.41, p < .05). We also found a main effect of shoplifting history (F(1,69) = 13.03, p < .001), such that those individuals who had shoplifted before reported significantly higher intention to shoplift the pair of jeans (Ms = 2.26 vs. 1.16). More importantly, planned contrasts revealed that the socially-excluded shoplifters expressed greater intentions to shoplift the jeans than did the socially-excluded non-shoplifters (3.08 vs. .99; F(1, 69) = 13.32, p = .001). However, shoplifting history did not impact shoplifting intentions among socially-included participants (1.85 vs. 1.30 for shoplifters vs. non-shoplifters; F(1, 69) = 1.45, p > .20).

The objective of study 3 was to test for the moderating role of product type on our previously found effect in study 2. Participants first completed the same social acceptance manipulation from study 2. Next, we presented participants with the same shoplifting scenario previously used which asked them to indicate their intention to shoplift; however, we manipulated whether the target option was a hedonic (6 pack of energy drinks) or a utilitarian (pack of pain relievers) product. After participants had indicated their intention to shoplift, we measured the extent to which shoplifting was perceived as a mood repair mechanism.

A 3 (social acceptance: exclusion vs. inclusion vs. control) x 2 (shoplifting history: shoplifter vs. non-shoplifter) x 2 (product type: hedonic vs. utilitarian) ANCOVA, controlling for age, on shoplifting intention was significant; F(2, 595) = 5.08, p < .01. planned contrasts revealed that socially-excluded shoplifters (vs. non-shoplifters) expressed greater intentions to shoplift the hedonic energy drinks (2.16 vs. 1.19; F(1, 595) = 10.94, p = .001).

Next, we tested for moderated mediation with the mediator of shoplifting as perceived mood repair using model 12 from the PROCESS macro (Hayes 2013). The index of moderated mediation was significant (95% CI: 1.17, 2.01) providing evidence for moderated mediation (Hayes 2015).

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The Effect of Facial Resemblance on Product Purchase: The Moderating Role of Mental Construal
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The significance of human facial resemblance has emerged as an important driver of both psychology theories (Zebrowitz, Kikkuchi, and Fellous 2010) and consumer research (e.g. Tanner and Maeng 2012), which include mate choice, kin selection, and social interaction (DeBruine 2004; Hinsz 1989; Kraus and Chen 2010; Platek et al. 2003, 2004). Although it is well established that people draw inferences about others based on the way they look (e.g. facial morphology), the current literature has mostly focused on perception of, and behavior towards, individual faces that resemble oneself or one’s familiar others. There is a dearth of research that explores the inferences derived from the faces of groups (of individuals) presented together. In this paper, groups formed by pairs of individual faces were shown to resemble each other. In particular, we aim to address three research questions: does collective facial appearance of a group matter? Will facial resemblance among team members bias consumers’ group-level perception and subsequent decision-making? Which type of consumers may be susceptible to face-based biases in judging groups?

Theoretical Development

Adding to the literature on face-based perception, this paper examines the impact of participants’ drawing inference about group facial resemblance on participants’ evaluation of the presented groups along with the product presented by the groups. This relationship depends on the perceivers’ construal level and springs from inferences made based on a group’s faces. As construal level theory illustrates, when perceiving several objects within a big picture, perceivers can either have a focus more intently on higher-order goals or on contextualized, lower-order details (Liberman, Trope, and Wakslak 2007; Trope and Liberman 2003). Similarly, based upon Schwarz and Bless’s (1992, 2007) model of exclusion/inclusion as well as Förster and his coauthors (2008) global local model of social judgment (GLOMO), high-level construals in a global processing are more inclusive than in a local processing; such perceivers tend to group the stimulus objects in the same category. Hence, when a high-level construal is induced, participants process faces globally and have a tendency to make inferences about group traits based on faces of the presented group (Liberman, Trope, and Wakslak 2007; Trope and Liberman 2003). Accordingly, facial resemblance enhances consumers’ perception of how group members work well with each other. Increasing group facial resemblance leads to greater mental inferences about perceived group entitativity (i.e. groupness, homogeneity, cohesiveness). Specifically, facial resemblance at a group level signals a higher level of intragroup similarity or entitativity, which is often associated with increased cooperative intent (Wang, He, and Liu 2016) or higher likelihood to work toward a common goal (Ip, Chiu, and Wan 2006). While there is adequate evidence showing that entitative groups benefit from positive team traits that lead to better team performance (e.g. Hollingshead 1998; Mulvey and Klein 1998), consumers then consistently transfer perceptual group entitativity, inferred from the evaluation of represented groups of faces, to the associated presented products (Beckwith and Lehmann 1975; Wirtz and Bateson 1995). On the contrary, when a low-level construal is activated, perceivers tend to conduct local processing and focus on each individual face rather than a group of faces (Trope and Liberman 2003). In summary, we predict that (a) construal level moderates the effect of facial resemblance on product purchase likelihood, such that facial resemblance enhances purchase likelihood only among consumers with high-level construals; and (b) the interactive effect of facial resemblance and construal level is mediated by perceived group entitativity.

Methodology

The hypotheses were tested in a series of three experiments. To prepare for the experimental stimuli, we followed digital morphing to manipulate facial resemblance, also adopted by recent face research (e.g. Verosky and Todorov 2010). This technique digitally combines the facial photographs of two (or more) different individuals to produce a composite face that represents a weighted average of the features of all the input faces. By controlling how much each input face contributes to the morph output (anywhere from 0% to 100% of the total contribution) we are able to precisely (and objectively) vary the degree of facial resemblance among team members in this study’s stimuli samples. In such case, two pairs of faces were created as experimental stimuli as either the low resemblance group (10% morphing) or the high resemblance group (30% morphing).

In experiments 1, evidence was provided indicating that subtle changes in facial resemblance among team members influence product purchase likelihood, depending on construal level. One hundred and seventy-three undergraduate participants were randomly assigned to either the low-resemblance condition or the high-resemblance condition. Participants were asked to report their intent in purchasing the product and complete the Behavior Identification Form measuring their chronic construal level (Vallacher and Wegner 1989). Among participants with high-level construals, the spotlight analysis revealed a significant and positive effect on purchase likelihood ($b_{construal} = .68, t = 2.53, p = .01$). However, for participants with low-level construals, there is no significant effect of facial resemblance on purchase likelihood ($b_{construal} = -.06, t = -.24, ns$).

The purpose of experiment 2 is to confirm the results using a different operationalization of construal level. In the high-level construal conditions the headline emphasized the end outcomes of participation. By contrast, in the low-level construal conditions, the headline pinpointed the means to achieve the end results. The study has a 2 (facial resemblance: high versus low) × 2 (construal level: high versus low) between-subjects design. One hundred thirty-three participants from mTurk crowdsourcing services were recruited and asked to report product purchase likelihood. A two-way ANOVA conducted on purchase likelihood indicated a significant interaction effect ($F(1, 130) = 4.26, p < .05$). Planned contrasts analyses revealed that consumers at high-level construals tended to buy the product presented by the high-resemblance versus low-resemblance artists ($M_{low} = 2.30, M_{high} = 3.08; F(1, 130) = 4.97, p < .05$). Among consumers at low-level construals, there was no significant difference in purchase likelihood between the facial resemblance conditions ($F < 1$).

In experiment 3, we operationalized construal level as the desirability (high-construal) or feasibility (low-construal) of the product and replicated the findings. In addition, we tested the underlying mechanism of perceived group entitativity. Similarly, One hundred
and seventy participants were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions. They then reported product purchase intent and perceived group entitativity. Consistently, a $2 \times 2$ ANOVA analysis on purchase likelihood was performed to show a significant interaction effect ($F(1, 166) = 4.17, p < .05$). Moreover, the moderated mediation model revealed a significant indirect effect through perceived group entitativity (95% confidence interval: .001, .380), which fully mediated the interactive effects of facial resemblance and construal level on purchase likelihood.

**Discussion**

This study contributes to the literature on facial resemblance and by and large to face-based inference research. While it is well established that how individuals appear to be (e.g., facial morphology) can affect how they are judged by others, little research concerns perception of groups (of individuals) purely based on facial cues. This research extends the scope of this line of research from individual-level perception to group-level perception in the context of facial resemblance. We demonstrate in three experiments that increasing facial resemblance only enhances product purchase likelihood for consumers at high-level construals. These findings are robust across different operationalizations on construal level (self-measured vs. message-framed vs. desirability/feasibility featured), contexts (fundraising event vs. shopping for furniture), and sample characteristics (undergraduate students vs. non-student sample from mTurk). In practice, marketers can improve purchase behavior by morphing facial features of a group of salespeople and altering the advertising message at an abstract high-level framing. Given the widespread usage of team photos or multi-face imageries in visual media, our findings provide managerial implications for a wide range of audiences, including firm advertising, employee team promotion, collaborative consumption, political campaign and academic collaboration.

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Fevered Pitch: Anxiety and Risk Avoidance in Response to Low-Pitch Ambient Sounds

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The consumer experience is comprised of a complex and multilayered soundscape that includes both scripted (e.g., spokesperson voice, background music) and unscripted (e.g., crowd noise, the hum of appliances) elements. Despite the omnipresent nature of sound, relatively little research has explored how the most basic structural properties of sound can impact emotional and behavioral responses among consumers. We explore how the pitch of ambient sound impacts consumer anxiety and subsequent willingness to engage in potentially risky behaviors. Specifically, we propose that, compared to moderate-pitched ambient sounds, low-pitched ambient sounds signal a possible environmental threat resulting in an anxious response causing heightened risk appraisal and subsequently increased risk avoidance. We test these relationships across six studies.

In study 1, we test whether the presence of a relatively low-pitched vs. moderately-pitched ambient sound impacts the selection of “safe” or “risky” products in a retail environment. While hidden speakers played either a 60Hz or 720Hz sine wave, shoppers at a grocery store were presented with the option of trying a free sample of either Texas BBQ (low risk) or Bombay Curry (high risk) flavored kale chips. As expected, pitch impacted risk aversion (Chi-Square = 4.05, p<.05; PROC FREQ in SAS). When the low-pitch sound was playing, only 21% selected the “riskier” flavor; when the higher-pitched sound was playing, 44% did.

In study 2, we replicated the results from study 1 in a more controlled lab environment and with the addition of a control condition. Participants made a series of dichotomous choices between a certain cash payoff and an unguaranteed chance at a larger payoff (Griskevicius et al. 2011) while speakers in the ceiling played either a relatively low-pitched (720Hz) sine wave sound, or no sound at all (control condition). Again, pitch of the ambient sound had a significant impact on risk aversion (F(2,228)=4.68, p<.01). Participants in the low pitch condition took fewer risks (M<sub>Low pitched</sub>=11.5) than those in both the moderate pitch (M<sub>High pitched</sub>=14.3) and control conditions (M<sub>Control</sub>=14.5).

In study 3, participants listened to 1 of 2 versions of anti-smoking ad for which we varied the pitch of the background music. Participants in the low pitch condition (M<sub>Lowpitch</sub>=1.55) reported significantly lower intentions of smoking in the future relative to those in the more moderately-pitched condition (M<sub>Moderate</sub>=2.06; F(1,128)=4.57, p<.05). Furthermore, this effect was mediated by the perceived risk associated with smoking (a<sub>x b<sub>1</sub></a> = -.2093, 95% C.I. 95% = -.5236 to -.0098).

In study 4, we find initial evidence that our effects are driven by anxiety. Using a word search as our D.V. we found that participants in the low-pitch condition found significantly more anxiety related words than participants in the moderate-pitch condition (M<sub>Lowpitch</sub>=1.26, M<sub>Moderate</sub>=.922; F(1,178)=4.88, p<.05) suggesting a greater sensitivity to anxiety related terms.

In study 5, we provide more direct evidence that anxiety drives the relationship between the pitch of ambient sound and risk aversion and introduce a potential moderator of our effect: sound source. To this end we used a 2 (ambient sound: low pitch vs. moderate pitch) x 2 (sound source: strangers vs. friends) between subjects design. Participants imagined visiting an Asian restaurant in a neighborhood that historically had rather high crime rates, but that the food at the restaurant was typically well reviewed. We found a significant interaction between the sound source and pitch (F(1,135)=4.87, p<.05) on risk aversion. When the ambient sound was ascribed to strangers, participants indicated a lower willingness to try a potentially risky food if the pitch of the ambient sound was low (M<sub>Low</sub>=3.84, M<sub>Moderate</sub>=4.80; F(1,132)=6.72, p=.01), replicating the results of previous studies. However, when the ambient sound was attributed to friends our effect was attenuated (F(1,132)=.311, NS). We also found a significant interaction between the sound source conditions and pitch conditions on anxiety (F(1,135)=4.29, p<.05) such that in the “strangers” condition participants felt less safe (more anxious) when the ambient sound was low-pitched (M<sub>Low</sub>=3.59, M<sub>Moderate</sub>=4.09; F(1,132)=3.56, p<.06). However, this effect was again attenuated in the friends condition (F(1,132)=1.11, NS). Finally, a bootstrap (N=1000) analysis shows that feelings of anxiety mediated the interaction of pitch and sound source on risk avoidance, specifically the willingness to consume a risky product (a<sub>x b<sub>1</sub></a> = .2325, 95% C.I. =.0107 to .6292).

Finally, in study 6, we test our full serial mediation model. To this end participants listened to an ad for a risk reducing product, car insurance, in which we manipulated the pitch of background traffic noise (low-pitch vs. moderate-pitch vs. control). Replicating our earlier findings, pitch had a significant impact on risk averse behavior (F(1,168) = 5.33, p<.01). Participant were willing to pay more for the advertised insurance in the low-pitch condition (M=$79.27) compared to both the moderate-pitch (M=$70.10, p<.05) and the control conditions (M=$66.33, p<.01). Risk appraisal (a<sub>x b<sub>1</sub></a> = -.4929; 90% C.I. = .3544; 90% C.I. = -.1090; 90% C.I. = -.0097) weakly mediated the relationship between pitch condition and risk avoidance (willingness to pay for insurance) while anxiety alone did not (a<sub>x b<sub>1</sub></a> = -.5236 to -.0098). Anxiety did, however, mediate the relationship between pitch condition and risk appraisal (a<sub>x b<sub>1</sub></a> = -.4535; 90% C.I. = .1173 to 1.458). Finally, taking these steps together, there was significant serial mediation between pitch condition, anxiety, risk appraisal, and risk avoidance (a<sub>x b<sub>1</sub></a> = -.4535; 90% C.I. = .1173 to 1.458).

Taken together, these results suggest that subtle differences in the pitch of ambient sound can have a strong influence on both emotional and behavioral responses. Specifically, compared to moderate-pitch ambient sound, low-pitch ambient sound leads to risk aversion through anxiety and situational risk appraisal.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Government, employers, and marketers often use incentives to motivate certain behaviors (e.g., Shapiro and Slemrod, 2003; Volpp, Asch, Galvin and Loewenstein, 2011). However, their effectiveness varies considerably. Insight as to why this might be can be found in multiple streams of research. Of particular relevance to our work, Epley and his collaborators (Epley and Gneezy, 2006; Epley, Mak and Idson, 2006) demonstrates that consumers are more likely to spend windfall framed as a bonus (other’s money) than as a rebate (one’s own money). Potentially at odds with these findings is research on savings and decumulation decisions (Shu and Payne, 2015) which finds that the more strongly people feel that Social Security benefits come from money they contributed through their working life, the sooner they want to claim (and presumably spend) it.

To reconcile these findings, we note that windfalls require no action to be taken in order to be received, while claiming Social Security benefits early requires a volitional decision by the retiree. Building on these streams of research, we predict that consumers will react to incentives differently depending on whether the incentive is linked to their own money or other people’s money, and whether the incentive is conditional on their behavior, or is in the form of an unconditional windfall. Specifically, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1: When receiving an incentive is contingent upon making a purchase, a consumer is more likely to make the purchase if the incentive is framed as being funded from a source she/he has paid into.

Hypothesis 2: When receiving an incentive is not contingent upon making a purchase, a consumer is less likely to make the purchase if the incentive is framed as being funded from a source she/he has paid into.

In Study 1, participants imagined they were in the market for a house with some flexibility on the issue of when to buy. While they would prefer to buy next year rather than this year, there was a factor that might expedite their decision, namely, a $10,000 first time home buyer incentive. The experiment manipulated the source of the incentive: individual income taxes / corporate income taxes / seller concession. The dependent variable was the likelihood of purchasing a new house now, elicited on a 9-point scale. A one-way ANOVA indicated a main effect of the source of the incentive (F(2, 201) = 4.14, p < .05). Pairwise comparisons showed that participants in the individual income tax condition were more likely to expedite the purchase (M=7.49) than participants in either the corporate tax condition (M = 6.95; t(201) = 2.16, p < .05) or the seller concession condition (M = 6.82; t(201) = 2.71, p < .01).

Study 2 generalized the investigation to a car incentive, and measured participants’ psychological ownership of the incentive with three items adapted from Shu and Peck (2011). Participants imagined that they were in the market for a new car with some flexibility on when to buy. However, a $2,000 incentive would expire within a month. Again, the experiment manipulated the source of the incentive: individual income taxes / corporate income taxes / manufacturer concession. The dependent variable was the likelihood of purchasing a new car now, elicited on a 9-point scale. Results indicated that participants were more likely to expedite their purchase in the “individual income tax” condition (M = 6.94) than in the “corporate income tax” condition (M = 6.11; t(192) = 2.28, p < .05) or the “car manufacturer” condition (M = 6.03; t(192) = 2.43, p < .05). A bootstrapping analysis demonstrated that that psychological ownership of the incentive fully mediated the effect of the source of incentive on early purchase (β = .34, SE = .10; 95% confidence interval = [.16, .56]).

Study 3 examined the effectiveness of an incentive in encouraging healthier diets and explored the issue of contingent vs. windfall incentives. The study adopted a 2 by 2 factorial design. A scenario described a $200 discount of a CSA membership offered by a health insurance company. The incentive was either contingent on subscription or paid up front (in which case it could be spent elsewhere), and was either funded by insurance premiums or donations. The dependent variable was the likelihood of CSA subscription, elicited on a 5-point scale. An ANOVA revealed no main effect of the source of the incentive (F(1, 118) = .66, p = .81), a main effect of the contingency of the incentive (F(1, 118) = 3.77, p = .05), and the predicted interaction between contingency and source of the incentive (F(1, 118) = 11.67, p < .01). Specifically, when the incentive was contingent upon CSA subscription, students were more likely to subscribe when the incentive was funded by insurance premiums than by donations (M_premiums = 3.62, M_donations = 2.81; t(59) = 2.65, p = .01); when the incentive was not contingent upon CSA subscription, students were less likely to subscribe in the “premiums” condition than in the “donations” condition (M_premiums = 2.44, M_donations = 3.14; t(59) = 2.20, p < .05).

In summary, framing purchase-contingent incentives as being funded by money consumers have contributed to increases consumer’s perceived ownership over that incentive, which in turn increases their motivation to claim it. However, this effect reverses for non-purchase-contingent (windfall) incentives. These findings have potentially significant implications for a wide range of public policy oriented incentives that aim to motivate society-improving behaviors. For example, consider the cash-for-clunkers program, or incentives to buy solar power systems, both would potentially be made more effective by simply framing the source of the subsidies/incentives as being paid into by the target market. Similarly, in the consumer realm, we have preliminary data that grocery store promotions are more likely to be successful if framed as being store profit funded (i.e. shoppers contributed to) than a manufacturer concession.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Many of our daily activities are not freely chosen, and our freedom to choose how to behave is often constrained by rules and norms. However, being autonomous – in other words being choiceful in one’s actions (deCharms 1976; Deci and Ryan 1985) – represents a critical condition for well-being (Ryan and Deci 2000). In this context, and unsurprisingly, research has established that consumers are eager for autonomy (Zheng, Van Osselaer and Alba 2016), whether it refers to freedom of choice (Markus and Schwartz 2010) or freedom in behavior (Levav and Zhu 2009), and exhibit reactance where their autonomy is threatened (Brehm 1966).

However, the assumption that being autonomous may always be beneficial for consumers may be challenged. Drawing below on the literature on self-determination (Deci and Ryan 1985b) and the theory of psychological stress and coping (Lazarus and Folkman 1984), we propose that the pleasure derived from the experience of autonomy varies as a function of whether consumers perceive the situation in which they have autonomy as risky. Specifically, we propose and test a model where autonomy leads either to stress or personal control depending on the level of risk that they perceive in the situation in which they exert their autonomy.

Theoretical Background

Autonomy

Autonomy refers to the belief that one can freely choose how to behave in a specific situation (Deci and Ryan 1985a), or the extent to which people feel free to initiate their own actions (deCharms 1976; Deci and Ryan 1985, 2000). Autonomy is at the heart of the self-determination theory (hereafter, SDT; Deci and Ryan, 1985a, b, 2000), which posits that autonomous actions are accompanied by a sense of freedom and volition (Butzel and Ryan 1997). Extant research consistently provided support for the beneficial effects of autonomy, mainly in the academic (Grolnick and Ryan 1987; Vallerand, Fortier, and Guay 1997) and work domains (Kirkman and Rosen, 1999, 2000). This notion of autonomy has driving positive outcomes has also been observed in consumption settings. For instance, Zhang et al. (2011) found that consumers value more their goals when they perceive that they autonomously decided to reach that goal. In the domain of computer games, Kim, Chen and Zang (2016) identified autonomy as an important condition for enjoyment.

However, this notion of autonomy as being always beneficial has recently been challenged by Chen and Sengupta (2014), who observed that because ‘vice products’ are intrinsically enjoyable and therefore induce guilt, consuming a vice product leads to lower vitality when consumers are autonomous in their decision of eating that vice product. Their results hence challenge self-determination research, which finds that increased decision autonomy usually heightens vitality. What we propose is in line with this latter notion that autonomy may not always be beneficial for consumers. We develop our rationale for this notion below.

Autonomy under risk

Previous research in a wide array of areas have brought evidence for positive effects of autonomy. For instance, among teachers (Pearson and Moomaw 2005) and workers (Kalleberg, Nesheim, and Olsen 2009), autonomy is positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to stress. However, the relationship between autonomy and well-being can be complex, and the question arises if the positive effects of autonomy always hold, or, said differently, if being autonomous can lead to negative outcomes under specific circumstances. We posit that perceiving risk in the situation one has autonomy over can be such a circumstance. Perceived risk refers to the perception of variances in the possible gains and losses that could result from that particular choice (Kahneman and Tversky 1979; March and Shapira 1987). Hence, people perceive a specific option less risky when, controlling for expected outcomes, this option is more certain than another more probabilistic option. In this regard, what could be argued is that when people have autonomy in a given situation, the perception of risk makes salient the probabilistic negative outcomes that can occur from the experience of autonomy, making the experience less pleasurable. Hence, we propose that risk moderates the effect of autonomy on pleasure such that when autonomy is high, a high (versus low) level of risk makes the experience less (versus more) pleasurable (Hypothesis 1).

According to the theory of a theory of psychological stress and coping (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984), stress arises when people evaluate a particular encounter with the environment as irrelevant to their well-being. Relying on the notion that risky situations are those that are associated with uncertainty (Kahneman and Tversky 1979; March and Shapira 1987), consumers who face risk might also encounter a situation that is less certain to make them achieve their goals as compared to a non-risky situation. In such environments that are risky, autonomy can reveal immobilizing or even detrimental to people (Markus and Kitayama 1991) and lead to experience the situation as stressful (Hypothesis 2a). On the contrary, non-risky situation might make the outcome more certain and lead autonomous people to perceive more contingencies between their behavioral choices and the outcomes. As such contingencies are a core component of control beliefs (Seligman 1975; Skinner 1995, 1996), it may be argued that when risk is low, autonomy leads to a stronger perception of personal control (Hypothesis 2b). Given the literature on stress and control seeing these affective reactions as mediators of the effects of the environment on pleasure (Folkman et al. 1986; Hui and Bateson 1991), both stress (Hypothesis 3a) and personal control (Hypothesis 3b) should mediate the effects of autonomy on pleasure. Further, people who face risk might perceive the situation as threatening, and low autonomy might in this context promote defensive reactions. Because defensiveness has been shown to be less likely to occur when a person has greater autonomy (Knee and Zuckerman 1998), people who have autonomy may react more strongly to risk, leading to an increase in stress. On the contrary, when risk is low, autonomy may be here beneficial to psychological well-being and leads to more personal control. Therefore, when risk is high, autonomy may lead to an increase in stress and consequently on pleasure (Hypothesis 4a), while when risk is low, autonomy may increase personal control and pleasurae (Hypothesis 4b).

Study 1

Procedure. A 2 × 2 between-subjects experiment manipulated autonomy and perceived risk. Participants (N=206 students, 50% male) were asked to imagine themselves with a friend on vacation in Macao, where they had to rent a scooter. Pictures of the streets
of Macao and the scooter were provided on a screen to facilitate the scenario. Autonomy was manipulated following the definition of autonomy as the ability to initiate behaviors (Deci and Ryan 200). In the low autonomy condition, participants were told that they could not drive the scooter because their friend was willing to drive the scooter himself. In the high autonomy condition participants were told that they could choose to drive the scooter themselves. Perceived risk was then manipulated. In the high risk condition, participants were informed that more than 25% (versus 1% in the low risk condition) of tourists who rented a scooter over the last 5 years had been involved in a crash. Then, participants rated how much pleasure they would have riding the scooter in the city, their stress (Durante and Laran 2016, α=.89) and their personal control (Cutright, Bettman, and Fitzsimons 2013; α=.83). For manipulation check purposes, participants rated their perceived autonomy (Chen and Sengupta 2014; α=.94) and how much driving the scooter in Macao was risky (one item). All scales were 7-point Likert scales.

Results. Manipulations of autonomy (M High=5.13, M Low=2.44, F(1, 204)=275.67, p < .001) and risk (M High=4.60, M Low=2.19 F(1, 204)=105.31, p < .001) were successful, and the manipulation of autonomy did not affect personal control (F(1, 204)=3.67, p < .05).

A 2-way ANOVA revealed no effects of autonomy (p > .05) on pleasure, but a negative effect of perceived risk (F(1, 204)=4.68, p < .01; M Low=3.93; M High=3.51). Supporting Hypothesis 1, a significant interaction was observed (F(1, 204)=22.01, p < .001). Precisely, in the low risk condition, autonomy had a positive effect on pleasure (M Low=3.53; M High=4.31, p < .01), while a negative effect was observed in the high risk condition (M Low=3.98; M High=3.09, p < .001). Supporting Hypothesis 2a, results revealed positive effects of autonomy (F(1, 204)=6.89, p < .05; M Low=3.92; M High=4.37) and risk (F(1, 204)=20.41, p < .001; M Low=3.78; M High=4.57) and, interestingly, their interacting effect (F(1, 204)=3.90, p < .05), whereby in the low risk condition autonomy had no effect on stress (p > .05) but had a positive one in the high risk condition (t=-2.97, p < .01; M Low Auton.=4.15; M High Auton.=4.92). Turning to Hypothesis 2b, results revealed a significant positive effect of autonomy (F(1, 204)=4.71, p < .05; M Low=3.08; M High=3.41) and a negative effect of risk (F(1, 204)=38.87, p < .001; M Low=3.69; M High=2.78) on personal control. Supporting Hypothesis 2b, a significant interaction was observed (F(1, 204)=4.25, p < .05) whereby autonomy had a positive effect on personal control when risk was low (M Low Auton.=3.35; M High Auton.=4.03, p < .05) but had no effect when risk was high (p > .05).

Then, a mediation analysis revealed significant indirect effects of autonomy on pleasure through stress (CI=−.25; -.02) and personal control (CI=−.01; -.22), supporting H3. Results from a moderated-mediation analysis revealed no effects of stress on personal control (CI=−.35; -.01) and personal control (CI=−.37; -.01) were moderated by risk, but differently. Specifically and supporting Hypothesis 4, stress negatively mediated the effects of autonomy on pleasure when risk was high (CI=−.34; -.03) but not when risk was low (CI=−.11; -.05), while the mediating effect of personal control was positive in the low risk condition and (CI=−.03; -.37) and non-significant in the high risk condition (CI=−.06; -.09).

Study 2

To examine if the effects observed in study 1 replicated on the field, we interviewed 122 participants (66.4% men, M age=35.23, S.D.=11.21) of car racing in the West of France during two weekends in July and August 2015. We waited on the parking lot of the circuit for people who had just finished driving a car. Because the cars that people could drive vary in their power, perceived risk was likely to vary across cars. Also, although people were supervised by a professional instructor, some instructors were supposedly more lax than others, making autonomy subject to variation. Hence, every third person who arrived on the parking lot after having driven a sports car was systematically approached and asked if they would answer some brief questions about their experience of driving the car. The same measures as in study 1 were used and adapted to the context of the study. In addition, participants rated their general risk-taking tendency (Kim and McGill 2011).

Results. A moderated-mediation analysis was performed with autonomy as the independent variable, stress and personal control as the mediators, pleasure as the dependent variable, perceived risk as the moderator and general risk-taking tendency as a covariate. The analysis yielded significant positive effects of both autonomy (β=.91, p < .001) and risk (β=.73, p < .01) on pleasure, as well as their significant interaction (β=-.15, p < .01) showing that when autonomy increases, a low level of risk leads to higher pleasure. Supporting Hypotheses 2a-b, results also revealed that neither autonomy (β=.17, p > .10) nor risk (β=.03, p > .05) had an effect on stress, but their interaction was observed (β=.10, p < .01), such that when risk is high, being autonomous makes the experience more stressful. Personal control was not affected by risk (p > .05) but by autonomy (β=.98, p < .001) and their interaction (β=-.15, p < .01) such that when risk is high, autonomy has no effect on personal control but has a positive effect when risk is low. Hypotheses 3-4 were also supported, with mediating effects of both stress (CI=−.19; -.03) and personal control (CI=−.01; .17) and similar significant indexes of moderated mediation for stress (CI=−.084; -.003) and personal control (CI=−.082; -.001) were also observed, with the same pattern of results as in study 1. For all analyses, general risk-taking tendency had no effects (p > .05).

Hence, study 2 replicates previous results. However, some differences pertaining to the effects of autonomy and risk on stress were observed. To address these differences, we hypothesize that self-efficacy, or the belief that one is able to mobilize the skills that are necessary to attain a given goal (Bandura 1982, 1997), moderates the effects of autonomy on stress, such that when autonomy increases, self-efficacy makes the experience of autonomy less stressful (Hypothesis 5).

Study 3

Procedure and sample. A 2 × 2 between-subjects design was conducted with autonomy (low vs. high) and risk (low vs. high) as fixed factors. Participants (n=240, 54% female, M age=28.28) were asked to read a scenario where they had to imagine cooking a meal for an evening with friends and to choose one dish to cook from a list of five dishes (the dishes did not significantly differ on indulgence). In the condition of high autonomy, respondents were advised that they had the option of following a recipe or doing as they wished, while in the low autonomy condition they were specified that they had to follow a recipe scrupulously and that no room was left for imagination. Then, in the low-risk condition, it was indicated that on Internet forums consumers reported feeling that the recipe had a nice 80% chance to please. In the high risk condition, it was indicated that consumers on the forums pointed out that the recipe had only a 40% chance to please. Respondents then completed the same measures of pleasure, stress, personal control, autonomy and risk as in previous studies, as well as one of self-efficacy (Keller 2006; α=.75).

Results. The manipulation of autonomy and risk were successful, and self-efficacy was not affected by the manipulation of risk (p > .10). As studies 1-2, the same patterns of interacting effects of autonomy and risk on pleasure (F (1, 236)=8.66, p < .01), stress (F (1, 236)=8.01, p < .01) and personal control (F (1, 236)=7.59, p <

...were observed. Also, results yielded the same mediating effects of stress (CI=−.51; -.19) and personal control (CI=.01; .14), that were again moderated by risk perception (CI_{stress}=.80; -.16; CI_{control}=.37; -.02). Finally, a regression revealed that when risk is high, stress is marginally affected by efficacy (β=−.17, p=.10) and its interaction with autonomy (β=−.31, p < .05), whereby for all values of self-efficacy below 5.57, having autonomy results in significantly higher levels of stress than not having autonomy. Age and gender had no effects on self-efficacy (p’s > .05).

Conclusion
The three studies reported here support our hypothesis that the pleasure derived from being autonomous can vary as a function of risk perception. The extent to which a consumption experience is pleasurable varies according to the degrees of stress and personal control that consumers may feel in response to their autonomy and risk. Hence, marketers should reduce perceived risk so that autonomy leads to an increase in personal control and pleasure.

REFERENCES


I Speak Starbucks, do You? Distinction and Inclusion on Linguistic Brand Codes

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Successful brands are active producers of cultural objects, rather than mere parasites that appropriate popular culture. Indeed, brands create symbols, myths, and even prescriptive models for the way we think and the way we behave—our goals, ideals, and values. Eavesdropping on someone ordering a drink at Starbucks or talking about a sci-fi narrative brand will make obvious that brands also change the way consumers talk. Despite the widely-accepted centrality of language to culture (Crawford & Valsiner 1999), brand-specific linguistic codes have been largely overlooked in cultural approaches to consumer research.

Despite the lack of deliberate examination, the existence of linguistic codes shared and used within consumption communities and brand communities is widely recognized. Thomsen, Straubhaar and Bolyard (1998) use the words “jargon or group speak” to describe the insider code used within cyber-communities. Schau and Muñiz (2002) find a “community jargon” shared in brand-related personal websites. Langerak et al. (2003) use the term “specialized language” for the jargon spoken within an e-brand’s virtual community. In their ethnography of the new bikers, Schouten and McAlester (1995) define subcultures of consumption as having unique jargons, and their data illustrates several examples of “biker vernacular.” One of the Trekker sub-communities described by Kozinets (2001) revolves around the constructed language Klingon. Muñiz and Schau (2005) describe a characteristic “formulaic language” within users of the discontinued Apple Newton. Whereas the presence of brand codes has been repeatedly acknowledged, their relevance to consumer researcher theory and marketing implications have yet to be explored. This study aims to fill this gap in the literature by putting the spotlight on this particular brand cultural object.

We bring together Bourdieu’s cultural capital theories (e.g. Bourdieu 1986, Bourdieu & Passeron 1990), a brand culture approach (Schroeder 2009), and a consumer research reading of socio-linguistics to study the practices and discourses created by branded jargon and dialects. Starbucks is our context for studying brand codes. Brand-specific linguistic codes were studied using an ethnographic (Kozinets 2002) approach complemented with in-store observation. Brand related conversations were extracted from official and fan-created websites, Twitter messages and YouTube videos. Findings were further informed by naturalistic observation in Starbucks coffeehouses.

Findings confirm the appropriateness of the “brand language” metaphor, revealing the ubiquity of its use among consumers and illustrating the many ways in which linguistic brand codes mirror natural languages. Specifically, this study sheds light on the largely unexplored topic of how “brand literacy” (Bengtsson & Firat 2006) is acquired. Careful examination of Starbucks’ linguistic brand code reveals “jargon” to be an insufficient term to refer to a code with grammar-like properties in which issues of syntax (e.g. word order), pragmatics (e.g. tacitness and sub-textuality), and style (e.g. redundancy) matter. Linguistic competence in “Starbucksese” is revealed as a continuum ranging from complete lack of fluency to “native-like” competence. Two main opposing discourses co-exist around Starbucks’ ordering script. A wide range of oppositional and skeptical consumers see the brand code as unnecessarily cryptic, putatively designed to pretentiously sound “vaguely European” or simply expert Starbucks cultural hegemony. A second discourse (as voiced by baristas, and endorsed by most fans) is to discount the need for the code and the barriers to learning it without denying its complexity.

Among the most brand loyal customers endorsing the latter discourse, competence in Starbucks linguistic code signals commitment to the brand (and hence, status within the fan community). These fans often police the brand discourse and community in such a way that lack of fluency is tolerated, if looked down upon, but oppositional discourse is attacked and silenced.

On the other ideological end, oppositional customers, in their own words, “make a point” of not learning or using the linguistic brand code while ridiculing those who do and sharing with like-minded users their successes in defying Starbucks cultural dominance. Interestingly, they do so while still being Starbucks customers (many of them declared frequent customers).

Aside this dialectical war, occasional and unaligned Starbucks customers must still manage to navigate the brand code. Lacking fluency, they do so using a variety of compensatory strategies that typically result in negative feelings or suboptimal outcomes.

Fans use brand codes as a field-specific cultural capital and a source of identity, belonging, and group status. In the case of a highly accessible brand like Starbucks, cultural capital is more tied to how to consume and less to what is consumed (Holt 1998). Whereas less-than-expert customers are needed if code competence is to be a signal of high status, deniers of the value of “speaking the brand” are a menace to status-seeking fans who have learned the code. Lack of fluency is described by consumers as a source of rejection and anxiety. Consistent with previous theory (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, Lamont and Lareau’s 1988), cultural and social exclusion prove to be a central component of the status game. On the other hand, and deviating from previous literature on consumer resistance, we find oppositional consumers who are “anti-Starbucksese” rather than anti-Starbucks. Consumers can be polarized not only for and against a brand (as in Thompson & Arsel 2004, Kozinets & Handelman 2004) but for and against a brand’s cultural objects while still consuming the brand. Ethic interpretation of this form of consumer cultural resistance is that consumers are inverting the sign of marketer-imposed codes (Ozanne & Murray 1995) while still using them for status-seeking purposes. As Holt (2002) points out, opposition does not liberate from the market, but instead drives consumers to build their resistance identity through the market. We extend Holt’s findings by adding that even opposition to a brand’s cultural objects does not emancipate from the brand: knowing and denying brand cultural objects can be two fields within the same context; two strategies in the same status-seeking game of cultural capital.

REFERENCES


Increasing PSA Effectiveness: Two Routes from Self-Threat to Message Acceptance

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The typical goal of a public service announcement (PSA) is to prompt viewers to behave in a more socially responsible way. Interestingly, many PSAs use shocking stories or visuals to illustrate the irresponsibility of viewers’ current behaviors. However, by illustrating how a viewer may be acting in a socially irresponsible way, such messages are likely to create an identity threat and thus may lead to defensive reactions rather than to more responsible behaviors.

To increase acceptance of threatening messages, past research has attempted either (1) to reduce individuals’ experience of threat through self-affirmation (Sherman and Cohen 2006; Sherman, Nelson, and Steele 2000; Steele 1988) or (2) to elevate individuals’ mood (Raghunathan and Trope 2002). In this research, we highlight the relationship between these two solutions, we identify conditions under which each is more or less effective at reducing resistance to counter-attitudinal messages, and we explore the mechanism for their influence on message acceptance. More specifically, we propose that the more important a threatened identity domain is to an individual, the more seriously a person’s identity will feel threatened, and the less effective cross-domain self-affirmations are therefore likely to be. As suggested by Tetlock et al. (2000), sacred or important values are harder to compensate or trade-off (Tetlock et al. 2000). If and when a self-affirmation does not reduce an identity threat, any effect on message acceptance might be credited to mood.

In study 1, participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: threat-only, threat-compensation, and no-threat. Participants in both the threat-only and threat-compensation conditions engaged in a procedure that threatened their moral identity (i.e., admitting to online piracy behavior). Later, participants in the threat-compensation condition were asked to write an essay to self-affirm their competence. Lastly, all participants evaluated advertisements and expressed their agreement to anti-piracy messages. Results showed that participants in the threat-only condition showed greater preference for moral advertisements than those in the no-threat condition ($p < 0.05$), which was consistent with past research on within-domain compensation. Contrary to what previous self-affirmation research might predict, the preference for moral advertisements for those in the threat-compensation condition was not significantly different from that in the threat-only condition ($p = 0.81$). This result indicated that participants’ threatened moral identity was not effectively compensated by cross-domain self-affirmation. However, relative to participants in the threat-only condition, participants were more willing to accept threatening messages in the no-threat condition (5.6 vs. 4.57; $t(92) = 3.02, p < .005$), and in the threat-compensation condition (5.56 vs. 4.57; $t(87) = 2.67, p < .01$). This result raises a paradox that why individuals become more accepting of threatening messages when they still have discrepancy in their threatened identity.

Study 2 investigated the underlying mechanism for this increased message acceptance. In this study, we replicated our finding that cross-domain compensation increased willingness to accept threatening messages, but did not reduce self-discrepancy. We also showed that cross-domain compensation improved respondents’ mood, which mediated the effect of cross-domain compensation on message acceptance. Further supporting our claim that improved mood can enhance message acceptance, we showed in this study that simply thinking about a sunny day (which is not related to self-affirmation or compensation) also enhanced message acceptance.

In Study 3, we demonstrated conditions under which cross-domain compensation was effective vs. ineffective in reducing self-discrepancy. Moreover, we showed that even when cross-domain compensation was ineffective, it could still increase message acceptance. Specifically, participants received a threat to one of five life values (family, honesty/kindness, competency, spontaneity, and physical attractiveness), then they received an essay writing task designed to self-affirm one of those five life values. We found that the cross-domain compensation effectively reduced self-discrepancy only when the threat was to the least important value and the compensation was to the most important value. However, even when the cross-domain compensation did not effectively reduce discrepancy, it still increased participants’ mood which, in turn increased their message acceptance.

Last study, we applied our findings in a field study to show the role of mood in improving the effectiveness of PSA. 70 male workers (generally heavy smokers) working at a construction site in China were randomly assigned to one of three conditions by receiving three different types of PSA messages in print: control condition (no PSA), threat condition (a threatening PSA featuring pictures of the deadly consequences of smoking), and mood elevation condition (a PSA featuring pictures of healthy looking families living happily). Then they were asked to answer five questions regarding anti-smoking messages, gender (70 males), age (mean=38), and how many cigarettes they smoke each day (mean=19). Results showed message acceptance in the mood elevation condition was significantly higher than that in the control condition (4.08 vs. 3.49; $t(44) = 3.24, p < .005$) and the threat condition (4.08 vs. 3.39; $t(47) = 2.47, p < .05$); mood in the mood elevation condition was significantly higher than that in the control condition (4.80 vs. 3.10; $t(44) = 7.83, p < .001$) and the threat condition (4.80 vs. 1.83; $t(47) = 12.33, p < .001$). A mediation analysis showed that mood mediates the influence of different PSAs on message acceptance, the mean indirect effect from the bootstrap analysis is also significant ($a \times b = .18$, with a 95% confidence interval excluding zero (.0384 to .3765).

This research contributes to literature on self-affirmation and persuasion and have practical implications in improving the effectiveness of PSAs.

REFERENCE


Towards a New Framework of Eco-Food Consumption: The Importance of Contextual Drivers

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Green consumer trends demonstrate that an influential group of aware and ethical consumers has emerged. However, what consumers say about the importance of ethical and environmental issues often differs from their actual behavior, and the share of eco-friendly food in total consumption has remained low (Rousseau and Vranken 2013). Frequently this gap between consumers’ attitudes and their actual buying behavior refers to the so-called attitude-behavior gap (Carrigan, Szmigiern, and Wright 2004). The gap can potentially be explained by the multifaceted nature of sustainable consumption. Existing studies mostly focus on individual consumer characteristics, which means that macro and structural causes of sustainable consumption tend to be ignored (Thørgesen 2010). For example, the cultural context needs to be taken into account, as it has a direct influence on social pressure and pro-environmental value orientation (Kumar, Manrai, and Manrai 2017; Strizhakova and Coulter 2013). Thørgesen (2010) argues that both macro factors (e.g., culture) and structural factors (e.g., political regulation, national labelling systems) are more important determinants for sustainable consumption than individual-level attitudinal variables.

This study looks on one particular type of sustainable consumption, namely eco-food (i.e., food encompassing environmental, ethical, and health benefits) and addresses the wider social framework and cultural system in which this type of food is consumed. As a result, we suggest a new conceptual framework that contributes a contextual dimension to our understanding of eco-food consumption. In this way, we extend the existing literature by suggesting that consumers’ perceptions and attitudes toward eco-food are influenced by five contextual drivers: (1) cultural values; (2) media discourses and structural factors (e.g., political regulation, national labelling systems) are more important determinants for sustainable consumption than individual-level attitudinal variables.

This study contributes to the existing literature by bringing attention to the contextual factors which were earlier neglected in the literature (Thørgesen 2010). The findings are important for both companies and policy makers as we highlight the importance of taking into account contextual dimensions while promoting eco-food in different countries. However, this study has a number of limitations and more research is necessary. We address only two countries and the research can be extended to different types of cultures, e.g., more collectivist cultures. We also do not focus on the variations between ethnic groups, which can be especially important in the US. Moreover, there is a need to consider how a combination of product-, consumer- and context-level drivers influences eco-food consumption.

Thørgesen (2010) argues that both macro factors (e.g., culture) and structural factors (e.g., political regulation, national labelling systems) are more important determinants for sustainable consumption than individual-level attitudinal variables.

Our aim is to explore how these contextual factors explain the differences in consumers’ perceptions and attitudes toward eco-food in the US and Norway. Both countries are developed and industrialized and contain a growing eco-food market. However, they differ on cultural orientations and other dimensions (country size, food regulations, media discourse, and so on). We can therefore expect differences in the importance of eco-food concerns. To collect the data, we conducted 40 in-depth interviews in Norway and the US (twenty in each country). The researcher began by discussing consumers’ food habits and their salient concerns pertaining to food purchases. The interviewer then explained the concept of eco-food, probing informants’ perceptions of the category and its salience to their purchasing and eating behavior. Moreover, the interviewer probed for contextual factors influencing consumers’ perceptions of eco-food. The interview procedure yielded around 520 pages of transcribed single-spaced text. The research team utilized the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss 1968) to identify the presence of the contextual drivers discussed in the conceptual framework. In addition, the researchers conducted a media discourse analysis to identify food and eco-food related topics discussed in the media in the US and Norway. We also compared the food safety regulations in both countries.

We discerned the following patterns when comparing responses from Norway and the US. Like previous research (e.g., Carrigan et al. 2004), the current study shows consumers experience an attitude-behavior gap in both countries. Specifically, informants offer two broad reasons for not purchasing eco-food, or for not buying as much as they would have liked – namely, price and access. Nevertheless, interesting differences emerge between American and Norwegian consumers when they explain the reasons for buying eco-food. While American consumers highlight the health benefits, ethical considerations and animal welfare are the most prevalent among their Norwegian counterparts. Moreover, Norwegian consumers exhibit much stronger preferences for nationally produced food, as they consider Norwegian food to be similar to eco-food along the dimensions of safety and ethicality. We argue these differences can be partly explained by contextual factors such as cultural values, differences in media discourse, food regulations, a nation’s geographical characteristics and provenance effects. Norwegian culture emphasizes egalitarianism and harmony and de-emphasizes mastery, which calls for selfless concern for the welfare of others (Schwartz 2006). In contrast, American individualism emphasizes affective autonomy and mastery at the expense of harmony (Schwartz 2006). This combination leads to justifying and encouraging egoistic self-advancement.

This distinction may result in a more functional, self-focused approach to eco-food in the US (with a focus on health and taste benefits), while ethical (and especially animal welfare) issues prevail in Norway. In addition, our analysis reveals that focus on issues in the media differs in the US and Norway. While Norwegian media devotes attention to animal welfare issues, there is still more emphasis on health issues and food safety (e.g., pesticides and hormones) in the US. Our informants confirm the influence of media discourses and refer to recent feature stories in the media while explaining their reasons for buying eco-food. Moreover, Norway has more restrictive food safety regulations (EcoWatch 2014), which can explain consumers’ trust to non-eco-food produced in Norway. Geographical differences may also play a role. Norway is much smaller country than the USA and it can explain the different perceptions of provenance. While consumers in the USA exhibit preference for local non-eco-food, Norwegians perceive local food much broader and prefer all the food produced in Norway.

This study contributes to the existing literature by bringing attention to the contextual factors which were earlier neglected in the literature (Thørgesen 2010). The findings are important for both companies and policy makers as we highlight the importance of taking into account contextual dimensions while promoting eco-food in different countries. However, this study has a number of limitations and more research is necessary. We address only two countries and the research can be extended to different types of cultures, e.g., more collectivist cultures. We also do not focus on the variations between ethnic groups, which can be especially important in the US. Moreover, there is a need to consider how a combination of product-, consumer- and context-level drivers influences eco-food consumption.
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumers constantly decide what to bring into their lives, from people (who to date) to places (where to live) to products (what to buy). Beyond such what questions, any acquisition necessitates a subsequent, unexamined question: How long will I keep it? We examine this concept of retention, or the duration over which consumers maintain possession of something. To probe retention, we present a series of three pilot studies that tests a straightforward prediction relating retention to gift giving. Specifically, people retain gifts for a longer period of time when they come from socially closer others. We then identify a condition (explicit consideration or inclusion of gift quality information) that causes this pattern of retention to reverse (longer retention for gifts from distant others) as a function of gift recipients’ shifting expectations for their social connection with gift givers in the future. Practical implications for gift giving as well as theoretical relevance for future research on retention are discussed.

In a set of three pilot studies, we document the obvious conclusion that people keep gifts longer when they receive gifts from socially closer (versus distant) givers. Throughout, we find longer retention for gifts from objectively and subjectively closer others, across a range of retention measures – viz. prospective retention ("How long will I keep this new item?"); retrospective retention (“How long did I keep a former possession?"); and a combination of the latter ("How long have I had this, and how much longer should I hold onto it?").

We then tested whether this pattern would maintain when the price of the gift is revealed. Counterintuitively, we found in a set of four studies that such gifts are retained longer when they originate from distant givers. In all, when price information was present, retention of a high-priced gift was higher when the gift was from a socially distant giver than from a socially close giver (Studies 1-4). This result was shown to be conditionally mediated by the expectation of increased future closeness with a distant (vs. a closer) gift giver (Study 4). That is, unlike gift givers (and others more generally) that are prima facie socially close, people who stand at a greater social distance have a greater potential to move through that distance in becoming closer. In turn, these expectations for change in connectedness in the future informs decisions in the present.

Study 1 asked participants about their retention intentions for gifts that were low- or high-priced ($10 vs. $75) from a socially distant or close giver. When price information was revealed, the pattern of results was notably different than in our pilot studies: For the low-priced gift, expected retention did not differ between close ($M = 105.80$ days, $SD = 66.26$) and distant ($M = 118.80$ days, $SD = 42.85$) givers, $F < 1, p > .8$; but for the high-priced gift, expected retention was significantly higher when it came from a distant giver ($M = 1474.60$ days, $SD = 414.56$) compared with a close giver ($M = 1226.40$ days, $SD = 457.83$), $F(1, 144) = 10.15, p = .002, \eta^2_s = .07$.

Study 2 provides evidence that price is used as a proxy for product quality in retention decisions. Study 2 tested two different prices (as in Study 1) across two different levels of gift quality (“rather low in quality – about a 2 on a 10-point scale” vs. “very high in quality – about a 9 on a 10-point scale”). When quality of the gift was revealed, expected retention was consistently higher when the gift came from a distant friend at both low ($M = 504.40$ days, $SD = 294.67$) and high ($M = 1430.80$ days, $SD = 314.69$) levels of quality, as contrasted with the expected retention from a close friend at low ($M = 368.76$ days, $SD = 215.39$) and high ($M = 1328.60$ days, $SD = 331.19$) quality levels.

Study 3 provides discriminant validity between liking of the gift and retention. Using a high- and low-priced pen methodology similar to Study 1 and including a measure of liking, Study 3 found that among participants asked about liking, only a significant main effect of gift price emerged ($p < .001$), whereas giver distance and the interaction between distance and price two did not prove reliable ($p s > .4$). The general conclusion appears to suggest that expensive gifts are liked more than inexpensive gifts regardless of who is giving them. Thus, it appears that consumers consider and make retention-related decisions in a manner that is conceptually dissociable from mere liking.

Finally, Study 4 examines the mechanism by which the addition of price information seems to provide a boost in retention for gifts from distant givers: An inferred expectation by recipients of increased closeness with givers in the future. Using new gift and price scenarios, we asked participants not only how long they planned to retain the gift but also how, if at all, they anticipated their relationship with the gift giver would change in the future. While more increased closeness was anticipated for a distant ($M = 0.28, SD = 0.61$) versus close ($M = -0.08, SD = 0.28$) giver in the low-priced gift condition, $F(1, 96) = 6.15, p = .015, \eta^2_s = .06$, the high-priced gift showed an even larger difference in anticipated increase in closeness between the distant ($M = 2.72, SD = 0.61$) and close ($M = 0.16, SD = 0.47$) giver, $F(1, 96) = 311.09, p < .001, \eta^2_s = .76$. A reliable indirect pathway emerged for both the close giver ($\beta = 26.23, SE = 15.53; 95% CI = 6.22-73.65$) and the distant giver ($\beta = 266.64, SE = 82.90; 95% CI = 97.56-427.98$). Crucially, the model estimated the index of moderated mediation at 240.41 ($SE = 75.15$), and a 95% confidence interval for this estimate did not include zero ($90.09-389.89$). This suggests that, while gift price-evoked expectations of future relationship change predicted retention in both gift-giver conditions, the psychological process relating price to anticipated change and retention was more impactful in evaluating gifts from a distant (versus close) giver.

Taken together, this research emphasizes the relevance of retention as a conceptual variable. It also provides an initial treatment of it as an experimental outcome that allows for novel consumer insights into the relationships between social closeness, price information, and gift retention.
SAME SAME, BUT DIFFERENT: HOW REFUTATIONAL TWO-SIDED MESSAGES STEER AMBIVALENT ATTITUDES

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The question whether marketers should use one- vs. two-sided messages has received considerable attention in the persuasion literature (e.g., Eisend, 2006), but without straight answers. On the one hand, the inclusion of negative information in a promotional message seems to enhance attitudes and intentions (e.g., Crowley & Hoyer, 1994), whereas, on the other hand, attitudes and intentions can be derogated (Eisend, 2006). We argue that attitude ambivalence could account for these mixed results. Past research demonstrates that attitude ambivalence plays an important (negative) role in influencing attitudes and intentions (e.g., Priester & Petty, 1996). When people are confronted with a two-sided message, this may induce feelings of evaluative conflict (i.e., attitudinal ambivalence) which may lead to lower attitudes and purchase intentions. However, when a two-sided message does not evoke high levels of ambivalence, we expect positive effects on message effectiveness as previously documented in message sidedness literature.

The first objective of this research is to introduce attitude ambivalence as an explanatory factor for prior inconsistent results concerning the effectiveness of one- vs. two-sided messages (study 1). We know that ambivalent attitudes are generally more susceptible to persuasion (van Harreveld et al., 2009). Most research focuses predominantly on the underlying reasons why (e.g., because they are less strong, or because they are a source of psychological discomfort which people want to resolve). Instead, our research focuses on refutation as a tool to get people with highly ambivalent attitudes ‘off the fence’ (study 2). Next, study 3 introduces refutation on the same vs. different product attributes as a moderator of these effects. This work advances the literature on ambivalence and message sidedness, while also providing hands-on recommendations to practitioners dealing with cases of high ambivalence.

137 undergraduate students were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in a 2 (one- vs. two-sided) by 2 (high vs. low ambivalence) between-subjects factorial design. They were shown a set of equally important attributes that described an MP3 player. Message sidedness was manipulated by providing either only positive or both positive and negative product attributes. Low vs. high ambivalence was manipulated by varying the amount of attributes, in line with prior research (Priester, Petty & Park, 2007). We found significant interaction effects for attitude towards the MP3-player and purchase intention. As expected, two-sided messages only yield more positive attitudes and intentions when ambivalence is low (vs. high). Hence, when designing two-sided messages, marketers should avoid creating ambivalent situations, because ambivalence offsets the positive effects of two-sided messages on message effectiveness.

Study 2 tests whether a refutational statement in a two-sided message increases message effectiveness when ambivalence is high. The intent of two-sided refutational messages is to first introduce an opposing view, and subsequently demonstrate why this opposing view is inferior (Allen, 1991). A non-refutational two-sided message merely offers both views while not refuting the opposing view in the message. We argue that a refutation can uplift message effectiveness in ambivalent individuals. 106 MTurk participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in a 2 (two-sided non-refutational vs. refutational) by 2 (high vs. low ambivalence) between-subjects factorial design. Study 2 was identical to the previous one except for some modifications: (a) only two-sided messages were used, (b) a different product stimulus was used to generalize across products: a notebook, (c) the attributes were pretested on their importance level, and, finally (d) measures of negative and positive WOM were included. The results show significant interaction effects: in case of high ambivalence, refutational two-sided messages lead to higher attitudes, purchase intentions, and proportionally more (less) positive (negative) WOM (compared to non-refutational two-sided messages). Hence, a refutation may overcome the perverse effects of ambivalence in two-sided messages.

Study 3 examines whether the nature of the refutation matters. Refutational statements can be based on the same or different product attribute levels, for example: “This laptop has a short battery autonomy, but on the other hand the battery charges exceptionally fast” (same attribute) vs. “This laptop has a short battery autonomy, but on the other hand this model has many USB ports” (different attribute). We test whether refutation on the same vs. different attributes in a two-sided message amplifies attitudes, purchase intentions, and WOM. 305 participants of an online respondent panel were randomly assigned to one of six conditions in a 3 (two-sided non-refutational vs. two-sided refutational on the same attribute vs. two-sided refutational on a different attribute) by 2 (high vs. low ambivalence) between-subjects factorial design. Study 3 was similar to study 2 except (a) the same vs. different product attribute level refutational statements were manipulated by tailoring the type of product attribute(s). The results show that among high (vs. low) ambivalent individuals, same-attribute refutations lead to significantly proportionally more (less) positive (negative) WOM and higher purchase intentions (vs. different-attribute refutations or non-refutational two-sided messages). Among individuals with low (vs. high) ambivalence, refutational two-sided messages, irrespective of whether they are based on the same or different product attributes, lead to significantly lower purchase intentions and proportionally less (more) positive (negative) WOM (vs. non-refutational two-sided messages). Hence, a two-sided message with a focus on the same attribute is more persuasive while addressing highly ambivalent people.

This research shows that attitude ambivalence explains previous inconsistent results concerning two-sided messages’ effectiveness. That is, two-sided messages only yield more positive attitudes and intentions when ambivalence is low (vs. high) (study 1). However, in study 2, we show that this perverse effect of ambivalence in two-sided messages can be resolved by including a refutation. In other words, a refutation can persuade ambivalent individuals. Study 3 shows this only works if the refutation is on the same product attribute-level. While it is known that ambivalent individuals evaluate relevant stimuli more deeply to resolve their ambivalence, further research can explore whether refutation based on the same (vs. different) product attributes is perceived as more salient, more complete, or more successful in reducing anticipated conflict, allowing ambivalent individuals to form stable attitudes and intentions.
REFERENCES

Can Packaging Color Influence Consumers’ Willingness To Pay? Evidences of the Au Naturel-Colored Packaging Effect

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This paper introduces the concept of Au Naturel Color and investigates the relationship between packaging color and consumers’ willingness to pay (WTP). Drawing on color theory (Giles 2000), we define Au Naturel Color as a color that brings to mind something that comes from the soil, is not dyed or not artificial, untreated or unprocessed, and expresses authenticity, that is something genuine and not altered. We include shades of beige in this color domain.

Consistent with dual process theories (e.g., Elaboration Likelihood Model - Petty and Cacioppo 1981; and Heuristic-Systematic Model - Bohner et al. 1995), packaging color can be considered as a heuristic. We propose that au naturel-colored packaging (vs. non au naturel-colored packaging) will work as a heuristic and produce positive associations with the product, thus leading to an increase in consumers’ WTP (H1). Moreover, the use of feelings falls in the category of heuristic processing (Chen and Chaiken 1999) and may influence consumers’ responses based on the feeling-as-information model under peripheral route condition (Schwarz and Clore 1988). We maintain that the relationship between au naturel-colored packaging and consumers’ WTP is explained by an emotion-based mechanism.

We expect that au naturel-colored packaging (vs. non au naturel-colored packaging) will evoke low arousal emotions, mainly consisting in sensations of tranquillity, serenity and relief, that we call safety emotions. In turn, such kind of sensations will produce higher consumers’ WTP (H2). We also propose that perceived dangerousness for consumers’ health of product category moderates the effect of au naturel-colored packaging on consumers’ WTP. When facing a product category featuring low dangerousness consumers keep using color packaging as a heuristic. Under such conditions, the positive effect of au naturel color on consumers’ WTP will hold. Instead, the effect disappears for product categories featuring high dangerousness for which heuristics are no more relevant (H3). Additionally, the effect of au naturel-colored packaging on consumers’ WTP may depend on cognitive load. Indeed, under conditions of high (vs. low) cognitive load such effect may be stronger because consumers have fewer cognitive resources available which limit their ability to process information and prompt them to use heuristics. (H4).

We first validated the proposed definition of Au Naturel Color. Results of two preliminary studies (A and B) suggested that seven items aimed at measuring the characteristics of au naturel color converged onto a common latent factor, allowing us to obtain an overall score of Au Naturel Color Scale (ANCS). Additionally, findings allowed us to conclude that shades of beige reflect the characteristics of the au naturel color better than other colors in a large majority of product categories. Study B also allowed us to select stimuli for the subsequent experimental studies. Then we tested our hypotheses in four experimental studies.

In study 1 (N = 97; 55.1% females; ModeAge = 36-55), we found that respondents are more willing to pay for the au naturel-colored packaging than for the non au naturel-colored packaging, providing support to H1. A mediation analysis (Preacher and Hayes, 2004) allowed us to support the idea that safety emotions mediate the effect of packaging color on willingness to pay (H2).

In study 2 (N = 198; 38.9% females; Mage = 34.78; SDAge = 10.67), we found a significant main effect of packaging color, supporting again H1. Consistent with H3, we found a significant two-way interaction between packaging color and product category on consumers’ WTP. Planned comparisons showed that WTP for butter was not significantly different in the two color conditions, whereas WTP for rice was significantly higher for au naturel-colored packaging than for non au naturel-colored packaging. Building upon the results of planned comparisons, we conducted the mediation analysis considering only data collected on rice (N = 100; 32% females; MAge = 32.88; SDAge = 9.44) and a moderated mediation analysis on the whole sample (N = 198). Results further support H2.

In study 3 (N = 176; 52.3% females; MAge = 22.35; SDAge = 1.88), we found a significant main effect of packaging color, supporting again H1. Consistent with H4, we found a significant two-way interaction between packaging color and cognitive load. Planned comparisons showed that in the high cognitive load condition, WTP for au naturel-colored packaging was higher than WTP for non au naturel-colored packaging. A similar pattern was observed in the low cognitive load condition, replicating results of study 1. As predicted, however, the effect of packaging color on consumers’ WTP is significantly larger in the high cognitive load condition than in the low cognitive load condition.

In study 4 (N = 212; 50% females; MAge = 35.86; SDAge = 11.56), we expect to find the packaging color effect on WTP irrespective of the fit between product color and packaging color. Results showed a significant main effect of packaging color, supporting again H1. The interaction effect of packaging color and product color was non-significant. Planned comparisons showed that WTP for rice was significantly higher in the au naturel-colored packaging condition than in the orange-colored packaging condition. The same pattern holds for carrots. Thus, our results can be explained by the characteristics of au naturel-colored packaging, but not by the fit between product color and packaging color.

Our research provides deeper insights on how consumers perceive packaging featuring products featuring au naturel-colors, showing that they associate to these hues of colors specific features that positively influence their WTP. Based on our results, public policy makers may favour an “au naturel color” (vs. non au naturel color) system only for packaging of product categories that really reflect the consumers’ associations in terms of genuineness and non-artificial features. If the au naturel color system becomes a common practice, adopting an ethical perspective and a social fair conduct, food manufacturers may use the au naturel color system (being a heuristic) to communicate the value of their offerings and distinctiveness from the competitors.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This paper explores how risky innovation in the fertility services market impacts legitimation dynamics and marketing expansion. Taking institutional theory as an enabling theory, we introduce scientific legitimacy as key pillar in the legitimation of risky, biomedical technologies. Prior research identifies several actors who play key roles in the legitimation process of consumption practices. For example, Humphreys (2010) highlights how casino managers achieve a sense of legitimacy by successfully navigating regulatory, socio-cognitive, and normative conventions that underpin the industry. Additionally, Giesler's (2012) analysis of Botox marketplace activity illuminates how brands strategically engage with other stakeholders to facilitate the legitimation of new markets. Three main legitimacy-driving actors emerge in the literature: decentralized groups of consumers (e.g. Martin and Schouten 2014; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013), centralized marketplace actors such as a brand (e.g. Giesler 2008; Humphreys 2010a), and news media (e.g. Humphreys and Thompson 2014).

Whilst the aforementioned research has significantly advanced our understanding of market evolution and legitimating processes, several questions remain. First, Martin and Schouten (2014) emphasize that legitimation efforts include “a process of multiple translations wherein consumers mobilize human and nonhuman actors to co-constitute products, practices, and infrastructure” (p.855). Therefore, our research considers how other types of nonhuman actors can be central in legitimation process, especially ones that originate outside the control of marketplace players (e.g. firms or managers). Studies on role of technological innovation are limited. For instance, Giesler (2012) focuses on a technology-centered brand and emphasizes that market creation and development evolves with consumers' perceptions of technology. We argue that technological innovation itself can substantially affect legitimacy dynamics concerning consumption practices.

Furthermore, previous related studies often focus on empirical contexts in which producers and consumers are relatively clearly defined and the risk of consumption is minimal or predictable. Thus, there is an impetus to examine issues pertaining to the legitimation of consumption processes, in relation to contexts where the subject positions of consumer and producer may shift, and where consumption risks are uncertain or the risk of failure exceed those of success (Fischer, Otnes, and Tuncay 2007).

Existing work which explores the part played by communication technologies as intermediaries of legitimation processes, has focused on the results of centralized industry efforts, such as within one industry, brand, or a set of managerial or expert systems (Humphreys and Thompson 2014). We advance that research is needed to analyze the role of communication technologies, including mass-media, in selecting and disseminating information within decentralized markets to a variety of consumer segments. This is important because in decentralized markets, news media coverage can widely advance technological progress and reflect the type of consumers adopting these innovations. This can help us to distinguish legitimation efforts from centralized industries, versus those stemming from decentralized industries.

Taking a meso-level approach to market expansion driven by high-risk technological innovations, we seek to address the outlined research gaps, by analyzing the marketing of fertility services in the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US). Innovations in Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART) have revolutionized fertility services and how reproductive problems are solved, and have facilitated the quest for parenthood for various consumer demographics. We address two research questions: How and why does technological innovation impact the legitimation of consumption? Under what circumstances does this change in legitimacy dynamics result in market expansion? Qualitative methods and automated content analysis were used to analyze a set of visual and textual data, which includes articles from two newspapers (The Guardian and The New York Times) and three magazines (Elle, Cosmo, and New Scientist), as well as marketing material from US and UK fertility clinics and related health organizations.

We find that decentralized technology innovation which relies on scientific legitimacy impacts normative legitimacy (parenthood norm) and socio-affective legitimacy (in contrast to socio-cognitive), while regulatory legitimacy plays a secondary role. The socio-affective mechanism is fueled by how media and marketers frame mythologized parenthood and time scarcity in order to minimize implications of risk failure. Last, despite high probability of technology failure, this market has expanded rather than contracted over time. From our frame analysis, we see that, while ART were heavily adopted by infertile couples and single women when it entered the mainstream, in recent years the use of ART has been expanded to individuals seeking fertility preservation from cancer treatment, gay couples, couples in need of gestational surrogacy, and single, young women seeking egg preservation to name a few.

Our research contributes to literature on institutionalization, by showing that technology innovation is a distinct determinant of consumption-related legitimacy, whilst differentiating between decentralized and centralized technological innovation. Finally, we link scientific legitimacy to the emotional facet of social legitimacy, and its influence on consumption in a market characterized by moderate success in helping consumers reach their goal of parenthood. Lastly, we hope that this work may have implications for providers looking to promote services in contexts where high hopes and high risk surround complex technologies, which may include a variety of medical services.

REFERENCES


Consuming the Inauthentic as a Self-Authenticating Act in Insa-dong, Seoul

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

As authenticating acts and authoritative performances (Arnould and Price 2000), tourism has provided researchers with fertile ground to examine the pursuit of authenticity through consumption. MacCannell (1973) indicates that modern tourists, who are concerned about the shallowness and inauthenticity of their lives, are motivated by the hope of discovering and experiencing authentic cultures. Although—as Cohen (1988) suggests—authenticity is a socially negotiable concept perceived by individuals based on their own personal experiences and expectations (Leigh, Peters, and Shelton 2006), prior research has established that objects and experiences that are perceived inauthentic may not have the ability to authenticate one’s individual and communal identity. However, the present study attempts to put on the weight to the other side by showing that through cynicism, perceived inauthenticity could authenticate consumers’ individual and communal identities, based on an examination of consumption in the traditional cultural district of Insa-dong in Seoul, South Korea. Insa-dong is an ideal empirical setting because about 100,000 domestic and foreign tourists visit the district every day (Insa Traditional Culture Preservation Association 2012), but many Koreans often criticize it as inauthentic and overly commercialized.

While early studies on cynicism tend to view it as a psychological defect that needs to be corrected (Fleming and Spicer 2003), more recent research shows that cynicism is not necessarily unethical and does not lead to negative outcomes for organizations, employees, and consumers, emphasizing its role in social critique (Karfakis and Kokkinidis 2011) and consumer resistance to the consumerist marketplace (Mikkonen, Moisander, and Firat 2011). However, both negative and positive cynicism often have an effect on individuals’ identity construction as protection against aggressive marketing practices (Helm 2004; Odou and de Pechpeyrou 2010) and overwhelming managerial controls (Casey 1995; Kunda 1992). As seen in Mikkonen et al. (2011), cynicism is also part of the consumer identity project by allowing people to take the moral high ground to disillusioned members of society and organizations. However, it does not necessarily lead to reforming actions that help change society or organizations (Bloom 2008) because while cynical individuals may dis-identify with cultural prescriptions of a given society or organization they still perform them (Fleming and Spicer 2003), and, arguably, one such case in modern society is nationalism.

While nation and nationalism have long been discussed as a contingent outcome of modernity (Gellner 1983) based on artificial invention of tradition (Hobsbawm 1983), recent studies on nationalism examine everyday reproduction of nationhood. They highlight that the seemingly declining importance of national identity, as commonly claimed by postmodernists, may be based on the fact that people take national identity for granted in their everyday life. Billig (1995) calls this taken for granted national identity banal nationalism. In their everyday life, the citizens of a nation are reminded of their national place in a world of nations, but this reminding is so familiar that it is not consciously registered as a reminding, thus reproducing embodied national identity (Billig 1995). For instance, nations are reproduced through ordinary people’s mundane practices (Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008) such as consumption of consumer goods (Belk and Paun 1995; Douglas and Isherwood 1979). In this vein, consumption practices in Insa-dong may play an important role in reproducing Korean identity. Korean tradition-themed commodities and experiences in the district may flag or remind consumers of Korean national identity regardless of whether they enjoy or criticize the offered commodities and experiences. Rather than mindless acceptance and enjoyment, criticism on the authenticity of the place and the offered commodities may engage these consumers more strongly in the matter of whether the commodity/service is truly Korean. In this process, Korean identity may be reproduced even though they are not directly involved in actual consumption of such inauthentic commodities. Therefore, while criticizing or talking about national tradition and its authenticity, nations can be discursively constituted (Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008).

The primary data for this research project were collected in 2013 through qualitative interviews with 24 native Korean consumers who had prior experiences in visiting Insa-dong. Materials and photos obtained since 2004 through multiple observations in the location were used as supplement data for our project. Other supplementary data include websites of Insa-dong-related entities, government promotional materials, newspaper articles, documentaries about Insa-dong, movies about Korean tradition, among others. Data analysis entailed an iterative process of coding and categorizing. Provisional understandings of consumers’ experiences were formed, challenged, and revised in multiple readings of the individual transcripts and the data set as a whole in conjunction with emerging themes, including cynicism on Insa-dong and the relation between the consumption of Insa-dong and the consumer self.

In contrast to a typical description of the place as “a museum alive with the lives, histories, and cultures of Korean people” (Insa Traditional Culture Preservation Association 2012), the researchers perceived Insa-dong as an inauthentic representation of Korean traditional culture despite its official christening as a traditional cultural district. Data analysis demonstrates that despite its contested authenticity, however, consuming the place brand of Insa-dong authenticates the individual consumer self and reproduces a national identity as Korean through engaged cynicism on commercialization, governmental control, and the static view of tradition that the government and businesses in the district take in constructing the place.

Through our analysis, Korean nationalism, which incorporates both banal and hot nationalism based on the historical trajectory of Koreans who experienced both brutal colonialism and rapid economic development after the Korean War, has emerged as a condition that makes consumers engage in the consumption of the place despite their perceived inauthenticity of the themed place. This reinforces the association of Insa-dong and Korean tradition and ultimately the reproduction of Korean national identity for the consumers of the place.

By examining the consumption practices in a traditional cultural district of Insa-dong, this study has illustrated the role of cynicism as an important mechanism to authenticate the self for modern consumers who often face inauthentic market offerings. This study also shows that socio-cultural ideology such as nationalism is an important condition for consumers’ ongoing engagement in inauthenticity.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Relative comparison suggests that presenting very different (v. very similar) items sequentially should accentuate the stark differences among the items such that a hedonic, pleasurable item should seem much more pleasurable following the presentation of a functional, utilitarian item as opposed to following the presentation of a hedonic item.

Indeed, previous research, such as the two-factor model on assimilation and contrast (Meyers-Levy and Sternthal 1993) would suggest that stimuli that have little overlap should produce contrast effects granted plenty of cognitive resources are available. Otherwise, assimilation is predicted. Other research exploring the juxtaposition of two or more products in a market share similar effects of dominance (Huber, Payne, and Puto 1982), contrasted preferences, and even surprising consequence on choice (Wilcox et al. 2009).

However, the prior research focused primarily on the rational, logical, and even surprising consequence on choice (Wilcox et al. 2009).

With respect to theory, the studies contribute to the prior research on contrast effects, the two-factor model on assimilation and contrast, and other, more rational approaches to understanding comparisons between stimuli by adding a metacognitive, “feelings as information” perspective to the literature. Althoughrally the presentation of two very different products should highlight their differences and result in more extreme evaluations, particularly on the dimension on which the stimuli differ, the metacognitive experiences of fluency and disfluency that arise from homogeneous and heterogeneous product presentation yield more extreme and more conservative evaluations, respectively. Thus, prior rational theorizing that suggests heterogeneous presentation should lead to greater contrast in evaluations does not explain the muted findings found within the heterogeneous presentation evaluations herein. More work can be done to explore the relationship between the prior research and the current findings, specifically with respect to when consumers are more likely to rely on rationality versus their metacognitive experience.

REFERENCES


When Do Limited Time Offers Work? A Reactance Perspective
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Marketers often use limited-time offers to attract customers. For example, retailers make offers that are for “one week only”; flash sales websites make offers stating “today’s deal” or “deal expires in one hour”; and online shopping portals make limited-time offers with a countdown clock ticking down the remaining time. Given the popularity of limited time offers, it is important to understand when these offers do or do not work in terms of improving product evaluation. Past research has found that putting any kind of restriction on offers – such as time restriction or quantity restriction – tends to increase product evaluation because restrictions prompt consumers to make inferences of product value (Inman et al. 1997; Parker and Lehman 2011). The present research extends this literature by applying the theoretical lens of reactance to limited time offers, and showing that the positive effect of limited time offers on product evaluation is moderated by factors related to reactance.

Reactance has been defined as the motivational state aroused when individuals perceive threats to their freedom of action (Brehm 1966; Levav and Zhu 2009). We propose that limited time offers can prompt reactance when consumers perceive that their freedom to buy the product whenever they want is being overly restricted. For example, compared to the offer “20% off regular price” which has no time restriction, a limited-time offer stating “20% off regular price, deal expires in one hour” gives consumers lesser freedom regarding when the offer can be accepted. We suggest that such restrictions on one’s freedom of choice timing can prompt reactance, which in turn can reduce the positive effect of limited time offers on product evaluation. We verify this proposed reactance mechanism in series of four studies by showing that a set of factors related to reactance – trait reactance, an experimental manipulation of reactance, and time to expiry of the offer – moderate the positive effect of limited time offers on product evaluation. We also show that negative reactance responses to limited time offers can be overcome by reminding consumers of future regret if they miss the offer.

Study 1 tested the hypothesis that individuals high in trait reactance are likely to experience greater reactance to limited time offers than those low in trait reactance, which in turn should reduce the positive effect of limited time offers. One hundred and eighty student participants read an advertisement for a new brand of digital camera which manipulated the presence versus absence of a limited time offer by including or omitting the phrase “one day only, buy now!” Participants then indicated their intent to purchase the advertised camera, and responded to a multi-item scale for trait reactance (Hong and Faedda 1996). Consistent with a reactance mechanism, spotlight analysis showed that the presence (versus absence) of the limited time offer increased purchase intent for low trait reactance respondents, but not for high trait reactance respondents. Study 2 tested the hypothesis that experimentally increasing reactance will reduce the positive effect of limited time offers on product evaluation. Two hundred and fifty nine student participants evaluated an online advertisement for a backpack with a short-horizon limited time offer. The advertisement manipulated the presence versus absence of a limited time offer, as well as the presence versus absence of an anticipated regret reminder. Results showed that the presence of an anticipated regret reminder was sufficient to overcome reactance responses and restore a positive effect of the limited time offer on purchase intent.

In summary, our findings make three theoretical contributions to the literature on limited time offers. First, we identify a new reactance mechanism underlying the effect of limited time offers on product evaluation. Second, we identify new reactance-based moderators of the effect of limited time offers on product evaluation, i.e., trait reactance, an experimental manipulation of reactance, and time to expiry of the offer. Third, we show that reminders of future regret can overcome reactance and restore the positive effect of limited-time offers on product evaluation. Methodologically, we present convergent evidence across four studies using different product categories and measures of product evaluation. Managerially, our results give new insight into when the widely used promotional technique of limited time offer is likely to be effective for increasing product evaluation.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The effect of financial education interventions is limited (Fernandes, Lynch, and Netemeyer 2014). Financial literacy has a very small effect on financial behavior. The effect of financial literacy is even lower among low-income groups who are the ones most in need for interventions to improve their financial health.

Financial matters are a problem for many consumers. The Pew Research Center (2015) reports that 55% of American households can replace less than one month of their income through their savings, and a 2016 PWC study found that 45% of employees stated that personal financial matters cause them the most stress in their lives; more stress than their jobs, health, or relationships combined.

Therefore, consumer researchers need to develop interventions and nudges that improve financial well-being. However, very little is known about what drives financial well-being and downstream implications posing a problem for policy makers about how to improve financial well-being of people.

The lack of an accepted definition of this construct and little systematic examination of its antecedents and consequences hampers efforts to address financial well-being and its role in general well-being. From a narrative qualitative procedure and five survey-based studies, the objectives of this research are to: 1) define the construct of financial well-being; 2) posit a framework of its antecedents and its relationship to the consequence of general well-being; 3) develop and validate a measure of financial well-being (Studies 1-3); and 4) empirically test the framework (Studies 4 and 5).

We had access to qualitative research from the CFPB (2015). They interviewed 59 adult consumers. Interviews were transcribed, sorted, coded, and then catalogued using computer-aided qualitative data analysis software. Building from existing literature and this qualitative data, we conceptualize financial well-being as two separate, but related, constructs: 1) stress related to the management of money today (current money management stress); and 2) a sense of security in one’s financial future (future financial security).

Using three survey studies, we developed measures of these constructs and demonstrated predicted correlations with other constructs in the nomological net. We reduced the number of items to 10 (five for each construct of the scale).

With two additional studies (Study 4 and Study 5), we offered and supported a model of potential antecedents and consequences of current money management stress and future financial security. Importantly, we demonstrated that current money management stress and future financial security are influenced by different antecedents, but shared the same outcome of well-being. As such, the primary thesis of this paper relates to the interplay of stress about money matters today and a sense of security about a financial future in producing feelings of financial well-being and, ultimately, emotional/psychological well-being.

Current money management stress was predicted by traits and behaviors that are negative and more short-term oriented: making only minimal payments, lacking in self-control, and being materialistic. Behaviors and traits that reflect longer-term thinking, such as planning for money long-term and a willingness to take investment risk, were related to future financial security. Current money management stress and perceived future financial security had the predicted effects on well-being. Finally, we found that within the battery of controls in the model, financial literacy showed a small negative partial effect on perceived future financial security, and had no effect on money management stress. This finding is consistent with existing literature on the lack of relationship between financial knowledge and financial outcomes.

The measures developed are reliable, valid, and brief. These measures could be used by a variety of agencies and firms specializing in savings and retirement to gauge how consumers are feeling about their current and future financial situations, relate these measures to what consumers are actually doing, and then advise those who feel stressed or insecure about their financial future. The constructs and measures developed here would allow prioritization of interventions based on the relative opportunity with the present and future dimensions of financial well-being.

The results raise the issue of whether interventions aimed at reducing materialism and improving self-control would reduce current money management stress. In addition, whether training in planning for money, self-efficacy/ability, and willingness to take investment risk would enhance future financial security. The answer is "possibly". Though materialism is a trait/value likely internalized early in life (Richins 2004, 2011), there is evidence that some traits like self-control are malleable into early adulthood (Moffitt et al. 2011). Thus, school-based training/interventions designed to increase self-control with money may be worthwhile (Pathak, Holmes, and Zimmerman 2011). Similarly, financial skill, willingness to take investment risks, and planning for money are skills that can be acquired (Hader et al. 2013; Perry and Morris 2005).

Financial education efforts in these domains may be at least as effective, if not more so, than acquiring content knowledge about interest rates, bonds, etc. (Fernandes et al. 2014). Thus, designing and testing programs to increase financial skill, willingness to take investment risks, and planning for money leading to intended changes in future financial security seem to be worthwhile undertakings for academics and policymakers alike (CFPB 2015).

The measures developed in the present research – future financial security and money management stress collectively explained 33% (Study 4) and 39% (Study 5) of the variance in well-being. Recall that prior to our studies, we found little evidence examining the financial well-being/psychological well-being linkage. We also observe that the effect of current money management stress on well-being is stronger for low-income individuals, and that the effect of future financial security is stronger for younger individuals. Therefore, specific interventions aimed at current money management for low-income individuals or future financial security for younger individuals are more promising at improving the well-being of these individuals.

This study represents only an initial investigation of what traits, behaviors, and circumstances produce higher or lower levels of well-being and the implications of financial well-being for overall well-being. It is our intent that the concepts and findings presented here will instigate additional work and ultimately lead to a working model driving policy and program decisions.
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UNCONVENTIONAL CONSUMPTION METHODS AND ENJOYMENT OF THINGS CONSUMED: RECAPTURING THE “FIRST TIME” EXPERIENCE

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Jorge Spielman’s dinner guests had an idea: to honor their host, himself a blind clergyman, they dined blindfolded. In doing so they found that the same foods suddenly tasted better, as if depriving their sight heightened other senses. After many gatherings to similar effects, Spielman was inspired to open the world’s first “pitch black” restaurant in his hometown of Zürich, where patrons must eat in complete darkness. The restaurant has garnered a wealth of praise and profit since opening in 1999, and many eateries around the globe now imitate Spielman’s idea with similar success (Forbes 2015).

Is there something special about darkness that enhances gastronomic pleasures? Perhaps. However, we explore a broader feature that might more parsimoniously explain this phenomenon: the mere fact that dining in the dark is strange. We find that consuming an object via unusual means can boost enjoyment. Beyond darkness per se, many familiar experiences might be revitalized (at least temporarily) simply by consuming them in some unconventional way.

We suggest that unconventional methods invite a “first time” perspective on the consumption object; even if a person has eaten a particular dish before, the overall event of eating it like this likely feels unprecedented. Accordingly, perceived novelty leads people to attend more closely, engage more fully, and generally immerse themselves into an experience (Redden 2008; Sansone et al. 1992), and immersion can facilitate enjoyment (Brown and Ryan 2003; Csikszentmihalyi 1990; Killingsworth and Gilbert 2010). People commonly lament the inability to recapture “first time” experiences with now-familiar things, but perhaps consuming them in new ways can partly help.

We investigated this possibility by asking people to eat a snack (Experiment 1), consume a drink (Experiment 2), and watch a video (Experiment 3) by either normal or unusual means. We hypothesized that, when the consumption object is familiar and the consumption method is new, unconventionality may revitalize enjoyment for the thing consumed. Throughout, we also tested for various mediators and moderation evidence for the driving role of “first time” immersion and potential incremental features (e.g., eating by the handful in one condition but with chopsticks in another).

We tested this possibility by asking people to eat a snack (Experiment 1), consume a drink (Experiment 2), and watch a video (Experiment 3) by either normal or unusual means. We hypothesized that, when the consumption object is familiar and the consumption method is new, unconventionality may revitalize enjoyment for the thing consumed. Throughout, we also tested for various mediators and moderation evidence for the driving role of “first time” immersion and potential incremental features (e.g., eating by the handful in one condition but with chopsticks in another).

Method

Sixty-eight adult participants were randomly assigned to one of two between-subjects conditions. The study was ostensibly about snacking speed and getting people to eat more slowly. To allegedly achieve this goal, “traditional” participants were instructed to eat 10 kernels of popcorn one-at-a-time using their hands. This marked a single “trial,” and they completed two trials in total. “Unconventional” participants followed identical instructions but instead had to use chopsticks to eat for both trials. This cover story and manipulation helped disguise the hypothesis while also accounting for various incidental features (e.g., eating by the handful in one condition but not in the other).

After eating the popcorn in each trial, participants indicated their experienced enjoyment for the popcorn by rating how enjoyable, positive, and delicious it tasted, and how much they savored and liked it, each on individual scales anchored at 1 (not at all) to 9 (extremely). These dependent variables were collapsed into an enjoyment scale (α=.91). Participants also reported their immersion during eating by rating how much the task led them to immerse in the experience and feel as if it were something new (α=.84).

Results

A Repeated Measures GLM with Condition (traditional, unconventional) as a between-subjects factor and Time (Trial 1 and Trial 2) as a within-subjects factor revealed no main effect of Condition, $F(1, 66)=1.82, p=.182, \text{SE}=.066$, nor Time, $F(1, 66)=2.16, p=.146, \text{SE}=.095$, but did reveal the hypothesized significant interaction between these variables, $F(1, 66)=4.88, p=.031, \text{SE}=.07$. Pairwise comparisons reveal that unconventional methods indeed enhanced enjoyment at Trial 1: the same popcorn tasted significantly better when eaten one-at-a-time using chopsticks ($M=7.23, SD=1.08$) than hands ($M=6.45, SD=1.45$, $p=.015, d=.61$. In contrast, these boosts in enjoyment disappeared at Trial 2, at which point the eating experience returned to baseline: the popcorn was equally enjoyable regardless of whether people ate it using chopsticks ($M=6.57, SD=1.63$) or using hands ($M=6.59, SD=1.24$, $F(1, 66)=.004, p=.950, \text{SE}=.01$). This suggests that chopsticks enhance enjoyment due to their novelty. Other accounts (e.g., chopsticks encourage slower eating, provide effort justification, or otherwise reflect an inherently superior way of eating popcorn) predict that these initial boosts should remain. Results on immersion followed a similar pattern and mediated the enjoyment boosts at Trial 1, (Effect=.53, $SE=.19$, 95% confidence interval $[.16, 1.00]$; Hayes 2013).

Experiment 1 demonstrates that unconventional consumption methods can boost enjoyment by facilitating immersion. Otherwise identical popcorn tasted better when eaten with chopsticks than with hands. Moderation by time and mediation by immersion both support the proposed framework: chopsticks enhance enjoyment be-
cause they provide an unusual and therefore immersive method of consumption and not because they are inherently superior in some way. As the unconventionality of chopsticks wanes, so goes their influence on hedonic experience. A post-test revealed an affective forecasting error such that only 16% of participants predicted enjoyment to be higher for popcorn consumed with chopsticks than by hand.

**Experiment 2: Sipping Water in Unconventional Ways**

In Experiment 2, participants were asked to generate their own ideas for unusual consumption methods so as to generalize the effects beyond any one method concocted by an experimenter. We also sought to further highlight the role of “first time” feelings in driving the boost. As proposed, unconventionality should enhance enjoyment to the extent that it invites an immersive experience. Accordingly, if people generate their own lists of unusual methods, it is unlikely that each and every idea will enhance enjoyment relative to conventional consumption, but our hypothesis suggests that rotating through them (i.e., having many individual “first time” experiences rather than relying on a single method) should maximize enjoyment over time. This further serves our goal of testing when unconventional methods should be most effective: rather than any one method being objectively better, we seek to highlight the critical role of “first time” feelings.

**Method**

Three hundred participants were recruited via Mturk. Participants grabbed a bottle of water and then listed five unique unconventional ways in which they had never consumed water before, with the restrictions that the ways could not objectively change the water itself (e.g., no adding flavors) and that they should be able and willing to actually drink using each method if instructed to do so. Sample responses include “Use a funnel and drink from tap” and “Drink from a spoon”. Participants were then randomly assigned to condition and sipped and rated the water five times. “Traditional” participants sipped the water in the normal way they usually drink for each of the five sips. “Unconventional-variety” participants sipped the water using different methods they listed, which were piped back one at a time at random. “Unconventional-repetition” participants sipped the water using one of the methods they listed which was piped at random for the first sip and then piped again repeatedly for the remaining sips. After each sip, all participants rated their enjoyment for the water on a similar scale as in Experiment 1 (a=.97).

**Results**

A Repeated Measures GLM analyses with Condition (traditional, unconventional-variety, unconventional-repetition) as a between-subjects factor and Time (Sip 1-5 rating scales) as a within-subjects factor revealed no main effect of Condition on enjoyment, F(2, 297)=1.04, p=.355, η²=.01, a main effect of Time such that the video grew less enjoyable across exposures, F(1, 297)=17.33, p<.001, η²=.06, and the hypothesized interaction, F(2, 297)=9.30, p<.001, η²=.06.

Pairwise comparisons reveal a significant effect at the third viewing where the manipulation took place, F(2, 297)=6.39, p=.002, η²=.04. Unconventional participants who watched via hand goggles enjoyed the video significantly more (M=5.75, SD=2.21) than participants who watched the same video normally (M=4.99, SD=2.50), t(297)=2.22, p=.028, d=.32. Critically, not all unconventionality did the trick: unconventionality involving watching upside-down (M=4.58, SD=2.41) did not boost enjoyment versus watching normally, t(297)=1.23, p=.218, d=.17. Results on immersion revealed a similar pattern, and mediated the enjoyment boosts at Trial 3, (Effect=.37, SE=.13, 95% CI Bootstrapping [.12, .61]; Hayes 2014).

Experiment 3 replicates and extends our general framework. Again, boosts in enjoyment derive from boosts in immersion into otherwise familiar experiences, and these boosts in immersion can be gleaned from unusual consumption methods. But accordingly, consumption methods that are unconventional but disruptive for immersion often fail to boost enjoyment as intended.

**General Discussion**

We find converging evidence across various domains of experience, direct effects, moderation analyses, mediation analyses, and control comparisons, all highlighting the same basic effect: otherwise identical entities can become more enjoyable merely when con-
Unconventional Consumption Methods and Enjoyment of Things Consumed: Recapturing The “First Time” Experience

Practical concerns

The most important implication pertains to how these findings bear on the psychology of waste. Waste is a growing societal concern, around the globe and in all areas of life; see recent calls by World Bank (2012) and the OECD (2014) for the need to better understand how to combat these increasingly wasteful trends. When something declines in enjoyment, people notoriously assume that “it” is the problem and therefore abandon the entity for a new alternative (Campbell et al. 2014; Herrnstein and Prelec 1991). Clearly more research is needed to tackle these diverse trends, but the current studies reveal an overarching possible fix. Before intuitively (and perhaps mistakenly) reverting to a substitution strategy, simply changing the way “it” is experienced could reduce cost and prolong value. Beyond waste, the current findings more generally suggest an easy, cheap, and potentially effective way to better enjoy the things we consume: using unconventional methods, but not overusing them, may serve to boost enjoyment and combat hedonic adaptation.

Outstanding questions

Beyond these broader issues, the idea of unconventional consumption raises many fruitful avenues for research. What are the parameters of unconventionality? Experiment 3 highlights how methods that inhibit immersion can backfire, so it would be valuable to identify the most important sources of inhibition. Experiment 1 suggests that some boosts could pass very quickly, so future research should also identify how and why feelings of unconventionality can be maintained.

Finally, the current findings may parsimoniously explain existing wellbeing-boosting factors, which largely appear throughout the literature as isolated strategies and effects (see Quoidbach, Mikolajczak, & Gross 2015). If such manipulations invite people to behave atypically (which they often do, see Quoidbach et al. 2015 for a review), many factors touted to boost enjoyment might largely reflect the unconventionality of the method. Until these possibilities are tested, consider using the wrong utensils at tonight’s meal rather than splurging at a trendy “dark” restaurant—it may taste just as delicious.

REFERENCES


European Consumers and their Persistent Resilience in the Face of Austerity
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

While much has been written on austerity from political and economic perspectives (e.g. Blyth 2013), there has been limited marketing attention regarding the effects of austerity on consumers. Even less focus has been directed at long-term and proactive responses to austerity which, we argue, can be understood via the concept of persistent resilience (Golubchikov 2011). This study explores the nature of this enduring and dynamic form of resilience manifested by consumers across EU countries affected by austerity. Drawing on recent spatial studies, we contribute to academic literature by advancing our understanding of the concept of persistent resilience and by distinguishing its underlying characteristics within the consumption context of EU austerity.

There is an extensive literature on resilience and its varying definitions are represented from many areas including psychology (e.g. Lazarus 1993), sociology (e.g. Evans and Reid 2013), consumer research (e.g. Ball and Lamberton 2015); disaster studies (e.g. Baker and Baker 2014) and ecology (e.g. Adger 2000). Recent conceptualisations of resilience are premised not upon a one-off event from which individuals bounce back, but rather on their ability to continually re-emerge from on-going adversity, for which one must be continuously prepared and increasingly respond to (Neocleous 2012; Evans and Reid 2013). Thus, the growing importance of a sustained, flexible and dynamic response to the enduring challenges of modern society paves the way for a more relevant form of resilience to explore in our austerity context - persistent resilience.

Defined as “a form of engagement with more enduring, lasting challenges and pressures...that underlie everyday life”, persistent resilience allows for a proactive and continuous renegotiation of everyday life practices and relationships (Golubchikov 2011, 4). Persistent resilience was conceived within spatial studies in response to the pressures of modern society but also as a coping strategy over prolonged periods of time. More recent studies have applied persistent resilience to explore how households and communities “develop responses to more long-term processes, such as the changing nature of employment and ... altering state policies” (Andres and Round 2015, 676). The associated restructuring of common, everyday practices and relations may, in turn, form the basis for more significant transformation and even permanent change at both an individual and societal level (De Verteuil and Golubchikov 2016). Building upon this spatial research, we propose that the ongoing phenomenon of austerity in affected EU states necessitates the activation of persistent resilience and we explore its specific nature and characteristics within an austerity consumption context, deliberately including in our study countries that have experienced varying degrees of austerity.

Our cross cultural interpretive study was conducted by a team of European researchers across six countries. A purposive sample (Patton, 1990) of 38 people across a range of demographics e.g. age (ranging from 18 to 65), gender (14 male and 24 female), life-stage, profession and income, including unemployed people, were interviewed from Ireland, UK, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece. Face to face in-depth interviews were chosen as an appropriate form of social enquiry (Denzin and Lincoln 1994; Miles and Huberman 1994) to explore the effects of austerity over a lengthy period, in terms of changes to everyday consumption practices and experiences, both prior to and during austerity. The interviews ranged in length from 45 minutes to 2 hours and reached a deep level of richness and insight. Following transcription and, where necessary, translation, cycles of coding, cross-checking and theoretical review (Strauss and Corbin 1990; Clark and Braun 2013) were followed by all research team members. Using a thematic approach, three distinct themes of self-efficacy, creativity and community relating to persistent resilience were identified.

Persistent resilience was demonstrated through an active renegotiation of and continuous adaptation to everyday life challenges as well as in a process of transformation and long-term adjustment, often leading to a renewed sense of wellbeing, sustainable values and reciprocal goals. Self-efficacy was identified by participants’ ability to persist, adapt and transform, often facilitated through a mind-set change. Manifested through upskilling, working several jobs and enterprise formation, self-efficacy was seen as part of a process of flexible adaptation to the risky austerity context. As part of this transformation, the restructuring of everyday practices was also undertaken through numerous creative means, reflected by the theme creativity, involving creative thinking, making and doing, and resourceful budgeting to demonstrate a persistent creative response to the financial challenges of austerity. Captured by the theme community, persistent resilience was further enabled through drawing on key relationships with family, friends and colleagues to share the burden of financial uncertainty and, together, increase strength and resilience. Community was also reflected through deep solidarity towards others at a localized level and also broader community and national levels. Collectively, the themes of self-efficacy, creativity and community, underpinning persistent resilience, reflect a wide range of proactive, continuous and sustained responses to the on-going challenges of austerity.

As European consumers continue to navigate long-term austerity, our study presents rich and timely insights into the nature of their persistent resilience and how this differs across culture and historical context. Reflecting the dynamic, enduring and proactive nature of this resilience, our analysis identifies a wide range of self-efficacious, creative and community-based strategies involving adapting to, persisting with and transforming consumers’ everyday practices and social relations. Persistent resilience in our austerity context involves an enduring self-belief and positivity to creatively embrace continuous change and social reciprocity at personal, local and societal levels. While the economic and social pressures of austerity may, in some instances, still bring about marginalization, exclusion and displacement, persistent resilience provides the armor to continuously and creatively transform, and, thus, mitigate its effects. Regarding addressing potential limitations of the study, the size of subgroups within the cross-cultural sample could be increased by conducting larger scale multi-country qualitative research comparing differing levels of resilience. Future research should focus on investigating...
how persistent resilience could be nurtured individually and collectively through collaboration between governments and local community bodies.

REFERENCES

Moral Consumers and the Moral Economy
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Moral consumers are typically understood as those individuals who engage in moral (ethical) consumption (Komarova Loureiro et al. 2016). In the current paper, we develop theoretical propositions regarding moral consumers and their interface with the moral economy. After considering two aspects of moral persons, as moral agents and as moral subjects, we identify a first pathway of the moral consumer – moral economy interface, from consumers to the economy. We then argue that moral consumers include both natural and legal persons, and identify a second pathway of the interface, from the economy to consumers, before concluding with research implications.

Consumers are moral, in the sense of having moral personhood, independently of whether their consumption is deemed moral or immoral. Someone with moral personhood can be seen from two aspects: as moral agent and as moral subject (Gallagher 2007). As moral agents, consumers can take responsibility for their actions. As moral subjects or subjects of moral worth, they have rights and are owed respect. Is every moral agent a moral subject, and is every moral subject a moral agent? Some moral agents are not moral subjects. Humans forced into slavery conditions are moral agents who are denied the status of moral subjects. Some moral subjects, like biodiversity or culture, are not moral agents. Moral subjects who are also moral agents can respond to moral transgressions (Xie et al. 2014), such as product harm crises (Lu et al. 2016), through retaliation.

P1: Ethical (moral) marketing involves the recognition that consumers are both moral agents and moral subjects

P2: Moral transgressions entail undermining the status of one or more beings as moral subject(s)

P3: Moral agency can be exercised over oneself (e.g. ethical consumption) or over others (e.g. retaliation)

Moral consumers are moral; they are also consumers. We can consider different aspects or dimensions of consumption and other economic activities, such as the ecological, social, political, or cultural. Although analysis entails separating the different aspects, they are inseparable in the real world. Assessing the morality of the activity therefore requires considering its different aspects. For example, the ecological aspect can be captured in measures such as the ecological footprint. Addressing the social aspect can involve investigating the social practices associated with consumption. The cultural aspect of consumption can address its relation to value(s) (Graeber 2001), which are socially constructed. It enables consideration of the struggle between market economy and moral economy from an (inter) subjective perspective, as a value conflict that may take the form of psychological tension in the individual (Burroughs and Rindfleisch 2002), or of political conflict in society. More importantly, it permits investigating how such conflict is managed (Miller 2008).

P4: The morality of consumption, and of the economy more generally, is multidimensional

P5: The difference between market economy and moral economy relates to the value(s) under consideration

P6: The struggle between market economy and moral economy relates to value conflict and can be investigated as such

What kind of persons are moral consumers? The typical focus is on the final consumption of individuals (natural persons). From a macro perspective, final consumption is undertaken by institutional units such as households or the government (European Commission et al. 2009). In addition to final consumption, intermediate consumption during production can be investigated. Can we consider legal entities as moral persons? There has been a growing recognition that corporations have a mind, and alongside it the notion of corporate crime has increasingly featured in legislation (Tombs 1999).

P7: Both final and intermediate consumers are moral consumers

P8: Moral personhood encompasses both natural and legal persons

We have already noted that consumers can respond to the moral transgressions of enterprises. Yet such moral transgressions can also transform consumer moral norms. A prominent example relates to the 2007 financial crisis, which came as people engaged in unethical behavior to receive bigger pay (Lewis et al. 2010). The pay structure focused on bonuses, which were unequally distributed (Crotty 2009). A bonus structure means that a certain pay is contingent on the achievement of set goals; such goal-setting increases the likelihood of engaging in unethical behavior (Schweitzer et al. 2004). A combination of income and status inequality and variable pay is likely to increase moral transgressions made for higher monetary gain. The highly visible status rewards and non-punishment of such perceived transgressions generates a social norm that challenges existing moral norms, and may eventually lead to habit change. Our approach provides a new interpretation of the finding that consumers assign less blame to people who morally transgressed if the transgression was to gain a large enough sum of money (Xie et al. 2014). That is, the outcome of the value conflict within a person can be tipped by the changing incentive structures and related evolution in social norms around her.

P9: Repeated exposure to the non-punishment of perceived moral transgressions modifies moral norms

P10: Changes in the incentive structures of the market economy can alter how consumers resolve their value conflicts

Our investigation into what it means to be a moral consumer has broad implications for furthering the research agenda on morality in and around markets. When are consumers not moral agents? The delimitations are important, including for accountability purposes in cases of consumer rage (Fullerton and Punj 2004). Who (or what) is or is not to be considered a moral subject? Shedding light on the
matter has major implications, including about whether to eat ani-
mals (Loughnan et al. 2014), or to protect cultural heritage (Vlasic
and Turku 2016). Our analysis has also identified opportunities for
research into the morality of corporate consumers, such as how con-
sumers treat corporations as moral subjects. Taking corporations as
moral agents, interesting questions include moral disengagement
(Eriksson and Svensson 2016), risk-taking and the diffusion of re
sponsibility (Wallach et al. 1964), and whistle-blowing (Dozier and
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The inequality of wealth in the US has reached record high levels, which has sparked a debate about the role of inequality in the economic instability and the erosion of the middle class (Piketty 2011). But despite wide agreement that wealth inequality in the US is too high, support for redistributive policies has not been widespread, and there has been much debate about the effectiveness and the optimal level of redistribution (Jost and Hunyady 2005). Preferences for redistribution stem from individuals’ distinct beliefs about the fairness of unequal outcomes (Bénabou and Tirole 2006). Resistance to redistribution is driven, to a significant extent, by individuals’ belief that the unequal distribution of outcomes is fair because it results from natural differences in individuals’ dispositional inputs such as hard work and effort (Alesina and Angeletos 2005). Whereas what drives support for, and resistance to, redistribution has been abundantly researched, little work has examined the strategies that can effectively shift redistribution support (Brown-Iannuzzi et al. 2014; Chow and Galak 2012).

The present research examines a new strategy to boost redistribution support – focus on similarity (vs. dissimilarity). We build on prior studies which showed that prompting individuals to focus on similarity (vs. dissimilarity) in an unrelated task (e.g., while evaluating pictures) can increase their perception of similarity of stimuli in subsequent judgments (e.g., the height of Mount Everest in relation to a numeric anchor, Mussweiler 2001). We hypothesize that prompting a similarity focus in an unrelated task (e.g., evaluation of pictures) will lead people to perceive greater similarity within the social environment while they determine their preferred level of redistribution. Specifically, we predict that focusing on similarity (vs. dissimilarity) will boost individuals’ perceptions of how similar people are in their dispositional inputs (motivation and hard work), which will, in turn, weaken the justification of unequal outcomes and the perceived fairness of an unequal distribution, ultimately leading to greater support for redistributive policies. Four studies tested this prediction.

Study 1A manipulated similarity focus in a picture task. US participants were shown two pictures used in previous research (Markman and Gentner 1997), and they were asked to list the similarities between the two pictures (similarity focus condition), dissimilarities between the pictures (dissimilarity focus condition), or to describe one picture in detail (control condition). Afterwards, participants indicated the extent to which they would support or oppose two redistributive tax policies (creating a new tax for individuals earning more than $1 million, creating a new tax for individuals earning more than $5 million). To check if the similarity effect was contingent upon individuals’ political ideology, participants also completed a multi-item scale (Nail et al. 2009) and a single-item scale (Jost 2006) of political ideology. Support for redistributive tax policies was stronger in the similarity condition than in the dissimilarity and control conditions (there was no difference between the dissimilarity and control conditions). This effect remained significant when political ideology was added to the analysis, and it did not depend on (i.e. was not moderated by) ideology.

Study 1B showed that the effect of similarity (vs. dissimilarity) focus generalized beyond tax policies to Americans’ support for redistributive spending policies (expanding programs that improve the poor’s economic opportunities, expanding programs that improve the poor’s living standards, and investing in initiatives that improve public services for the poor).

Study 2 tested the psychological process behind the effect. After listing the similarities or dissimilarities between the two pictures, participants indicated their support for redistributive tax and redistributive spending policies (as in Studies 1A and 1B). We then measured several factors that could mediate the effect of similarity. Specifically, we measured the three hypothesized mediators including the perceived similarity of individuals’ dispositional inputs (motivation and hard work), justification of unequal outcomes (operationalized through just-world beliefs), and perceived fairness of an unequal distribution. We also measured additional factors that could provide alternative explanations, including the perceived similarity of external circumstances (good luck, opportunity), the perceived similarity of individual outputs (income, wealth), the personal gain (self-interest) from redistribution, subjective inequality (the perceived inequality of the wealth distribution), and commitment to the equality principle (that all individuals deserve equal rewards regardless of their contributions). The mediation analyses showed that the hypothesized factors, and not the alternative ones, mediated the effect of similarity (vs. dissimilarity) focus on redistribution support. Specifically, the serial mediation analysis confirmed that focusing on similarity (vs. dissimilarity) boosted individuals’ perceptions that people are similar in their dispositional inputs (motivation and hard work), which, in turn, reduced the justification of unequal outcomes and the perceived fairness of an unequal distribution, ultimately resulting in stronger support for redistribution.

Study 3 tested if the similarity effect would hold with a more practical manipulation of similarity focus (rather than a theoretical manipulation involving abstract black-and-white pictures), which policy makers could potentially adapt to shift public preferences for redistribution. US participants listed all the ways in which they thought they were similar to other Americans (similarity focus condition) or different from other Americans (dissimilarity focus condition), after which they indicated their support for redistributive tax and spending policies. The similarity effect generalized to this more practical manipulation of similarity focus, thereby offering policy makers one potential route (e.g., in their communication efforts) to, at least temporarily, shift redistribution support.

Our findings propose an effective strategy to boost support for redistribution. They thereby add to the emerging view that redistributive preferences and beliefs that underlie them may, to some extent, be malleable and changed by environmental stimuli (Brown-Iannuzzi et al. 2014; Chow and Galak 2012). Our work also furthers the understanding of prior findings that redistribution support is low in racially fragmented environments (Alesina, Baqir and Easterly 1999). More generally, we hope that our findings will inspire future work on strategies that can change public perceptions of and preferences for redistribution.

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Customers’ Emotions in Service Failure and Recovery: A Meta-Analysis

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

For customers, service failure and service recovery situations can be powerful triggers of strong emotional reactions. Consider the following titles of reviews taken from Tripadvisor as an example: “Disgusted, disappointed, DON’T GO”, “Unexpected joy!” Since companies often need to deal with customer displays of emotions, understanding what role do emotions play and what firms should do to manage emotions successfully represents important issues. The last fifteen years of complaint handling research have witnessed a rapid growth in the number of studies that have included customers’ emotional responses following service failure and recovery. The evidence accumulated in these years suggests that emotions are related to cognitive reactions of customers to service recovery efforts (i.e., perceived justice dimensions), and to relevant outcome variables such as loyalty, satisfaction, return intent, word of mouth, and complaint intentions (i.e., Lazarus 1966; Smith and Bolton 2002). Despite the significant number of empirical work, insights from this stream of research have not always been cumulative. Overall, these findings indicate that the impact of emotions may vary depending on the theoretical and methodological choices of the studies, the way emotions are measured (Richins 1997), and the cultural orientation. This suggests the need for a meta-analysis to integrate the evidence of accumulated empirical research. More specifically, through meta-analysis we aim to: 1) reflect on the theoretical conceptualization of emotions in service recovery domain, 2) map the constructs that have been examined in relation to emotions, 3) identify which of these constructs are more strongly related to emotions, and 4) assess the role of moderating variables in shaping the magnitude of the relationships.

In the current research we present a meta-analysis of 331 pairwise relationships coming from 69 independent studies of the correlates of emotions in service failure and recovery.

Our results show that for negative emotions, half of the studies relies on a discrete model (50.6%), and the remaining half (49.4%) on a dimensional model (Barret 1998). Within the discrete model, anger is the emotion that is most frequently taken into consideration (52%), followed by frustration, regret, and helplessness. Interestingly, for positive emotions, most studies are anchored to a dimensional view model (92.7%). Moreover, we found that discrete and dimensional constructs are measured differently. Discrete models tend to measure emotions using multi-item scales where each item represents different nuances of the same category of emotions. Dimensional models use multi-item scales where each item represents a specific type of emotion from a different emotion category.

Additionally, negative emotion scales show a wide dispersion of items expressing different types of emotions across studies, whereas this variation is less pronounced for positive emotion scales. For example, we found 25 different negative emotions mentions in the studies vs. only 13 positive ones. Anger is by far the emotion most frequently included (18.7%) in dimensional models, followed by disappointment and annoyance (both 7.8%, respectively). The most common positive emotions are happiness (20.6%), followed by joy (12.7%) and pleasure (11.8%).

We also analyzed the pairwise relationships and the average effect sizes of emotions’ correlates and the results of the homogeneity analysis to test whether the observed variation in effect size values is greater than the one expected from sampling error alone. First, among the three dimensions of justice, procedural justice is the dimension most strongly related to both negative (r = -0.36) and positive emotions (r = 0.48). Procedural justice has a stronger relationship with emotions than distributive justice. On average, all justice dimensions have higher effect sizes for positive emotions than for negative emotions, in absolute terms. This is also true for overall justice that has the strongest relationship with both negative and positive emotions, although the magnitude is higher for positive emotions. Positive emotions have a stronger impact on satisfaction after recovery (r = 0.56) than negative emotions (r = -0.40), although negative emotions have a strong negative impact on cumulative satisfaction (r = -0.58).

With respect to the relationship between emotions and outcome variables, positive emotions are more strongly related to loyalty (r = 0.48), than negative emotions (r = -0.26). By contrast, negative emotions are more powerful in shaping WOM (r = -0.30) than positive emotions (r = 0.23). Finally, both positive and negative emotions are strongly related to trust (r = 0.49 and r = -0.44, respectively), although we retrieved few effect sizes for this relationship.

Regarding homogeneity analysis results are mixed. Although only five chi-square tests are significant, all credibility intervals are sufficiently wide (exceeding .11) or include zero (Sagie and Koslowsky 1993). These results suggest the presence of possible moderator variables.

The results of the moderator analyses show that, on average, dimensional models have higher effects sizes between emotions and their correlates. Scenarios produce on average higher effects size between emotions and their correlates, whereas a large number of items generates on average lower effect sizes than a smaller number. The type of participant (students vs. non-students) does not seem to affect the size of the correlations involving emotions and the other constructs. Among the cultural values, only uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation significantly moderate the relationships with emotion correlates.

Thus, we draw four main conclusions: first, our results show that the relationships between emotions and their correlates are higher when researchers use dimensional models rather than discrete models of emotions.

Second, the analysis of pairwise relationships highlights that the perceived fairness of procedures is more powerful than tangible compensation and interpersonal treatment in triggering both negative and positive emotions. Third, satisfaction after recovery and loyalty are more strongly related to positive than to negative emotions. Finally, the findings of the moderator analysis indicate that scenarios might inflate the relationships between emotional reactions and their correlates and that multi vs. single item scale lower on average the correlations. Researchers should also note that uncertainty avoiding cultures generate higher effect sizes in the relationship between emotions and their correlates, and suggests, for these cultures, an important role of the contact personnel and the company’s policies in handling the emotional reactions of customers.
REFERENCES
Grammatical Subject, Base Rates, and Persuasion
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Companies often make claims about the success rates of their products and/or the failure rates of competitors’ products. We examine whether changes in the grammatical subject used in these claims affect persuasion. Specifically, we differentiate between user-subjects, where users are the grammatical subject of the sentence, and product subjects, where the product is the grammatical subject of the sentence. For example, the success of a weight loss program can be presented either with a user-subject claim stating that “80% of participants succeed in reducing their excess weight” (Digitale 2010) or with a product-subject claim stating that “our program succeeds in reducing excess weight for 80% of participants.” Similarly, the failure of competitors’ sales training program can be presented with a user-subject claim stating that “75% of all participants in traditional sales training fail to learn anything” (Miller and Sinkovitz 2012) or with a product-subject claim stating that “Traditional sales training fails to teach anything for 75% of all participants.”

We empirically demonstrate that changes in the grammatical subject affect persuasion through a mediation chain that includes attribution of causality and optimism bias as mediators. Drawing on the linguistic literature (Fausey and Boroditsky 2010; McGlone et al. 2013), we suggest that user-subject claims lead to the causal attribution of success/failure to the users of the product rather than to the product’s characteristics.

Based on research on unrealistic optimism (Weinstein 1987), we predict that this difference in causal attribution affects peoples’ expectations about product performance. That is, situations perceived as more controllable can increase people’s expectation of outperforming others (Helweg-Larsen and Shepperd 2001; Weinstein 1987). Thus, user-subjects, which lead to causal attributions that are more controllable (i.e., performance depends on customers’ actions) should prompt more optimism, which results in the overestimation of success (e.g., I will be among those who succeed) and in the underestimation of failure (e.g., I will not be among those who fail).

Following these predictions, the persuasiveness of different grammatical subjects should depend on whether claims are about success or failure. For success claims (e.g., 70% success rate), user-subject claims should be more persuasive (e.g., result in higher attitudes toward the product described) than product-subject claims, since greater optimism bias increases the perceived likelihood of personal success. For failure claims (e.g., 70% failure rate), user-subject claims should be less persuasive, resulting in less damaging attitudes toward the product described, since greater optimism bias decreases the perceived likelihood of personal failure.

We tested this prediction in four experiments. In Experiment 1, participants read a claim about the performance of two blenders (i.e., blender A and blender B) which manipulated both the type of claim and its grammatical subject, resulting in a 2 (claim type: success vs. failure) x 2 (subject: user vs. product) between-subject design. Success claims reported that blender A performed better than blender B. In the user-subject condition, participants were informed that “50% of customers perform much better with blender A than blender B,” whereas, in the product-subject condition, participants were informed that “blender A performs much better than blender B for 50% of customers.” Failure claims reported that Blender B performs worse than Blender A. In the user-subject condition, participants were informed that “50% of customers perform much worse with blender B than blender A,” whereas in the product-subject condition, participants were informed that “blender B performs much worse than blender A for 50% of customers.” The dependent variable was the choice between the two blenders. Results revealed a significant interaction effect. For success claims (e.g., Blender A performs better than Blender B), more participants chose Blender A in the user-subject condition than in the product-subject condition, hence showing that the user-subject was more persuasive. We explain this finding by suggesting that the optimism bias cued by the user-subject makes people believe they can do better than the average consumer, thus making them more likely to choose blender A. For failure claims (i.e., Blender B performs worse than Blender A), more participants chose Blender A in the product-subject condition than in the user-subject condition. Because the claim discredited the performance of blender B, this finding suggests that the user-subject was less persuasive than the product-subject (i.e., fewer [more] people chose Blender A[B]). We suggest that optimism bias cued by the user-subject makes people believe they are less likely to fail than the average consumer, thus resulting in an underestimation of possible failure for blender B.

Experiment 2 provides evidence for the underlying mechanism by testing the three-path mediation process (subject→causal attribution→optimism bias→attitudes) using the bootstrap procedure proposed by Hayes (2012, model 6). Experiment 3 replicates the subject effect with different base rates ranging from 15% to 85%. Finally, a field study conducted with Google AdWords shows that a success claim for an existing company resulted in a higher click-through-rate when presented with a user-subject, than with a product-subject.

This work makes several contributions. First, it contributes to research on linguistic framing (Patrick and Hagtvedt 2012) in a significant manner: Whereas most examples of verbal framing examine changes in specific words (e.g., 97% lean meat vs. 3% fat meat), our work examines changes in syntax, which can, in principle, be applied to a broader variety of marketing communications of product success and failure. Second, it contributes to research on causality. Previous work on causality suggests that product attributions are more persuasive because perceived to be more stable and thus more diagnostic of the product future performance (Folkes 1984). We show that under some conditions product attribution can be less persuasive than customer attribution, hence enriching our understanding of the effects of causal attribution on persuasion.

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The Drain of Affective Decisions
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

A fundamental premise in decision making is that decisions based on affect are fast and economical relative to decisions based on cognition. That is, “going with one’s gut” reliably leads to quicker decision making and requires less processing resources to make a decision than does a more cognitive focus such as “thinking things through” (Epstein 1990). This pattern is evident from the robust finding that constraints on processing resources such as cognitive load, time pressure, and distraction increase the reliance on affect in decision making (e.g., Nowlis and Shiv 2005; Pham, Cohen, Pracejus, and Hughes 2001; Shiv and Fedorikhin 1999). Thus, relative to its cognitive counterpart, decisions based on affect are highly resource-efficient (see Pham 2007).

Despite this robust effect, we ask in this paper whether consumers’ perceptions of the resource efficiency of affect-based decision match reality. In particular, we propose the possibility that consumers’ perceive affect- (v. cognitive-) based decisions to require more—rather the less—resources to arrive at a decision. This proposition is based on research showing that individuals tend to overestimate the impact of future affect (Gilbert et al. 1998; Lowenstein and Schakade 1999; Wilson et al. 2004; Wilson and Gilbert 2003). That is, though individuals accurately predict the valence of their affect and even the specific emotions that they will experience (i.e., joy vs. anger; Robinson and Clore 2001), they are not able to accurately predict the duration and impact of their future affective states, with the specific tendency to overestimate these errors (e.g., Gilbert, Driver-Linn, and Wilson 2002; Gilbert, Lieberman, Morewedge, and Wilson 2004; Buechel, Zhang, and Morewedge 2014; see also Loewenstein 2005). Just as individuals tend to make overestimation errors regarding the impact of affective responses (see Wilson and Gilbert 2003), we argue for an overestimation error regarding the resource demand associated with affectively-based decisions.

This misperception is critical because, if true, it should directly undermine consumers’ desire to engage in the decision making process. In other words, if consumers perceive an insufficiency or drain of resources when making affect-based decisions, then they should consequently demonstrate a greater propensity to delay these decisions. Importantly, here, choice delay serves not only as an outcome measure but as a specific choice context that should be most sensitive to subtle differences in perceptions—if in fact perceptions do not align with reality. Essentially, the option to engage in choice delay allows for the opportunity for perceptions to override the general properties of affectively-based decisions, which appear most apparent when choice is forced (i.e., absent a no-choice option; see Shiv and Fedorikhin 1999). Given that consumers are rarely forced to make choices, this research therefore raises the possibility that marketing tactics emphasizing affect (e.g., advertisements, slogans, storylines) could unintentionally inhibit consumers’ motivation to purchase.

We tested this possibility in three experiments. Importantly, in each experiment, we controlled for decision importance and difficulty, as both variables have been previously shown to impact consumers’ desire to postpone decisions (Dhar 1997; Kripen, Zeelenberg, and Breugelmans 2015; Greenleaf and Lehman 1995). Relatedly, we also rule out alternative explanations related to cognitive laziness and mood. These variables have no impact on the results, which only further strengthen our confidence in role of consumers’ perceptions of resource drain in eliciting delay related to affect- and cognitive-based decisions.

Experiment 1

Using a real-choice paradigm, Experiment 1 sought to test the hypothesis that affectively-based decisions elicit greater choice delay.

Method and Results

Ninety undergraduates (51% Male; M_age = 20.47) were recruited to complete a study on print advertisements. Following the study welcome, all participants were told that a consumer packaged goods company, whose name was ostensibly concealed for privacy purposes, was seeking feedback on print advertisements. Participants were randomly assigned to receive one of three granola bar advertisements. Importantly, across all conditions the image on the advertisement remained the same. However, to manipulate the basis of the decision, we altered the slogan printed on the ad. This manipulation is consistent with prior research that has manipulated the affective or cognitive basis of a decision by altering an advertisement’s slogan (see Cian, Krishna, and Schwarz 2015).

Importantly, after viewing the ad, all participants were told that as a thank you for their time, they would be receiving a granola bar. Participants were asked what they would like to do—make a granola bar choice now or make a granola bar choice later. For those who opted to make a choice now, they were presented with the granola bar options on a subsequent screen. For those who opted to make a choice later, they were presented with the granola bar options at the end of the study. Importantly, then, only the timing of the decision varied, as it was clear to participants that the decision would be made.

The choice data were analyzed via a chi-square test to analyze potential differences in delay (0 = make choice, 1 = delay choice) as a function of the basis of the decision (0 = control, 1 = cognitive, 2 = affective). As expected, the analysis revealed a significant difference in delay based on the basis of the decision ($\chi^2(2, N = 90) = 7.78, p = .020$). Follow up analyses revealed that those in the affectively-based condition were much more likely to delay choice (60%) compared to those in the cognitively-based (26.67%) and control (33.33%) conditions, which did not differ from one another ($p > .57$).

Discussion

The findings of Experiment 1 offer initial evidence that consumers are more likely to delay affectively-based decisions—here, in an actual consumption experience. Indeed, across conditions, participants responded to the same choice. However, those in the affectively-based condition were significantly more likely to delay the choice than were those in the cognitively-based and control conditions. This latter effect is especially interesting as it provides initial evidence that an affective-basis increases consumers’ likelihood to engage in delay.

Experiment 2

The goal of Experiment 2 was to directly test the possibility that consumers are miscalibrated with regard to their perceptions of affectively-based decisions. That is, while research has repeatedly
demonstrated that affectively-based decisions are less resource demanding (see Pham 2007), we contend that consumers’ perceive affectively-based decisions to be more (not less) resource demanding. Though inconsistent with reality, this prediction is consistent with work demonstrating that individuals tend to overestimate the impact and duration of future affective states (Lowenstein and Schkade 1999; Wilson and Gilbert 2003).

Method and Results

One hundred and forty (56% Female; \(M_{age} = 36.14\)) participants were recruited through Mechanical Turk to complete a study on decision making. All participants were told that the study was about tea and were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: affective, cognitive, or control. Participants in the affective and cognitive conditions were instructed to focus on either their feelings (affectively-based condition) or thoughts (cognitively-based condition) in relation to tea (adapted from Mikles et al. 2010, 2011), while those in the control condition were given no further instructions.

Participants were then asked to imagine that they were shopping at a grocery store and that they came upon the tea aisle and noticed a few options available for purchase. Prior to making a purchasing decision, participants responded to a series of questions regarding the tea scenario that assessed the perceived resource drain associated with making a decision (α = .71; e.g., How much do you anticipate feeling exhausted of your mental resources after considering this decision?, How mentally exhausted do you anticipate feeling after considering this decision?, How much do you anticipate feeling drained of your mental resources after considering this decision?). Following these questions, participants were asked to make a choice to decide whether or not to purchase tea now or decide whether or not to purchase tea later.

Participants’ choice was coded as 0 = make choice or 1 = delay choice. These data were then submitted to a chi-square test to compare the difference in delay as a function of the basis of the decision (0 = control, 1 = cognitive, and 2 = affective). The analysis revealed a significant difference in choice delay based on the basis (\(\chi^2 (2, N = 140) = 15.28, p < .001\)). Those in the affectively-based condition (28.57%) were much more likely to delay choice than those in the cognitively-based (6.12%; \(\chi^2 (1, N = 91) = 8.28, p = .004\)) or control (4.08%; \(\chi^2 (1, N = 91) = 10.42, p = .001\)) conditions, which did not differ from each other (\(p > .64\)). Importantly, mediational analysis confirmed a significant mediating pathway through the perceived resource drain index (95% CI: .027, .72).

Discussion

The findings of Experiment 2 demonstrate that consumers: (i) do in fact perceive affectively-based decisions as more draining of their mental resources than cognitively-based decisions, and (ii) this misperception dictated the desire to engage in the decision-making process.

Experiment 3

Experiment 2 demonstrated that consumers delay affectively-based decisions because they perceive them as being more draining of mental resources. Importantly, if the findings of Experiment 2 hold true, then this effect should only occur for consumers who naturally believe their resources can be drained—that is, those who believe that they have a limited (vs. unlimited) storehouse of available resources (Mukhopadhyay and Gohar 2005; Job, Dweck, and Walton 2010). Thus, in Experiment 3, we offer an alternative test of the mechanism by examining the role of willpower beliefs (i.e., the extent to which individuals believe their ability to regulate behavior is a limited or unlimited resource; see Job et al. 2010).

Method and Results

One hundred participants (51% Male; \(M_{age} = 37.23\)) were recruited through Mechanical Turk to complete a study on decision making. Following an introduction to the study, participants were told that the study was about coffee. As in Experiment 2, participants were assigned to one of three decision bases conditions: affective, cognitive, or control. Specifically, those in the affectively-based condition were asked to describe their feelings about purchasing coffee, while those in the cognitively-based condition were asked to describe their thoughts about purchasing coffee on a series of items that were intentionally biased to promote agreement with these statements. Importantly, however, participants responded to each of the items on 5-point scales anchored at 1 – Somewhat agree to 5 – Completely agree, which were intentionally biased to promote agreement with the statements (Clarkson, Janiszewski, and Cinelli 2013; Salancik and Conway 1974; Salancik and Conway 1975; Tormala and DeSensi 2008; see Petrocelli, Martin, and Li 2010). Those in the control condition did not receive a focus manipulation and were automatically forwarded to the next portion of the study.

All participants were then asked to imagine that they were shopping for coffee and noticed several options available. Participants were then instructed to think about the scenario and asked to make a choice between deciding on whether or not to purchase coffee now or whether or not to purchase coffee later. Finally, following a series of filler questions, participants completed the Implicit Theories about Willpower Scale (Job et al. 2010) to index participants’ willpower theories (α = .85; e.g., Your mental stamina fuels itself, Even after strenuous mental exertion, you can continue doing more of it). The choice data (0 = make choice, 1 = delay choice) were submitted to a hierarchical logistic regression, with the basis of the decision (0 = control, 1 = cognitive, 2 = affective) and willpower theory (continuous, mean-centered) as main effect predictors in the first step and their interaction in the second step (Cohen et al. 2003). Repeating the prior two studies, the analysis revealed a main effect of decision basis (β = .84, Wald’s \(\chi^2 = 7.30, p = .007\)) and, as expected, no main effect of willpower theory (\(p > .98\)). Importantly, the results revealed a significant decision basis × willpower theory interaction (β = -.93, Wald’s \(\chi^2 = 5.26, p = .022\); see Figure 1). Consistent with expectations, limited theorists (+1 SD) were significantly more likely to delay choice in the affectively-based condition, compared to both the cognitively-based (β = 1.85, Wald’s \(\chi^2 = 6.05, p = .014\)) or control (β = 1.70, Wald’s \(\chi^2 = 8.56, p = .003\)) conditions, which did not differ from each other (\(p > .30\)). For unlimited theorists (-1 SD), there was no difference in choice delay based on the basis of the decision (\(p > .83\)).

Discussion

The findings of Experiment 3 offer an alternative means by which to test the robustness of the proposed misperception associated with affectively-based decisions. Here, we examined the role of willpower theories and found that the effect of an affective basis on choice delay was bound to those who naturally perceive they have a limited (vs. limited) amount of resources. That is, consumers delayed affectively-based decisions when they implicitly believed they had an insufficiency of resources (i.e., limited theorists). Importantly, these findings only corroborate those of Experiment 2, which demonstrated that perceptions of resource drain underlie the effect of affect on choice delay. Together, then, the findings of Experiments 2 and 3 offer converging means by which to demonstrate a resource-based account for the delay of decisions based on affect.
Conclusion

Though research has reliability demonstrated that affective (vs. cognitive) based decisions require less resources to arrive at a decision, we find that consumers are miscalibrated with regard to the perceived resource drain of affect-based decisions. Three experiments demonstrated that this perceived insufficiency of mental resources altered consumers’ desire to engage in the decision-making process. That is, perceiving a lack of sufficient resources naturally altered a consumer’s desire to make decisions. Moreover, this effect occurred despite controlling for decision difficulty and decision importance and independent of cognitive laziness or mood. Finally, we demonstrated the robustness of this mismeasurement by showing that the effects only occurred for those who perceive they have a limited (vs. unlimited) amount of resources.

Collectively, we believe this work offers critical insight for marketers who all too often seek to invoke an affective-basis in consumers’ decisions. That is, marketers alter images, storylines, and slogans to elicit greater effect. Yet the present findings suggest these strategies propel consumers to disengage from the decision-making process. Indeed, Experiment 1 demonstrated that even subtle advertisement slogans that manipulate decision bases (e.g., “To refuel your dreams” vs. “To refuel your mind”) altered whether or not consumers wanted to engage in actual choice. Furthermore, by studying the effects of this mismeasurement on choice delay (vs. forced choice), we have not only allowed for the opportunity for perceptions to over-ride reality, but also allowed for a more naturalistic test of consumer decision making.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

People often use different measurement scales due to personal, social, cultural, economical, or technical reasons as well as simple convenience. The naive act of using different ways to measure progress may lead two people to feel very differently about their levels of goal accomplishment even when they have totally identical achievements. For example, imagine that Mark and Jessica run a lap around town covering 2.23 miles of distance every day. Mark is keeping track of the total distance he runs in miles, whereas Jessica is counting the number of days she runs. Both of them run for 9 days completing 20 miles each. Will they feel the same way about their progress and willingness to continue their exercise? We propose that Mark will have a higher sense of accomplishment as he just reached the 20-mile benchmark. Despite achieving identical progress, Jessica will not share the same sense of achievement with Mark. As Jessica is measuring his progress differently (in days), she feels the urge to run one more day to reach the 10-day benchmark based on her choice of measuring progress. Further imagine that both run for another day and they both complete 10 days and 22.3 miles of running. This time Jessica will be feeling great about his progress because she completed a 10-day course of running. On the other hand, Mark will not feel very accomplished and he might feel a need to run just another day to reach 25 miles and feel a sense of completeness based on his arbitrary choice of measurement scale.

Vast literature in numerosity predicts that a more numerous scale leads to perceptions of larger numerical magnitudes compared to a less numerous scale (e.g., Burson, Larrick and Lynch 2009; Pandelaere, Briers and Lembregts 2011). For example, 365 days might be seen as longer than 12 months because the former is more numerous (Monga and Bagchi 2012). Thus, 20 miles might be perceived as better progress than 9 days. On the other hand, in the case of 10 days and 22.3 miles, numerosity literature would predict that the more numerous progress reported in miles should be perceived as higher than the less numerous progress measured in days. Yet, we propose a potential reversal of this effect. We base our prediction on another stream of research, which suggests that round numbers (ending with 0 or 5) serve as natural reference points to be achieved. It has been shown that people try to reach round numbers as numerical goals in various domains, including SAT scores, baseball statistics, when trading currencies and stocks and running marathons (Allen, Dechow, Pope and George 2016; Pope and Simonsohn 2011; Osler 2003). While numerosity literature has often compared scales with different granularity (e.g., months vs years) to demonstrate the role of number magnitudes in consumer perceptions, the recent findings related to round numbers have been limited to use of single scales and the tendency to reach the next round number.

The purpose of our research, therefore, was to examine scale-induced roundness and numerosity effects and show how use of different measurement scales affect perceptions and evaluations of progress and feeling of achievement. In a recent study Gunasti and Ozcan (2016) found that round numbers create a sense of completeness, fullness or wholeness especially in brand names domain. Authors tested various real and fictitious brand names and product types to illustrate that consumers prefer brand names including numbers ending with 0 and 5 over those with larger numbers because they perceive these products as more complete. This completeness effect was also investigated in a variety of different contexts such as completeness of product attributes (Ozcan and Sheinin 2012, 2013) and have been shown to impact consumer evaluations and decisions. Thus, the scaleocity effect will be mediated by the completeness perceptions induced by round numbers on corresponding scales. Formally, we posit the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Scaleocity effect - When measuring and evaluating identical goal progress using different scales, the scale that corresponds to round numerical values will lead to: i) a higher sense of accomplishment, ii) decreased motivation/persistence to keep working toward a goal, and iii) lower risk taking behavior.

Hypothesis 2: Identical or even lower progress expressed in lower but round numbers on a given scale might be perceived as better than equal or even higher progress expressed in higher but non-round numbers on another scale.

Hypothesis 3: The scaleocity effect (scale-induced perception of accomplishment) will be mediated by an artificial sense of completeness conveyed by round numbers measured on a scale.

We conducted five experimental studies to test our hypotheses. While the first three studies confirm H1 and H2, Studies 4 and 5 further test the mediation effect of completeness. Study 4 demonstrates the mediation. We found that people might decide that they have not performed well in a task and just to feel a sense of accomplishment they will work unnecessarily harder to lose additional amounts of weight; run additional distances/days; spend more time and work more persistently on a task; risk money and effort; and try to reach round number benchmarks totally based on their arbitrary choice of scales. While number magnitude (numerosity) affects goal evaluations as shown in past literature, this effect is moderated and often reversed by the tendency to attain scale-induced round numbers. We term this the scaleocity effect and further show that this tendency is mediated by the feeling of completeness stimulated by round numbers on specific measurement scales defining the progress.

Overall, our research makes three important contributions to the literature. First, we expand on the research on numerosity and unitosity (e.g., Burson, Larrick and Lynch 2009; Pandelaere, Briers and Lembregts 2011; Monga and Bagchi 2012; Bagchi and Li 2011; Cheema and Bagchi 2012) and integrate these efforts with the literature on round numbers and numerical cognition (e.g., Allen et al. 2016; Pope and Simonsohn 2011; Lynn, Flynn and Helion 2013; Bhattacharya, Holden, and Jacobsen 2012; Osler 2003; Gunasti and Ozcan 2016; Gunasti and Devezier 2016; Yan and Duclos 2013) to introduce what we term the “scaleocity” effect. We demonstrate that people feel more accomplished when identical progress corresponds to a round number on the specific scale they use even when compared to a non-round number with a higher magnitude on another scale. Second, we show that the scaleocity effect (scale-induced differences in perceptions of progress) manifests itself as a tendency to spend more time and money, exert higher effort, persist longer in a task, and take unnecessary risks just to reach a round number on an arbitrarily chosen scale (e.g., airlines miles). Third, we demonstrate...
that this scaleocity effect is mediated by the perceived completeness induced by number roundness.

REFERENCES


Meaning in Life, Powerlessness, and Nostalgia: Using Nostalgia to Mitigate the Effect of Powerlessness on the Search for Meaning in Life

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Meaning in life refers to thoughts and feelings connected to the self-perceived significance of one’s own life (Steiger and Frazier, 2005). When one’s life meaning has been threatened, he/she will be motivated to restore their meaning in life. Previous research has established numerous threats that might undermine one’s perception of meaning in life, such as interpersonal rejection (Zadro, Williams, and Richardson 2004). The present research suggests an important and very common threat: one’s feeling of powerlessness.

Individuals experience feelings of powerlessness in everyday settings. This ubiquitous feeling of powerlessness can result in an aversive experience associated with uncertainty, self-doubt, and negative emotions (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, and Magee, 2003). To alleviate this aversive experience, consumers tend to restore a sense of power by purchasing status-related products (Rucker and Galinsky, 2008). While the need to restore power is certainly an important individual motivator, we suggest that another motivator might be just as influential: restoring one’s meaning in life. Despite the ubiquity of instances where one might feel powerless in society, as well as the power of the search for meaning in life as a motivator, we are aware of no research that explore the relationship between feelings of powerlessness and the search for meaning in life. The present research addresses this gap by examining whether feelings of powerlessness can influence one’s motivation to search for and restore meaning in life.

One way an individual who feels powerless might attempt to mitigate that feeling is through consumption activities. Prior research has shown that nostalgic products can activate consumers’ memories of the significant events they have experienced and enhance consumers’ perceptions of connectedness with important others (Wildschut et al., 2010). We suggest that both of these experiences should help consumers perceive their life as meaningful. Therefore, we predict that the motivation to search for meaning in life resulting from feelings of powerlessness will increase consumers’ preferences for nostalgic products.

We conducted four studies to test these propositions. Study 1 measured the individual differences in power and examined its relationship with preference for nostalgic products. We recruited 111 participants at QQ Survey, a Chinese website similar Mturk. Participants first completed a scale to measure their sense of power and then reported overall attitudes toward an advertisement for instant noodle products that was manipulated to elicit feelings of nostalgia versus a control. Results showed a significant power × nostalgia interaction (β = .61, t(107) = 2.11, p = .037). As hypothesized, increased feelings of powerlessness were positively related to preference for the nostalgic noodle product (β = .44, 95% CI = .887, .002), but not the control (β = 0.17, 95% CI = -.199, .534).

Study 2 used a controlled experiment to test the main effect again. We recruited 196 participants at QQ Survey and randomly assigned them to the high-power, the low-power, or the control condition. We primed power firstly by asking participants to find out at least 10 words from a 10 × 10 grid. The words were related to high power (e.g., boss and control), low power (e.g., subordinate and submissive), or irrelevant to power (e.g., music and paper). Then participants were asked to choose between two concerts, one playing nostalgic music and the other playing non-nostalgic music. A Chi-square test suggested a significant effect of power (χ²(2) = 23.32, p<.001). Low-power participants were more likely to choose the nostalgic concert than high-power participants (100% vs. 60%, χ²(1) = 24.12, p <.001) and the ones in the control condition (100% vs. 70.83%, χ²(1) = 16.39, p <.001). No differences were found between the high-power condition and the control condition (χ²(1) = 1.27, p = .18).

Study 3 aimed to test the underlying process. Forty eight participants were recruited. We first manipulated power by asking participants to recall an experience in which they had high power or low power. After that, participants indicated to what extent they wanted to search for meaning in life. Then they were asked to make a choice among four real snack products, two nostalgic and two non-nostalgic. A Chi-square test on the product choice showed a significant effect of powerlessness on nostalgic preference (χ²(1)=3.46, p=.06). Next, we used a bootstrapping approach to test the mediating process. Results indicated that after controlling for the effect of emotion (β = 0.25, p = .32), low power led to a stronger motivation to search for meaning in life (β = -1.05, p = .002), which then increased the likelihood of choosing nostalgic products (β = .94, p = .03). Power had no direct effect on choice (β = -.09, p = .23). Further, the mediating effect was negative and had a 95% confidence interval that excluded zero (β = -.98, 95% CI=[-3.29—-10]). These results support the proposed mediation process.

Study 4 aimed to examine a boundary condition. We recruited 176 participants from Mturk and randomly assigned them to 2 (power: low power vs. high power) × 2 (meaning in life: reading vs. no reading) between-participants design. Participants were first assigned to either read an article that suggested that merely reading can provide meaning in life, or read nothing. Then participants were made to feel powerless or powerful by imagining that they are an employee or a boss. At last, they were asked to choose a product among four real snack products: two nostalgic and two non-nostalgic brands. A logistic regression revealed a significant power × reading interaction (β = 5.76, p = .016). More importantly, low-power participants who were not provided the article were more likely to choose the nostalgic soup brands than high-power participants (72.1% vs. 52.2%, χ²(1) = 3.74, p = .053). In the reading condition, there was no significant difference.

In conclusion, the four studies provide consistent evidence that consumers who feel powerless will prefer nostalgic products, and that this effect is mediated by motivation to search for meaning in life. These studies provide a new explanation for how individuals cope with feeling powerless. Beyond the theoretical contributions, this research also provides important implications on marketing practice.

REFERENCES


The Asymmetric Effect of a Firm’s Invested Effort in the CSR Campaign
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
An increasing number of companies are involved in prosocial behaviors called Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). In contrast, firm-induced incidents that impair social good are coined Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSI). This research investigates how consumers evaluate a company and its CSR campaign when the firm is involved in both a CSR and a CSI, depending on the order of the two: the response (CSI-CSR) and the insurance (CSR-CSI) mechanism. Some work has demonstrated the positive evaluation of insurance mechanism, because consumers attribute the cause of the negative event to external factors if it is preceded by CSR campaign (Klein and Dawar 2004). By contrast, another work (Wagner, Lutz, and Weitz 2009) argues that the insurance mechanism is viewed negatively when a CSI is highly congruent with a CSR, because consumers become suspicious about the firm’s true motive for CSR campaign initiation. Expanding upon previous findings, we propose a moderating factor that defines how consumers respond to the insurance mechanism: invested effort by the firm in the CSR.

Consumers’ skepticism has been identified as an important factor that impacts how consumers evaluate a CSR campaign and the firm (Dumwright 1996; Yoon, Gürhan-Canli, and Schwarz 2006). Although consumer suspicion about CSR motive can be derived from its temporal order in relation to a CSI incident (Wagner, Lutz, and Weitz 2009), we argue that having a CSR campaign initiated prior to a CSI does not harm company evaluation, when the firm invests high effort in the CSR campaign. Based on the previous findings that the level of firm’s effort in the campaign is interpreted as the level of firm’s commitment to the social good (Ellen et al. 2000, 2006), we argue that consumers will infer an altruistic motive from a CSR campaign with high effort in the insurance mechanism, improving company evaluation. For the response mechanism, however, the level of perceived ulterior motive will not differ based on the level of invested effort due to that the motive of the campaign (i.e., to offset any wrongdoing) is clear. And thus, ironically, investing more effort in response to a CSI accident that has already happened will not improve evaluations of the CSR campaign or the company.

We present three studies testing our hypotheses. Study 1 investigates whether more effort invested in a CSR campaign improves consumer reaction only in the insurance mechanism. The study employed a 2 (mechanism type: insurance vs. response) by 2 (invested effort: high vs. low) between-subject design. Participants read about a company that accidentally polluted a local river. As the effort, the company either donates money only or runs a task force team for river cleaning in addition to making a donation. Half of the participants read that the CSR was initiated before the CSI, whereas the other half read the opposite order. Participants then reported the perceived product performance and expected campaign success. As expected, there was a significant mechanism type by invested effort interaction on perceived product performance \( F(1, 204) = 3.96, p = .048, \eta^2_p = .019 \). Participants in the insurance condition reported marginally higher perceived product performance when the effort invested by the firm was high (vs. low), while no difference emerged for the response condition. Similar pattern was found for campaign success.

The goal of study 2 was to replicate the effect with a different manipulation of firm’s invested effort. As a proxy for invested effort, the number of charities the firm supports was used expecting that supporting multiple (vs. single) charities would be perceived as more effortful. Participants were randomly assigned to a 2 (mechanism type: insurance vs. response) by 2 (number of charities: multiple vs. single) between-subject design. Participants read about the same scenario as study 1 except for the effort manipulation. Then, participants reported how competent, effective, and efficient the company was and the degree to which the company developed the campaign to offset the CSI incident. Finally, they rated the importance of having a CSR campaign for a company as a covariate. An ANCOVA revealed a significant mechanism type by number of charity interaction on perceived competence \( F(1, 214) = 4.68, p = .032, \eta^2_p = .021 \). In the insurance condition, perceived competence was greater for the CSR campaign with the multiple (vs. single) activities, while perceived competence did not differ in the response condition. A moderated mediation supported our hypothesis: the indirect effect of the interaction between mechanism and number of charity through perceived motive was significant for the insurance condition (indirect effect = -.11, SE = .08; 90% CI, -.28 to .02), but not for the response condition (90% CI, -.06 to .02).

Study 3 investigates whether the source of CSR effort can change firm’s evaluation. Specifically, when firms ask consumers to get involved in choosing which charity to support (a common tactic employed by companies), the effort comes from consumers and not the company, and therefore will not have a beneficial effect for the insurance mechanism. The study employed 2 (mechanism type: insurance vs. response) by 2 (charity choice: consumers vs. executives) between-subject design. The scenario was about a hair care products company donates money to a non-profit organization supporting development of low-carbon energy. For the source of effort, the company either let their consumers or executives choose the non-profit organization. Participants reported their attitudes toward the company as well as the perceived motive of the campaign. An ANOVA revealed a significant mechanism type by charity choice interaction on firm evaluation \( F(1, 158) = 6.49, p = .012, \eta^2_p = .039 \). Participants in the insurance condition reported marginally lower evaluations of the firm with consumer (vs. executive) involvement. Interestingly, participants in the response condition reported marginally higher firm evaluation with consumer (vs. executive) involvement. Similar pattern was found for perceived firm’s motive. A moderated mediation supported our hypothesis.

Contributing to the knowledge of consumers’ response to companies’ CSR efforts, this research suggests new ways for marketing managers to mitigate the potential negative effects from engaging in CSR campaigns in light of CSI incidents.

REFERENCES


**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Bourdieu’s theory of distinction is commonly applied to social mobility. According to this theory, social mobility results in a divided habitus where individuals are forever caught between two competing habitus. However, other have suggested that mobile individuals can pick and choose their habitus at will, a position termed a strategic habitus. Both positions have received empirical support, raising two questions. First, does the experience of social mobility conform more closely to the idea of the divided habitus or strategic habitus? Second, what factors influence the outcome?

Bourdieu’s theory of distinction is used to approach these research questions. Briefly, this theory works to understand how individuals draw boundaries between different social groups and compete to arrange them hierarchically. The currencies in this competition are social, economic, and cultural capital. Social class is believed to be mirrored in the amount and type of capital possessed (Bemthal, Crockett, and Rose 2005; Carfagna al et 2014; Coskuner-Balli and Thompson 2012; Holt 1998; Moisio, Arnould, and Gentry 2013; Üstüner and Holt 2007, 2010).

Cultural capital can be objectified in consumption items, displayed through consumption behaviors and practices known as taste, or embodied in the habitus. An individual’s habitus can be expressed in a variety of ways including “standing, speaking, walking, [...] feeling and thinking” (Bourdieu 1990a, 70). Habitus is not only a characteristic of an individual, but is also shared among those in a group such as a social class (Bourdieu 1990b, 77). What happens when an individual’s social class changes? Does their habitus change?

Bourdieu theorizes that social mobility, whether upward or downward, results in a divided habitus. Bourdieu describes how upwardly-mobile students “continually desire reintegration in their community of origin but at the same time are also unable to fully assimilate into the elite” (Bourdieu 1998, 107). This outcome is known as a divided habitus or a habitus clivé and has received empirical support (Aarseth, Layton and Nielsen 2016; Lawler 1999; Saaticologu and Ozanne 2013; Savage 2015).

However, Lahire (2011) downplays the notion of a divided habitus as one of many contradictions an individual experiences. Emmison (2003) emphasizes how individuals make strategic, tactical choices in which habitus to use. Such ideas have found empirical support (Abrahams and Ingram 2013; Demetry, Thunk, and Fine 2015; Lehman 2009). Here, this position is referred to as a strategic habitus.

A total of 26 life history interviews were conducted. Respondents were first screened for subjective social mobility and semi-structured questions were included measure mobility objectively. Respondents were nearly evenly composed of men and women. Most were white, while others classified themselves as belonging to one or more racial or ethnic groups. There was also a wide age range and respondents came from every region of the United States. The grounded theory method was used to guide the analysis and interpretation of the interviews (Fischer and Otnes 2008; Glaser and Strauss 1967; Goulding 2005; Spiggle 1994). Attention was given to habitus as well as other closely related concepts. The habitus itself has been subdivided into emotional (Arsel and Bean 2013) and moral (Saaticoglu and Ozanne 2013) dimensions. While habitus and consumption are conceptually distinct, in practice they overlap and intertwine with one another and attention is given to both constructs in the analysis.

Does the experience of social mobility conform more closely to the idea of the divided habitus or the strategic habitus? Results suggest that the direction of mobility plays a crucial role in determining the outcome. Furthermore, changes in the habitus do not always align with either the divided or the strategic habitus.

For the downwardly mobile, habitus appears resistant to change. Adelaide’s story vividly illustrates downward mobility and a habitus that remains upper class. She comes from an upper class family and attended exclusive private schools in her youth. However, the death of a parent meant a series of sudden, downward movements for her throughout adolescence. In adulthood she married a working class man and the differences between Adelaide and her husband reveal that her habitus is still rooted in the upper class. She openly invokes her pedigree to explain why she has a different “level set” than her blue collar husband. She admits to “judging” his coworkers and bristles at working class children being fed Mountain Dew, sporting buzzcuts, wearing camouflage, and using improper grammar. Her judgements indicate she retains her original habitus. This is because there is little incentive for downwardly mobile individuals to adjust to a less valued habitus.

In contrast, the upwardly mobile exhibit more change to their habitus. It no longer matches their original habitus but neither does it entirely conform to their new class. One example of such change comes from Adam, the son of immigrant parents who have moved steadily upward from the lower class. Overall, he describes himself falling somewhere in-between his parents and his new milieu. For example, Adam is “off-put” by his girlfriend’s ability to spend $300 or $400 in one shopping trip. Such feelings indicate his habitus has not completely changed to fit his new class. For the upwardly mobile, one’s habitus falls somewhere between their origin and destination.

Upward and downward mobility have different effects on taste because they are very different experiences. Downward mobility is embarrassing and provides no incentive for those who experience it to change their habitus. For the upwardly mobile the move up is celebrated, providing an incentive to change. It is also worth reconsidering whether Bourdieu’s concept of a divided habitus accurately captures the experience. Rather than reflecting double isolation, the habitus appears blended. Additional work must also consider the role played by race, gender, and other characteristics as they intersect with social mobility. Overall, this work provides a look into the experience of social mobility. Investigating the effects is particularly important given the frequent, dynamic nature of mobility in the United States. The frequency of mobility also makes it essential to understand how mobility affects habitus and consumer behavior generally. Exploring social mobility also highlights the need to revisit traditional theories of the habitus.

**REFERENCES**


Self-Disclosure Asymmetry in Online Communities: 
A Challenge of Demographic Diversity

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The success of online communities depends on the active engagement and strong attachment of the members (Ren et al., 2012). Disclosure of personal information is a commonly proposed mechanism that induces close interpersonal relationships (Ensari and Miller, 2002). Therefore, a question that arises is how online communities can encourage members to disclose themselves to the community, and result in positive outcomes. Our study considers this question by examining online health communities for smoking cessation (Pechmann et al., 2016).

Self-disclosure is “any message about the self that a person communicates to another” (Wheeless and Grotz, 1976, p. 47). Researchers have found that disclosing personal information such as demographics is positively associated with developing high-quality relationships (Phillips et al., 2009). In addition, interpersonal similarity in demographics helps individuals build close relationships (Naylor et al., 2012). However, consumers are often concerned about disclosing personal information to demographically dissimilar others, because this may potentially increase the psychological distance between them and others (Phillips et al., 2009). This greater distance may undermine dyadic ties, which in turn may weaken online communities.

Therefore, understanding how similarity in and self-disclosure of demographics may affect dyads seems important for helping online communities improve engagement and goal attainment. Hence, we investigated how dyadic similarity in demographics affected whether the members of the dyad disclosed their personal demographic information to others. We also examined whether dyadic similarity affected the goal of dyadic abstinence (smoking cessation) due to the mediating effects of dyadic disclosure, dyadic tie strength, and total engagement.

Hypothesis 1: In online communities, members of demographically dissimilar versus similar dyads will be (a) less likely to engage in reciprocated self-disclosure and (b) more likely to engage in asymmetric self-disclosure about the demographic in their posts, but (c) only if there is an obvious minority on that demographic.

Hypothesis 2: In online communities, regardless of whether dyads are demographically similar or dissimilar, self-disclosure of demographics in posts will be associated with tie strength.

Our first study examined 8 online communities that participated in a 100-day quit-smoking program called Tweet2Quit in 2012-2013 (Pechmann et al. 2016). Individuals who were interested in an online community for quitting smoking and who met the screening criteria (i.e., ages 18-59, residing in the continental USA, current smokers, interested in quitting, mobile phone with data plan, social media users) were assigned to 20-member communities on Twitter consisting entirely of other smokers. Participants were mailed 8 weeks of study-provided nicotine patches to help them quit and were sent automated daily reminders to post to their online community. Also, they were encouraged to choose a quit date within one week of joining the online community, so that all members were striving for the same goal with similar milestones.

The demographics of the online community members were measured by a survey – gender, employment status, marital status, and age. Once members began to post to their online communities, the dyads that were formed were identified using social network analysis (details below). After this, the demographic similarity or dissimilarity of each dyad was determined by comparing the dyad members’ survey responses. Goal attainment, defined as sustained smoking abstinence, was assessed using email surveys (Pechmann et al. 2016). A dyad was identified based on whether a member sent at least one post to another member (Centola and van de Rijt 2015). Tie strength was measured as the count of posts exchanged between two members of a dyad (Shriver et al. 2013). Individual-level self-disclosure of demographics was assessed by two independent coders who examined if a post discussed gender, employment status, marital status, or age. Self-disclosure was coded in terms of occurrences and also content. Dyadic-level self-disclosure of examined demographics were coded as follows (Moon 2000): non-disclosure meaning neither dyad member self-disclosed the demographic (0), asymmetric self-disclosure meaning one member did so (1), and reciprocated self-disclosure meaning both members did so (2).

H1 predicted that demographically dissimilar versus similar dyads would show less reciprocated and more asymmetric self-disclosure of that demographic in their posts, if there was an obvious minority on that demographic. To examine H1, our z-tests compared the percentages of dissimilar versus similar dyads who reached each stage of self-disclosure by demographic. The results supported the hypothesis. We expected to see dissimilarity-based self-disclosure asymmetry for gender and employment status because men and the unemployed had an obvious minority standing in these online communities. Consistent with this expectation, gender dissimilar versus similar dyads were less likely to engage in reciprocated self-disclosure and more likely to engage in asymmetric self-disclosure of gender in posts. Also, employment dissimilar versus similar dyads were less likely to engage in reciprocated self-disclosure and more likely to engage in asymmetric self-disclosure of employment status in posts. For marital status and age, where there was no obvious minority, these effects did not obtain.

H2 posited that self-disclosure of either similar or dissimilar demographics in posts would relate to positive dyadic outcomes. To test H2, self-disclosure type was regressed on each outcome, separately for similar and dissimilar dyads. For dissimilar dyads, most of the results supported the hypothesis. For employment-dissimilar dyads, self-disclosure of employment status in posts related to tie strength. For marital-dissimilar dyads, self-disclosure of marital status in posts related to tie strength. For age dissimilar dyads, self-disclosure of age in posts related to tie strength. For similar dyads, self-disclosure of gender in posts related to tie strength. For employment-similar dyads, self-disclosure of employment status in posts related to tie strength. For marital-similar dyads, self-disclosure of marital status in posts related to tie strength.
In this research, we explored a psychological phenomenon, self-disclosure asymmetry, wherein one member of a dyad self-disclosed his or her demographic but the other did not. We reasoned that self-disclosure asymmetry might help to explain the weakness of ties in online communities that are comprised of diverse strangers. Furthermore, we observed substantial self-disclosure inhibition in the online communities that we studied, primarily in the form of asymmetric or one-sided self-disclosure. When there was an obvious minority on a demographic, minority members of dyads chose to conceal this demographic from majority members.

REFERENCES
The Conformity-Risk Paradox: Why Increasingly Risky Mortgages are Acquired by Increasingly Risk-Averse Consumers

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

According to the ‘financialization of everyday life’ theory, consumers took increasingly risky mortgages before the crisis because of the emergence of a new financial culture that promoted growing risk-tolerance (Aalbers 2008; Fligstein and Goldstein 2015). Rogers’ (2010) theory of the diffusion of innovation would imply a reverse trend: that late adopters are more conformist and, by extension, more risk-averse than early adopters.

While in most markets product risk is constant or decreases over time (i.e. surgeries get safer as expertise accumulates, etc.), in some markets, product risk increases. The mortgage market of the 2000s was one of such markets. In these markets, the conformity-based explanation implies a paradox relationship between risk-tolerance and actual riskiness of products: increasingly risk-averse consumers should hold increasingly risky products simply because they jumped later on the bandwagon. We call this the conformity-risk paradox.

We test this paradox through the case of mortgage borrowing, examining two hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** Increasingly risky mortgages were not taken by increasingly risk-tolerant consumers over time.

**Hypothesis 2:** Increasingly risky mortgages were taken by increasingly conformist consumers over time.

Methodology

Our test case is the Hungarian mortgage market between 2000 and 2010, which meets the criteria of becoming increasingly risky over time (Balás et al. 2015). Mortgage borrowing was practically non-existent before 2000 in Hungary (Pellantini-Simányi et al. 2015), hence the case also meets the criteria of being a new market.

We used a survey with 189 mortgage borrowers, using face-to-face interviews and random walk sampling method. The sample is representative of mortgage borrowers in Hungary in terms of age, education and settlement type (Balás et al. 2015).

We used four variables:

1. **Time of acquisition of the mortgage**

2. **Actual mortgage risk**

3. **Borrower’s risk tolerance**

4. **Borrower’s conformity**

We define conformity as a tendency to follow other people’s behaviour and opinions as opposed one’s own judgement. People may choose mortgages because their friends and acquaintances do so. We measured this aspect by asking respondents how many people they knew who held a similar mortgage at the time when they acquired it (none= 0; one or two =1; many=2). Moreover, conformity is at play when people assess the riskiness of the mortgage based on the behavior and advice of others, such as friends, acquaintances or bank clerks, rather than their own assessment. We thus asked respondents who considered their mortgage low-risk (more than 90% of the sample) to indicate the influences on their assessment (yes=1; no=0):

- many of my acquaintances, friends held a similar mortgage.
- people whose opinion I respect suggested that it is not risky.

The conformity score is the sum of these two, taking values between 0 and 2.

**Analysis**

**Hypothesis 1:** Increasingly risky mortgages were not taken by increasingly risk-tolerant consumers over time.

Our data shows a steady increase of riskiness of mortgages between 2000 and 2008 (from 5.5 to 8.4). Yet risk-tolerance remained consistently low: between 1.6 and 1.8 in all periods between 2003 and 2010, with even a minor, temporary decrease in 2005-6 (1= zero risk-tolerance, 2= average risk tolerance out of 4). Individual-level differences between one’s self-assessed risk tolerance and the risk of one’s mortgage (labeled ‘risk attitude-behaviour gap’ (ABG)) shows a steady upward trend from 4.2 to 6.4 between 2000 and 2008. These
findings confirm our hypothesis that increasingly risky borrowing was not accompanied by an increase in risk tolerance.

**Hypothesis 2:** Increasingly risky mortgages were taken by increasingly conformist consumers over time.

Borrowers on average had a high number of acquaintances with similar mortgages when they acquired their mortgage, suggesting an element of herd behavior. 90% of borrowers thought that their mortgage was low-risk, mainly based on the behavior and opinion of others. Conformity is high (above 0.9 between 2000 and 2004 and 1.2 between 2005 and 2008 on a scale of 0 to 2) throughout the period, with a slight decrease in 2007-8. Analyzing conformity by risk category shows that conformity tends to be higher for higher risk products, lending support to our hypothesis that increasingly conformist consumers took increasingly risky mortgages. This is supported by the result that people of higher conformity levels have a significantly higher risk attitude-behaviour gap (t-test statistics, significant at p<0.05). To further test this finding, we run an ordered logit estimation for the actual risk of the mortgage as dependent and the conformity index as independent variable, and gradually included risk-tolerance, age (at the time of borrowing), settlement type, education and income as control variables. Even after including all controls, a significant positive (0.529) relationship remained between conformity and the riskiness of the mortgage.

The widening attitude-behaviour gap has several alternative explanations, which we excluded. First, it may be caused by a cohort effect: older people tend to be more risk-averse, hence an increase in the average borrower age would also lead to decreasing risk-tolerance over time. T-test statistics, however, show that the average age (mid-thirties) of borrowers did not change significantly over the period. Second, the widening gap may be caused by the subprime extension of the market towards people of lower socio-economic status. Low SES status borrowers are more risk-averse (Pellandini-Simanyi and Banai 2017); yet they only have access to higher risk financial products. Thus, more low-SES borrowers entering the market over time may lead to a widening attitude-behaviour gap. This explanation, however, does not apply for the Hungarian case. The average income and labor market position of households taking mortgages did not change significantly over the period; even, after 2007, high income households’ mortgage debt grew even quicker than that of low income households (Tóth and Medgyesi, 2010; Balás, Banai and Hosszú 2015).

**Conclusion**

Theories of the proliferation of risky mortgages suggest a shift in attitudes, either through the ‘financialization of everyday life’ (Fligstein and Goldstein 2015) or through meaning-making processes that normalized risky mortgages (Peñalolaza and Barnhart 2011). Our study shows that meanings need not change for consumers to acquire risky products. Consumers did not see risky mortgages as increasingly normal, but rather, mistakenly, as low-risk, inferred from the behavior and opinion of others. Paradoxically, increasingly risky mortgages were acquired by increasingly risk-averse consumers. Thus, instead of a shift in attitudes, the attitude-behavior gap opened further over time.

Our findings are consistent with Roger’s (2010) diffusion of innovation theory, suggesting that less conformist and more risk-tolerant consumers adopt new products first, followed by more conformist and risk-averse adopters. We extend this by arguing that in (1) markets of increasingly risky offers and (2) high information asymmetry, this results in a conformity-risk paradox: the adoption of increasingly risky products by increasingly risk-averse consumers, who jumped later the bandwagon.

**REFERENCES**


Sadness Reduces Decisiveness
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
People often make decisions when feeling distressed. Sadness is a particularly prevalent and long-lasting emotion (e.g., Jordan et al. 2011), and therefore understanding its impact on decision-making is particularly important. Recent research has found that sadness can generate suboptimal decisions (e.g., increased willingness to pay and impatience; Lerner et al. 2004, 2013). However, beyond quality of decision-making, sadness may influence the willingness to actively engage in decision-making to begin with, an issue that has not been explored in research using forced-choice paradigms.

According to appraisal theory (Smith & Ellsworth 1985), the way people cognitively appraise their environment is both a cause and consequence of different emotions. Sadness, in particular, is characterized by a high sense of uncertainty (e.g., about one’s ability to cope; Tiedens and Linton 2001). Therefore, we propose that sadness can impair decision-making by reducing decisiveness. Indecisiveness may generate unnecessary search costs (Rassin et al. 2008). Moreover, waiting too long to select popular options may result in these becoming unavailable (students losing potential seats in a course, Palatano and Wengrovitz 2007). For consumers, indecisiveness can result in missed time offers opportunities.

Aside from costs to the consumer, indecisiveness can be costly for retailers. Purchase delays can increase stocking costs or turn into total revenue loss if the purchase is permanently deferred. Consumers’ difficulty in selecting a single alternative is one of the most important causes of delaying purchases (Greenleaf and Lehmann 1995).

Previous research has shown that negative affect integral to the decision increases status quo choices (Luce 1998), but whether incidental sadness reduces decisiveness more generally is still an open question. We demonstrate that the uncertainty that accompanies sad states increases perceived choice difficulty and, consequently, increase indecisive behavior.

Experiment 1A
One way that people can express decision avoidance is by circumventing the responsibility for deciding (Anderson 2003). Hence, in Study 1A we examine whether incidental sadness increases indecision in the context of gift giving (e.g., whether gift-givers prefer to buy a specific versus a generic gift card). In this context, there is room for higher uncertainty given that people are inherently more knowledgeable about their own preferences.

Method
One hundred forty one participants were recruited from Amazon MTurk (44.7% female, mean age = 33.9). We induced either sadness or a neutral emotional state with video clips validated in previous research (Gross and Levenson 1995, Lerner et al. 2004). Participants in the Sadness condition viewed a clip from The Champ that portrays the death of a boy’s father. Participants in the Neutral condition watched a video clip from a National Geographic documentary on coral reefs.

After the manipulation, all participants were told to imagine that they were going to a birthday party, and that they had decided to give their friend a gift card. Their friend and their friend’s spouse love dining out, so the participant had decided to give them a restaurant voucher to get?”.

Results
Participants in the Sadness condition were marginally more likely to select the more flexible, but lower value option (27%) than Neutral participants (44%; \( \chi^2 (1) = 11.46, p = .001 \)). Sadness increased indecisiveness when choosing for others, even when there is a cost ($10) associated with it.

Experiment 1B
One of the limitations from Experiment 1A is that the gift-giving context could be eliciting positive emotions, which could con- volute the interpretation of the results. Therefore, in experiment 1B we made the choice to be about a restaurant certificate to be used by the person making the decision. In addition, we expected sadness to increase choice difficulty in this context, so we included such measure in this design. We hypothesized that the effect of sadness on decisiveness would be explained by the increased decision difficulty.

Method
One hundred sixty two participants were recruited from Amazon MTurk (53.1% female, mean age = 36.5). Participants watched the same movie clips from Experiment 1A. After the emotion manipulation, all participants were told to imagine that they were going to purchase a restaurant voucher for an upcoming Restaurant Week in their hometown. The terms matched those of experiment 1A. Next, participants rated their choice difficulty (“How much difficulty did you experience when making the decision about which restaurant voucher to get?”).

Results
Participants in the Sadness condition were marginally more likely to select the more flexible, but lower value option (27%) than were participants in the Neutral condition (15%; \( \chi^2 (1) = 3.42, p = .065 \)). The choice shares of the flexible, but lower value option, were smaller in the context of choice for the self, versus choice for oth- ers (as expected, due to higher certainty regarding one’s own preferences).

We ran regression analysis using PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes 2013) to test the hypothesis that choice difficulty mediates the effect of sadness on decisiveness. Sadness condition was a signif-

ificant predictor of choice difficulty (\( \beta = .614, SE = .22, p = .006 \)). Choice difficulty significantly predicted preference for the flexible option (\( \beta = .404, SE = .131, p = .002 \)). Sadness is not a significant predictor of flexible option when controlling for choice difficulty (\( \beta = .463, SE = .422, p = .273 \)). The indirect effect of Sadness on choice of flexible option (i.e. indecisiveness) through choice difficulty was significant and positive (\( \beta = .248, SE = .132, 95\% CI [.0493, .6008], 1,000 bootstrap samples). Therefore, we conclude that sadness increases perceived choice difficulty, which in turn increases preference for the flexible – and less decisive – option.
Experiment 2

Experiment 2 extends the findings of Experiment 1A and 1B in two ways. First, Experiment 2 sheds additional light on the hypothesized process (lack of certainty present when one experiences sadness) by manipulating anger, an emotion as aversive as sadness, but not high in uncertainty (Smith and Ellsworth 1985). Second, it examines the influence of sadness on indecisiveness in a personal finance domain. Specifically, we gave participants a debt repayment scenario where they could allocate all of their money to one of two credit card accounts, or they could act more indecisively and split the payment between accounts. We hypothesized that sadness would increase the tendency to split one’s available money across cards (arguably, a proxy for indecisiveness), while anger would not since it is not associated with an uncertainty appraisal.

Method

We conducted a pre-test to test whether they perceived splitting the payment between accounts to be reflective of indecisive behavior. One hundred participants recruited through MTurk completed the pre-test for a small payment (29% female, mean age = 32.5). They were asked to judge a target based on his/her decision in a debt repayment scenario (Amar et al. 2011). Participants were asked to imagine that the target received $100 windfall from the government. The target had two debts where the money could be allocated: a Mastercard with a $100 balance and 10% APR and a Visa with a $1,000 balance and 15% APR. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: the target (i) paid off the smallest account, (ii) split payments evenly, or (iii) reduced the debt of the large, high-APR debt (the normative action). Participants rated the extent to which they thought the target was feeling indecisive, uncertain, and risk-averse. We ran a repeated measures ANOVA to test whether participants perceived the three targets differently. Pairwise comparisons show that the target who split the funds between the cards was perceived as being more indecisive, and uncertain. Importantly, this target was not perceived to be risk-averse, therefore splitting was not perceived as a strategy to reduce risk (which would conflict with the proposed explanation that people split due to uncertainty). Participants also stated that splitting was not a decision they would have made, and did not believe that splitting made targets feel good. Therefore, we conclude that participants perceived splitting as reflecting indecisiveness and uncertainty.

Two hundred and four participants (MTurk) completed the main experiment (37% female, mean age = 32). We first induced sadness, anger, or neutral emotional states with video clips validated in previous research (Gross and Levenson 1995, Lerner et al. 2004, Rottenberg, Ray and Gross 2007). Participants in the Anger condition viewed a four-minute clip from My Bodyguard that portrays a bullying incident. Participants were then presented with the scenario from the pretest and asked to indicate how much of their $100 windfall they would use to repay each card. The decision is difficult, because participants must choose between completely repaying the small balance, (which is tempting) and chipping away at the high balance with a high APR (which is financially optimal).

Results

We computed an indecisiveness score, which captured the extent to which participants split their windfall evenly between the two debts. Specifically, indecisiveness scores range from 0 to 50 and are equal to min(Mastercard payment, Visa payment). If participants equally split their windfall between debts, their indecisiveness score is min(50,50) = 50. If they allocate their entire windfall to one debt, their score is min(0,100) = 0. We ran a one-way between subjects ANOVA to test whether emotional condition predicts indecisiveness scores. The omnibus test was marginally significant (F(2, 201) = 2.50, p = .085). Pairwise comparisons show that indecisiveness scores were significantly greater in the Sadness condition (M = 9.43, SD = 16.41) than in the Anger condition (M = 4.83, SD = 11.07; t(134) = 1.99, p = .049) and the Neutral condition (M = 4.80, SD = 12.91; t(129) = 1.94, p = .054). Indecisiveness scores did not differ among Anger and Neutral conditions (p = .99).

Experiment 2 demonstrates that sadness reduces decisiveness, while anger does not (relative to a Neutral control condition). These results suggest that not all negative emotions reduce decisiveness, and that the appraisal of uncertainty that accompanies sadness is a potentially significant driver of the effect of sadness on decisiveness. We replicated this finding in a follow-up correlational study (N = 114, 55.3% female, mean age = 36.6) where participants rated their naturally occurring emotions and completed the debt repayment task (order counterbalanced). As predicted, sadness scores correlated positively and significantly with indecisiveness scores (r(112) = .33, p < .001). Indecisiveness did not correlate significantly with pride, hope, indifference or happiness (all p’s > .10, but it correlated significantly with anger (r(112) = .20, p < .05). When both anger and sadness are entered in a multiple regression, only sadness predicts indecisiveness (sadness: β = .211, t(100) = 2.86, p = .005; anger: t(100) < 1).

Experiment 3

Larger choice sets have been shown to increase decision avoidance (Tversky and Shafir 1992), so if sadness reduces decisiveness, people experiencing sadness would be better off when facing smaller choice sets. Ironically, given that people experiencing sadness have increased uncertainty over their preferences, they might believe that they are better off by having larger assortments available. Therefore, in Experiment 3 we tested whether sad participants would be willing to incur higher search costs to obtain a larger choice set.

Method

Two hundred seventy five students from a US Midwestern university completed the experiment for course credit (39.6 female, mean age = 21). We elicited sadness or a neutral state with the same videos used in the previous experiments. Then, we gave participants a short decision task where there is a trade-off between assortment and search costs. Participants are told that they are going to buy new eyeglasses, and they found two stores online. From store A, one mile away, they want to try 3 models. From store B, they want to try 15 models, but store B is further. Participants are then asked how many miles they are willing to drive in order to reach the store with the larger assortment (Inesi et al. 2011).

Results

Four participants with answers 3 standard deviations above the mean were excluded from the analysis, two in each condition. As predicted, participants in the Sadness condition were willing to drive significant more miles to reach the store with larger assortment (M = 21.34, SD = 15.49) than participants in the Neutral condition (M = 17.60, SD = 12.86, t(269) = 2.15, p = .032). Although having a larger assortment will likely make their choice even more difficult (Tversky and Shafir 1992), participants in the Sadness condition seem to be coping with their uncertainty by having a stronger preference for the larger assortment, even if this implies higher search costs.

General Discussion

Prior work has shown that sadness can either be detrimental or beneficial to decision-making, depending on the context and type of decision. Although this body of literature has documented
directional effects of sadness on decision-making (e.g., increasing 
impatience; Lerner et al. 2013), we propose and find across multiple 
experiments that sadness can actually reduce the propensity to be de-
cisive. We show that sadness increases indecisiveness in the context 
of financial decision-making regarding one’s current debts and in the 
context of selecting gifts for others and for themselves. This effect is 
explained by higher levels of choice difficulty and uncertainty over 
preferences. We also showed that sadness increases the propensity to 
engage in more search costs to acquire a product, which exacerbates 
choice difficulty for people experiencing this emotion.

A potential limitation of the current findings is that the indeci-
se behavior we observed could be interpreted as people seeking 
more variety (i.e., paying off more debt accounts, selecting the gift 
card option that can be used in more restaurants). Arguably, the gift 
card holder will still go to only one restaurant, and the debt holder 
will still have to pay both debts, so it is not clear that the flexible 
choices in our manipulations provide any variety in consumption.

Alternatively, choosing more variety might be a coping mech-
nism of people experiencing indecisiveness, and not a desire to con-
sume more variety per se. Another possibility is that sad people may 
simply have an enhanced desire for multiple units (e.g., two small 
candies rather than one large candy). Multiple units may appeal to 
sad people for a number of reasons (e.g., being able to share with 
others, or spreading out therapeutic consumption over time). Future 
research should also investigate this possibility.

Our work suggests that sadness reduces decisiveness due to in-
creased perceived choice difficulty, even when hesitation is costly. 
Alternatively, indecisiveness may prove beneficial when sadness-
tinged decisions are suboptimal. It is possible that indecisiveness 
protects sad decision-makers from larger blunders.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Do markets “remember”? How do these memories shape markets? Previous research has seldom examined the market processes underlying the accumulation of memories around the evolution of a market. Instead, it has either concentrated on micro-level, consumer-centric processes (Biehal and Chakravarti 1982), or on how the interactions between other ‘types’ of memories, such as popular memories (Thompson and Tian 2008), nationalistic memories (Hartmann et al. 2016), and memories associated to specific brands (Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry 2003) can inform market processes such as myth making, branding and market shaping. Moreover, a focus on the active work of market actors in the evolution of markets (Ertimur and Coskunerc-Balli 2015; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013) has left the role of market devices, or “the material and discursive assemblages that intervene in the construction of markets” (Muniesa, Millo and Callon 2007, 2) such as the memory of a market, out of the analysis. Studying such devices on which the evolution of a market relies is crucial if we are to further our understanding of market systems. As I will show, a market memory is central in the evolution of a market by providing a shared yet conflictual representation of the past, structuring market evolution through path dependencies, offering cultural resources, shaping market actors’ identities, and linking a market with others.

I broadly define a market memory as a collection of memory events that are collectively remembered by current market actors. By memory event, I mean a certain event in time for which traces exist (e.g., photographs, videos, press coverage). Such traces allow for the activation, retrieval and re-interpretation of the memory event. My findings are theoretically informed by two streams of research: work in sociology on collective memories (e.g., Jedlowski 2001; Olick 1999) and work in management and institutional studies (e.g., Ante-by and Molnar 2012; Lippman and Aldrich 2015; Ocasio, Mauskpf, and Steele 2015). In both of these streams of research, memories are used to explain how a collectively shared and commemorated past influences present events by “providing people with understandings and symbolic frameworks that enable them to make sense of the world” as we “rely on memory for the provision of symbolic representations and frames which can influence and organize both our actions and our conception of ourselves” (Miszta 2003, 13). This makes the study of a market memory central to our understanding of market systems.

Let me prelude by discriminating a market memory from other existing concepts. First, although the fields of history and memory studies have collided and converged, a market memory is different from the history of the same market. In line with existing work, I differentiate between history, which aims at providing if not an objective at least a comprehensive if contentious account of the past (Poole 2008), and the retrieval, reinterpretation, and commemoration of the past which constitute collective memories (Schwartz 2005). More, history includes all that we know (or aim at knowing) about a particular era, while collective memory emphasizes what market actors remember (Poole 2008). Finally, collective memories also include “aspects of culture as well as social practices and structures” (Reading 2003, 5).

Second, the creation and collection of individual memories, although inextricably intertwined with that of collective memories (Olick and Robbins 1998) such as a market memory, are different. Individual memories and their aggregation, which Olick (1999) refers to as collected memory, cannot address phenomena at the heart of collective memories: what triggers and how memories are stored and retrieved, the remaking of the past by the present by different actors, the division between memorable and forgettable, that styles, genres, and discourses cannot be reduced to the aggregation of individual subjectivities, the storification of the past and the associated simplification of memories as they are “prepared, planned, and rehearsed socially and individually”, and the shaping of reality by collective memories (Olick 1999; Misztal 2003).

A third possible objection could be that a market memory is similar to a commercial myth (e.g. Thompson and Tian 2008). Myths such as the South (Thompson and Tian 2008), the American Frontier (Belk and Costa 1998), or the invisible hand of the market (Kennedy 2009) are the source of resonant meanings and ideals (Thompson and Tian 2008) that “provide a logical model capable of overcoming contradictions” (Levi-Strauss 1955, 443). They do so by providing a dramatized story that “selectively narrates … a version of the past,” flattening its complexity (Bell 2003, 76) and offering simplified, packaged, and easily to understand narratives (Bell 2003). Through this process, memory events present in collective memories may be amplified or silenced (e.g. Schwartz 2005). Myths and collective memories, albeit linked, are offering different representations of the past.

I analyzed an extensive archival dataset that retraces the evolution of fifteen established fashion houses (e.g., Balenciaga, Chanel, Dior) representing four main subsets: ‘historical’ fashion house, which have existed for more than 50 years, ‘established’ fashion houses that have emerged in the last 25 years, ‘avant-garde’ designer brands that have been recognized as revolutionizing the field, and ‘new’ designer brands that have emerged in the last 10 years. For these 15 fashion houses, I also collected the coverage of two years (2010 and 2015) of fashion shows for the Fall and Summer seasons from four main publications (New York Times, Vogue, Women’s Wear Daily and Business of Fashion ). Because fashion shows are intricately intertwined with the history of the luxury fashion market and because designers and critics alike reference previous memory events when creating or interpreting shows. Each memory event identified and deemed important in these shows was further researched to inquire about its origin, how it became salient (i.e., remembered by the market as an important memory event), and how it was stored and maintained over time. My dataset totals 819 pages.

I intertwine notions of memory work—“a conscious and purposeful staging of memory” (Kuhn 2000, 186)—and institutional work—actions that create, maintain, or disrupt the understanding, practices, and rules that govern a market (Dolbec and Fischer 2015; Lawrence and Sudabey 2006)—to propose three types of memory work at the heart of the functioning of markets: (1) memory creation, (2) memory maintenance, and (3) memory shaping, and explain how these three types of memory work influences main institutional dynamics such as actors’ identities, institutional practices, other types of institutional work, institutional logics, bases for legitimacy claims, as well as interactions with other markets and how this defines a market’s identity.

Memory creation influences the development of most institutional dynamics by offering a bank of cultural resources for market actors to draw from and creating path dependencies. Perhaps one of fashion’s most central memories is that of Chanel’s ‘little black dress’ (LBD). As the story goes, Vogue US published in 1926 a picture of a simple, long-sleeve, calf length black crepe de chine dress
by Chanel that they referred to as “Chanel’s Ford” as it could become “a uniform for all women of taste” (Foreman 2014). If Chanel introduced the little black dress, the garment got forever stamped in consumers’ mind by its appearance on Audrey Hepburn in Breakfast at Tiffany. Even if this particular dress was designed by Givenchy, it only furthered Chanel’s memory as the creator of the LBD and became a key memory event in the history of the designer, her fashion house, and fashion as a whole. As a cultural resource, the dress has been adopted and adapted by countless subcultures and designers, from mods to Dior’s ‘New Look’. And the dress now is an inescapable object, “a rite of passage for generations of designers” (Foreman 2014). Its influence on the development of the fashion market has been such that it was included in the MoMA’s first fashion exhibition that focuses on 99 items “that serve as a window onto social, economic and political changes in the world over the last 100 years.”

Second, memory maintenance ensures the continuity of a market and associated dynamics by, for example, reifying the symbolic power of memories and actors associated to them (e.g., Chanel’s little black dress constantly re-affirms the position of Chanel in fashion), and by stabilizing boundaries that keep market identities in place. In fashion, the most efficient and lasting way to keep memories alive seem to be to have had a design piece consecrated at a staple of consumers’ everyday wardrobe (e.g. Chanel’s black dress, Heidi Slimane’s slim suit). Memory maintenance is also performed through the use of objects, actors, events, places, practices, and firms as points of reference. An example of this in the work of fashion critics is the coverage of the 2016 Fall-Winter menswear collection of Raf Simons by well-known critic Alexander Fury. In his article, Fury references another fashion house (and associated designer), Maison Martin Margiela, mentioning that “the collection was so Margiela, in its distressing, its conspicuous wear, XXL-scale sweaters and coats slipping and sliding off the figure”, that Raf Simons had “been following in Margiela’s tabi-toed footsteps all along—he’s previously stated it was a Margiela show that triggered his interest in entering the industry.” Fury here uses Margiela as a cultural referent to explain Simons’ collection, thereby re-affirming the place of Margiela, the person and the fashion house, as well as key elements of its design, in the collective memory of the fashion market.

Third, memory shaping allows for the reshaping of the past through forgetting and reinterpretation. This in turns leads to the re-configuration of the cultural resources available to market actors, influencing for example market identities and sensemaking. Two types of memory shaping are of interest here. First, memory can be reinterpreted to re-formulate how history unfolded. The reframing of the origins of designers following their commercial success or the re-writing of the evolution of a fashion house following the outing of its creative director are two examples of this process. For example, Maison Martin Margiela, Yoshi Yamamoto, and Rei Kawabuko are often presented in such a way that implies that their success and recognition were immediate, although all designers suffered from poor sales and critical reception for their first few shows (e.g. Thurman 2005), which helps reconcile their last influence on the fashion market. Second, memory erasure happens when memory events can undermine market dynamics. As other markets, the fashion market aims at shielding itself from some aspects of its functioning that could give rise to systematic critiques (e.g. Humphreys and Thompson 2014). If such critiques can arise from the ethical contradictions at the heart of value chains, it can also emerge from negative memories that could undermine the identities of institutional actors. For example, even if Roy Halston was an iconic designer who shaped the 1970s (Scheips 2013) whom Vogue dubbed “America’s first internationally renowned designer” (Alexander 2011) and whom ideas and innovations, such as developing outfit that can take you from work to the club, partnering with a major retail chain (JC Penny in 1983) and artists (with Andy Warhol), his downfall was accompanied by his erasure from the fashion market memory. A number of reasons, from the downfall of his brand following the JC Penny collection to his ban as the creative director of his own brand to his death from an AIDS-related disease in 1990s, could partly explain the desire of the industry to distance itself from the world famous designer.

Finally, I explain how a market connects to adjacent markets by building linked market memories. This is important for the following two reasons: first, creating linkages with adjacent markets can reinforce or undermine market dynamics. For example, designers draw from memory events from the markets of arts, architecture, music, and literature as referents for their collection. Not only does this allow them to create symbolic associations for their work, but this influx of memory events from adjacent markets that are structured by a similar institutional logic, the logic of art, also supports this logic in fashion. Second, linking memory events from adjacent markets opens possibilities for market complexification. Work on institutional theory has argued that markets are complex institutions where firms are exposed to competing institutional demands (Greenwood et al. 2011). I propose that these competing demands and contradicting institutional resources and processes (Seo and Creed 2002) can favor institutional improvisation and market-level changes.

My findings and the concept of market memory have a number of theoretical implications. First, I offer a market device that can help explain the maintenance of markets and market changes through memory contests. This points to the long-lasting value of any discursive act in markets, and how their accumulation, archival, and retrieval can over time shape how a market develops. It possibly provides avenues for marketers to devise marketing strategies that aim at developing important memory events, or developing their memory-based skills to influence markets. Second, I further refine the link between institutional logics and collective memories (Ocasio et al. 2016) by explaining how markets become intricately linked through references to memory events. Third, I also extend the concept of collective memories to markets. This is an important step as previous work has positioned collective memories at the societal, organizational, national, and communal levels. As markets as long-lasting institutions that govern most of today’s social life, I redress this theoretical oversight.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

News and entertainment websites often increase online traffic by tantalizing readers with sensational headlines containing phrases such as: YOU WON’T BELIEVE WHAT HAPPENED NEXT, or YOU’LL BE SHOCKED WHEN YOU SEE THIS, or 17 SECRETS YOU DON’T WANT TO KNOW. Called clickbait, these headlines typically aim to exploit consumers’ curiosity, by providing just enough information to make readers curious, but not enough to satisfy their curiosity without clicking through to the linked content. In a similar vein, many television episodes end on a cliffhanger – a plot device featuring a precarious dilemma or shocking revelation at the end of an episode – which spurs the audience to watch the next episode in order to find out how the story will continue.

This type of pursuit describes reconciling an information gap, or more precisely, what we call satisfying a curiosity appeal, which we define as a proviso that contains a promise to satisfy one’s piqued curiosity provided one option is chosen over others. In the current research we leverage the motivational benefits of curiosity appeals to test interventions designed to help steer people away from tempting “want” options like choosing unhealthy foods, choosing smaller-sooner payouts, watching lowbrow films, taking the elevator, and toward less-than-temping, though normatively desirable “should” options. In all, our interventions leverage curiosity by luring people with the information that satisfies a curiosity appeal. To illustrate, imagine having the solution to a puzzling trivia question revealed to you if you choose to take the stairs rather than take the elevator. By promising satisfaction to the curiosity appeal (caused by the trivia question) with choosing the “should” option (taking the stairs), we propose the “should” option is more likely to be chosen than when there is no curiosity appeal (and corresponding motivation to satisfy it).

Our approach to motivating consumers via curiosity appeals implies that curiosity appeals could be used to motivate consumers to choose all kinds of options, besides solely “should” options. However, we also show that when curiosity appeals are misapplied to “want” options, consumers will counter-intuitively choose “want” options with less (not more) likelihood. At first glance, it might seem like nudges (and curiosity appeals in particular) would hypothetically operate in the same way across options – for example, in a choice between option A and B, wherein option A is nudged, it should make little difference if option A is a “should” option or a “want” option (at a minimum, the nudge ought to increase options A’s likelihood in choice regardless of whether it is a “should” or “want” option). However, we show that nudging a “want” option via a curiosity appeal is a heretofore undocumented and novel way to increasing consumers’ choice of “should” options. That is, in our research we evidence two different ways for using curiosity to change consumers’ decisions and increase their choice of “should” options: one where “should” options are nudged, and another where “want” options are nudged.

Our research is important because a large portion of marketing is about grabbing consumers’ attention, and curiosity is a feeling that activates attention (Gottlieb, Oudeyer, Lopes, and Baranes 2013). Yet, empirical research on curiosity and its relevance to marketing has been slow to keep up, with a few notable exceptions such as Isikman, MacInnis, Ülkümen, and Cavanaugh (2016) and Menon and Soman (2002). In the current research, we examine curiosity in an empirical context that explores decision making and the want/should conflict in consumers’ decisions, with an emphasis on how to reconcile the conflict in a way that steers consumers toward more choice of “should” options.

Want/Should Conflicts

People regularly face a tension between what they want to do and what they believe they should do. Researchers have long studied the conflict between choosing options that provide immediate gratification and options that are less desirable in the short-term, but provide more long-term benefits (e.g., Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, and Tice 1998; Bazerman, Tenbrunsel, and Wade-Benzoni 1998; Haws 2016). Bazerman et al. (1998) dubbed this common struggle the “want/should conflict” whereby people face two competing options.

A common thread across past research is that making “should” choices is an effortful decision, requiring individuals to both override immediately rewarding temptations and to enact willpower (Milkman, Rogers, and Bazerman 2008). Accordingly, much of the literature to date has focused on how to increase consumers’ willpower. For example, increasing individuals’ self-control capacities and cognitive resources are well-studied psychological tools that enhance the ability to make “should” choices (e.g., Baumeister et al. 1998; Shiv and Fedorikhin 1999). However, another approach is to decrease the level of temptation evoked by “want” options (Hoch and Lowenstein 1991). For instance, providing individuals with some sense of immediate gratification (that is separate from what the “want” option itself provides) can reduce the immediate desire for a “want” option in favor of a “should” option. In one empirical demonstration, Urmskyy and Kivetz (2011) provided people with an immediate financial bonus in an intertemporal choice between a smaller-sooner option and a larger-later option. The authors found that the bonus led people to prefer the larger-later option because receiving it provided a sense of immediate gratification, thus making it easier to choose the less tempting but higher valued “should” option. In the current research, we explore whether appealing to a positive, intrinsically motivating state (curiosity) that requires no financial incentives could similarly steer people toward more “should” options.

Curiosity

Research has found that curiosity is a powerful predictor of behavior, playing an important role in motivating learning, mastery, and facilitating scientific discovery (Koestler 1964). Curiosity involves positive feelings of interest, but also feelings of uncertainty due to a perceived lack of knowledge (Litman and Jimerson 2004). An important theory of curiosity suggests that curiosity signals the presence of an “information gap” – that is, a lack of desired experience or knowledge (Loewenstein 1994; see also Litman 2005; Menon and Soman 2002). This feeling of deprivation instills a motivation to seek out the missing information in order to reduce or eliminate the feeling of deprivation (Maner and Gerend 2007), even if the missing information is unpleasant (Kruger and Evans 2009) or causes people physical pain when they try to resolve their curiosity (Hsee and Ruan 2016). Despite this feeling, curiosity is not typically seen as an aversive state; on the contrary, curiosity has been found to mitigate a negative experience, by improving upon it (Isikman et al. 2016); and Loew-
enstein (1994) remarks that people like to make themselves curious precisely to satisfy their curiosity. Indeed, positive feelings such as novelty, surprise, and closure help define curiosity: a desire to know something (Gottlieb et al. 2013).

Drawing on research supporting the motivational power of curiosity, we tested a previously unexplored strategy for steering behavior by creating interventions that encourage less-than-tempting but nonetheless normatively desirable behaviors (“shoulds”). Our central prediction was that, in a choice between “want” and “should” options, a curiosity appeal that can be satisfied by selecting a “should” option will increase the choice of “should” options over “want” options. From a theoretical standpoint, it is noteworthy that no research has yet investigated how curiosity and temptation jointly influence consumer behavior; nor has research investigated whether receiving satisfaction to one’s curiosity will change, much less reverse one’s choices or preferences. To be sure, research has found that curiosity-inducing advertising has the effect of making consumers search for information (Krugman 1965); and that consumers tend to remember a curiosity-inducing brand better (Menon and Soman 2002) – but no research has looked at the effect of curiosity on making an actual choice, precisely one of the major aims of consumer behavior research.

Nudging “Wants”

Implied by our research, curiosity appeals can be used to nudge consumers to choose other options, besides solely “should” options. For instance, curiosity appeals (and nudges writ large) could conceivably be used to nudge consumers to choose “want” options. Despite the voluminous research on nudges, the notion that they can be misused to increase “want” options among consumers has not been investigated. However, we propose that when “wants” are nudged (via curiosity appeals), consumers will counter-intuitively prefer them less.

Prior research has shown that before consumers choose “want” options, they prefer to feel like they have earned the right to choose them (Kivetz and Simonson 2002). This is because consumers often feel guilty and uneasy when choosing “want” options (Kivetz and Simonson 2002; Mishra and Mishra 2011; Ramanathan and Williams 2007). As such, consumers feel like they require a reason (some justification) for choosing “want” options (Okada 2005). In support of this view, research has shown that bolstering one’s self-concept or bolstering one’s effort serve as guilt-reducing ways that help make “want” options more justifiable (Khan and Dhar 2007; Kivetz and Simonson 2002). In fact, quite often with compensatory decision making, the path to justifying and choosing “want” options tends to involve first choosing “should” options – as though consuming “should” options provides consumers with the feeling that they have earned the license to subsequently indulge and choose “want” options (Merritt, Effron, and Monin 2010).

Thus, when consumers have established that they have earned the right to indulge, they feel like they have leeway for choosing a “want” option. Nudges, however, are designed precisely to help consumers make decisions without having to invoke excessive effort (Thaler and Sunstein 2009). And without the feeling of spending effort, consumers may not feel like they have adequately earned the right to indulge. What is more, satisfying one’s curiosity evokes an overall positive feeling – it serves as a reward in itself (Loewenstein, 1994). When this feeling of reward is coupled with choosing a “want” option, people may feel like they are, in the moment, over-indulging if they choose a “want” option. As the literatures on balancing and hedonic editing show, consumers prefer to balance their indulgence, by eschewing too much indulgence (Dhar and Simonson 1999). Thus, while choosing a “should” and being rewarded with the satisfaction of one’s curiosity feels like a balanced choice, choosing a “want” and being rewarded with the satisfaction of one’s curiosity feels like an overindulgence, and is consequently avoided.

Studies

In study 1, we gave participants a choice between two fortune cookies: one plain and one dipped in chocolate and covered in sprinkles. Half the participants were given no additional information – and this control group chose the cookies with a 20-80 split in favor of the chocolate-dipped cookie. The other half comprised our treatment condition. We told participants in this group that the plain cookie contained a fortune that would tell them something personal that we knew about them. This undoubtedly piqued their curiosity, and we observed a near complete reversal of preferences.

In study 2, we examined the special case that describes nudging a “want” option with a curiosity appeal. Thus, study 2 has three conditions – the same two conditions from study 1, plus a condition where a “want” option is nudged via a curiosity appeal. We found that in an intertemporal choice, over 80% of participants in the control condition chose the smaller-sooner “want” option. Yet when we tied participants’ choices to piquing their curiosity (with revealing the answers to a self-assessment quiz that participants took), the proportion of participants choosing the “want” option dropped significantly, in both instances. These two separate paths to increasing participants’ choice of “should” options provide evidence that curiosity appeals do more than simply incentivize participants into choosing one option over another, because we found that when “wants” are nudged with curiosity appeals, participants are disincentivized by the promise of curiosity relief.

In study 3, we investigated the different processes that underlie why people choose a “should” when it is nudged, and why people also choose a “should” when a “want” is nudged. To do this, we measured participants’ dispositional curiosity, and we measured participants’ unease, guilt, and overindulgence with choosing a nudged “want” option. We found that participants were more likely to choose a highbrow (“should”) film clip over a lowbrow (“want”) film clip when we piqued their curiosity (with a magic trick) and promised to satisfy their curiosity (revealing the secret behind the trick) provided they choose the highbrow film. This tendency was stronger among participants with higher dispositional curiosity (while holding constant other feelings such as fun, novelty, and attention). In a separate bootstrapping analysis, we found that when the “want” film clip is nudged, it makes people feel guilty choosing it, hence they prefer the alternative “should” film clip. For results to both tests (importantly, we did not find evidence supporting the possibility that psychological reactance is driving the effects).

Then, in studies 4 and 5 we broadened the scope and ecological validity of our investigation by moving to the field. In study 4, in a building on a large university campus, we designed a placard with an unanswered trivia question that we placed by the elevators. Then in a nearby stairwell, we placed different placards with the answers to the question (thus satisfying their curiosity). We changed the questions and corresponding answers every day, and ran our experiment for 28 days. The first 14 days made up our pretest phase. In this phase, we measured foot traffic (with a SenSource people-counting laser) in the intervention stairwell without our placards. In addition, we measured foot traffic in a separate stairwell on the other side of the building (our so-called control stairwell). The test revealed a significant interaction, such that the number of counts in the intervention stairwell during the posttest significantly exceeded the number of
counts during the pretest phase, whereas the number of counts in the control stairwell during the posttest and pretest phases was not significantly different.

In Study 5 we partnered with a locally-owned grocery store and tested whether curiosity gaps can motivate people to buy more fruits and vegetables. For each of the produce items (e.g., beets) we created a placard with a joke on it (e.g., “why did the beets blush?”) and posted the placard by the produce item’s regular sign that contained its details like price and origin. Then, close to the placard, we placed a cup containing bag closures with the respective punchline printed on them (e.g., “because the beets saw the salad dressing”). The placard indicated the punchline is on the nearby bag closures. In all, we had 17081 cases, and we found a significant 10% increase in fruits and vegetables purchases when our curiosity intervention was imposed.

In sum, our research demonstrates a new phenomenon in want/should conflict that goes beyond making “should” options easier to choose. Although we found that nudging “shoulds” increases the extent that they are chosen, we also found that nudging “wants” increases the extent that “should” options (rather than “want” options) are chosen. Taken together, our research shows that the powerful effects of curiosity come at a small cost and help promote a wide range of desirable behaviors, from choosing high-brow films to exercising more to healthier eating.

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Evaluation Overconfidence: When Uncertainty in Attribute 
Under Produces Less Extreme Product Evaluations

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumers’ ability to translate common product attributes (watts, calories, megapixels) into subjective evaluations (perceived energy efficiency, perceived healthiness, perceived picture quality) is fundamental to theories of consumer choice. One factor that might affect these evaluations is consumers’ confidence in their understanding of these commonly encountered attributes. This research proposes that consumers are often overconfident in assessing their own understanding. We show that simple interventions that encourage consumers to reflect on the level of their knowledge (e.g., estimating an attribute level, explaining an attribute, making relative attribute judgments) can make consumers less confident in their attribute knowledge. This reduced confidence leads to more moderate (less extreme) product evaluations and affects the options consumers choose. The authors derive an explanation for this phenomenon by drawing on research on folk science and the illusion of explanatory depth.

Previous research in the domain of consumer confidence is diverse in scope, but has generally focused on confidence in the outcome of some judgment or evaluation (Brenner et al. 1996; Griffin and Tversky 1992; Karmarkar and Tormala 2010). This paper investigates a novel type of confidence: the implicit confidence consumers feel in their understanding of common product attributes. The ability to translate objective attribute information into subjective evaluations is fundamental to theories of consumer choice (Helson 1964; Janiszewski and Lichtenstein 1999; Kahneman and Tversky 1979; Sharif and Hovland 1961), but consumers’ confidence in their understanding of the attributes they use to make these evaluations has not been investigated. We draw on insights from the literature in cognitive psychology on folk science and the illusion of explanatory depth (Keil 2003; Rozenblit and Keil 2002; Sloman and Fernbach 2016) to make the prediction that a variety of cognitive tasks—likely to be common during typical consumer decisions—can reduce consumers’ confidence in their own ability to evaluate the attribute. As we show, this leads to more moderate (less extreme) product evaluations and can affect choice.

We suggest that consumers are often more confident in their ability to evaluate common product attributes than is justified by their actual knowledge. We further suggest that this implicit confidence may be easily shaken by a number of simple interventions that invite consumers to consider the depth of their knowledge of a given attribute. We propose that the effect of these knowledge probes is to reduce consumers’ confidence in their own ability to evaluate attributes, leading to less extreme evaluations of that attribute, relative to an otherwise equivalent consumer with unshaken confidence.

A series of six experiments demonstrate that knowledge probes related to common product attributes can influence subsequent product evaluations. Specifically, participants’ subjective evaluations of attributes like gigabytes, watts, and calories, were less extreme following a knowledge probe than were evaluations made without one. The experimental evidence suggests that a knowledge probe related to an attribute reduces consumers’ confidence in their ability to evaluate that attribute. This account was supported by a mediation analysis (Experiment 3), as well as by theoretically derived moderators. Specifically, when participants had a high level of attribute knowledge, such that their confidence was well founded, the knowledge probe did not lead to less extreme evaluations (Experiment 4).

This phenomenon is robust across various manipulations of knowledge probes, including explaining an attribute (Pilot Experiment), making relative estimation (Experiment 1), estimating the focal option’s attribute level (Experiments 2-4), and estimating the attribute level of unrelated options (Experiment 5). Taken together, the effect is consistent: a knowledge probe, regardless of the type, caused less extreme product evaluations.

This research provides several important contributions to theories of consumer judgment and decision-making. For one, it highlights the importance of a kind of confidence that has not previously been studied, namely, confidence in one’s own understanding of common product attributes. This research demonstrates that changes in this kind of confidence can change consumers’ product evaluations.

This research also demonstrates the counterintuitive finding that several common consumer activities frequently involved in making decisions—making estimates, making relative comparisons, explaining an attribute—are not inert, but can change the subsequent evaluations and decisions the consumer makes. This research suggests that anything in the decision-making process that encourages consumers to reflect on their attribute understanding could lead to less extreme product evaluations and thereby affect choice.

Although previous research has examined related issues such as how uncertainty can lead to purchase delay (Brenner et al. 1996; Dhar and Simonson 2003) and how familiarity and confidence can facilitate judgments (Karmarkar and Tormala 2010; Park and Lessig 1981), it has not specified how the process of evaluating commonly encountered information such as product attributes can lead to more biased judgments. We contribute to the literature by specifying and testing a theoretical account based on overconfidence and uncertainty, which predicts that when consumers are prompted to re-assess their knowledge of a product attribute, they often become less certain of that knowledge.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Individuals must consume and interact with socially constructed, cultural representations of the self and the body (Pavia and Mason 2004; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013; Thompson and Hirschman 1995; Thompson and Ustuner 2015). When consumers’ internalized views or outward performativity conflict with such representations, identity may be threatened or questioned. This study explores the challenges that young women with breast cancer experience as they navigate embodiment and the intersectionality of their illness and gender identity.

Consumer bodies that don’t conform to normative representations of what a woman should look like or how she should act may face exclusion in the marketplace. Heteronormative gender discourse suggests that the body is a significant constituent of gender identity, and that bodily schemas are significant in distinguishing between the heteronormative binaries of masculinity and femininity (Bourdieu 1986; 1997). Accordingly, gender discourses are significantly defined in bodies through habituated behavioral tendencies and social schemas (Illouz 2012). Embodied identities that transgress from heteronormative gender discourse may confront challenges in consumption and acceptance (Coskuner-Balli and Thompson 2013). While consumers can contest identities through collective unifying actions and resignifying practices (Scaraboto and Fischer 2013; Thompson and Ustuner 2015), at the core of such acts exists a presumption of an empowered consumer who embraces the embodied aspects of identity. However, this is not the case for consumers facing illness and limitations emanating from the body.

Following the diagnosis of a life-threatening or disabling illness, consumer identities are abruptly and profoundly disrupted (Pavia and Mason 2004). With breast cancer, the visible alterations that occur to the body (e.g., mastectomy, hair loss) affect core cultural markers of gender (Young 2014), and thus have resounding repercussions for gender identity. Previous gender expressions, such as styling one’s hair or dressing to highlight a curvy body, are compromised due to the effects of treatment on body markers of gender and femininity. The need for control of the body and appearance is well-established (Thompson and Hirschman 1995). Thus, the context of breast cancer diagnosis and treatment represents a unique situation, as women have little to no control over changes to their body. Our understanding of the identity challenges that women face and how they manage these challenges in light of such an acute, abrupt disruption emanating from the body is limited.

Seventeen depth interviews were conducted with young women who had been diagnosed with breast cancer within the last five years. The phenomenological approach was followed for attaining an in-depth understanding of an individual’s lived experiences (McCracken, 1988; Thompson et al., 1989). Informants ranged from 23-41 years old and represented diagnosis stages 1-4. All women were currently undergoing treatment, including chemotherapy, radiation, and surgeries. The sample was diverse in terms of family status and education, and included those currently employed and unemployed; married, divorced and never married; with children and without. The interviews began with grand tour questions (McCracken 1988) about the informant’s cancer experience in general. Informants were then asked to discuss how the diagnosis and subsequent treatment impacted their identity.

Textual data was analyzed using an iterative part-to-whole method of the constant comparison (Spiggle, 1994). Researchers developed an understanding of the emic themes and concepts that emerged first in each interview and next across all interviews (Thompson, Locander and Pollio 1989). In an ongoing, recursive manner, the researchers consulted the literature to contextualize the narratives within gender identity.

A predominant theme that emerged among the informants was a liminal gender identity. More specifically, informants shared experiencing alterations of the body, changes in their motherhood identity, and constraints in their sexual identity. The alterations of the body dramatically transformed their gender identity, particularly in how they view themselves as a “woman.” Treatment for breast cancer in terms of chemotherapy and surgery led informants to experience tremendous disparity and unfamiliarity with their body. This resulted in a shattered sense of their sexual identity as well as physical limitation or inability to enact their role of being a mom. Thus, the disconnect of embodiment was so deeply experienced that it commonly shattered their sense of self and gender identity. Further, the majority of the informants reject this “new” version of herself. Although the informants express reaching the actualization of liminality, they have not reached aggregation (Schouten 1991; van Gennep 1960). Rather, they reject the revised self, which results in extreme dissonance and emotional turmoil. This is consistent with prior work that has shown periods of liminality are associated with shock, confusion, and disorientation (McCranken 1997; Schouten 1991), or at times a damaged sense (Turner 1967).

Another emergent theme was using specific consumption practices in marketplace performance to express female gender identity. Turner (1967, 1969) argues that during liminality, persons become structurally invisible (lost between and betwixt) and socially ambiguous. The use of specific products to enact gender in public was a common theme, and is consistent with literature that has examined interactions in the marketplace as social performances affiliated with cultural roles and scripts (Ustuner and Thompson 2015). These women described wearing wigs, jewelry, and makeup during a liminal period to manage the expression of female gender identity when embodiment could no longer serve this purpose.

In sum, consumer research, studies have investigated bodies that do not conform to normative consumption spaces, idealized body images, and cultural representations of gender. However, these have tended to involve a relatively empowered or emancipated consumer who has come to terms with their embodiment. Our informants provide unique insights into the under examined area of liminality (Thomassen 2016; Turner 1967, 1969), and the reflexive realization that they no longer fit with cultural notions of gendered discourse and habitus (Bourdieu 2001). Findings from this study show that the intersecting facets of embodiment, illness, and gender created profound rippling effects in identity which the women had not yet reconstructed. Future research should explore the paths and means by which women alter, integrate and reconstruct identities that express gender outside cultural representations.
REFERENCES


EXTERNSD ABSTRACT

Consumers’ generally associate higher prices with higher levels of quality (e.g., Dawar and Parker 1994). Nevertheless, the relationship between price and objective quality in the marketplace is not always strong or even positive (e.g., Boyle and Lathrop 2009). This could be explained by either consumers’ lack of access to product information (which is unlikely as we live in the age of information) or their reluctance/ inability to assimilate the available information to modify their price-quality judgments (ELM; Petty and Cacioppo 1986). The current research is built on this latter assumption and attempts to answer the following question: What is the effect of gender on consumers’ price-quality perceptions?

Selectivity Model (Meyers-Levy and Maheswaran 1991) suggests that women (men) have a systematic (schematic) thinking style, and they have a higher (lower) tendency to search for more details in the decision-making process. Therefore, it could be posited that men should be more likely to use price-quality heuristics to make product judgments; whereas, women should be more prone to make their quality judgments based on a wider range of available information. Furthermore, if the price has a stronger effect on men’s than on women’s perception of quality, the average prices of men’s products should be higher than the average prices of comparable women’s products.

In nine studies, which employed survey research, experimental research, and observational research methods to achieve methodological triangulation, we investigated the effect of gender on consumers’ motivation/ability to process the information (studies 1 and 2), their price-quality perceptions (studies 3 and 4), and the actual prices that they pay for similar products (studies 5a-5e). Next, the findings of these studies are briefly reported next.

Study 1 was designed to measure the effect of gender on consumers’ ability to pay attention to readily available information and form accurate judgments in the context of the print advertisement. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of two advertisement conditions, one of which had a manipulative ad claim. Results showed that type of ad affected women’s attitude towards advertisement. But men did not notice the suspicious claim in the manipulative advertisement.

Study 2 was designed to investigate whether gender influences consumers’ ability to make accurate judgments of the product quality based on the available product information. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of two conditions that entailed a table of information about 25 brands of digital camera. Next, they evaluated the quality of ten fictitious models of a digital camera based on the information that they had reviewed. Findings suggested that women’s judgments of the relationship among product attributes corresponded with the information that they had reviewed; whereas men’s judgments did not reflect the presented information in the tables.

Study 3 was designed to provide an initial examination of the potential effect of gender on the general-price-quality perceptions. Respondents answered several questions in a survey. Results showed that the price-quality perception was significantly stronger in men than in women. Furthermore, the average price-quality perception score was significantly above the midpoint value of 4.0 for men, but not for women.

Study 4 was designed to establish the generalizability of the findings of study 3 by employing a more rigorous research method. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions in which they reviewed the information of three brands of digital camera. One of them was the target brand, Rumax, and the other two (i.e., Nikon and Canon) provided baseline price information. The presented information in both conditions was identical except for the price of the target camera which was either $80 or $130. After reviewing the brand information, participants were asked to examine two photos ostensibly taken by Rumax. Findings showed that price created a placebo effect in men and they had a more positive judgment of the pictures that they thought were taken by a more expensive camera. Whereas, the effect of price on women’s judgment was not statistically significant.

In study 5a-5e, we collected the available information of 4200 athletic shoes, 3800 formal shoes, 781 suits, 909 jackets, and 597 socks, from Amazon.com. Findings of studies 5a-5e alongside the findings of 5 pretest studies suggested that regardless of the product type, men always paid a higher price to buy comparable products than women did. The price premiums that men paid ranged from 17% in the socks product category to 84% in the formal shoes product category. Furthermore, findings showed that the observed price difference in men’s versus women’s product categories was not attributable to consumer involvement, shopping frequency, type of product, manufacturing cost, online review information, available product information, and brand name.

General Discussion

Current study makes several substantive contributions to theory and practice. First, to our knowledge, this paper is the first to show that gender influences consumers’ price-quality perceptions (studies 3 and 4). Second, this paper provides further empirical support for selectivity model (studies 1 and 2). Third, this research contributes to the advertising literature by showing that gender affects the target audience’s attitude towards the deceptive advertisement (study 1). Fourth, this paper contributes to the digital marketing literature by showing that the effect of online review valence is greater than the effect of online review volume on a product’s price (studies 5a-5e). Finally, this paper offers important practical implications. Findings suggest that opposite pricing strategies could be used for men and women product categories to increase the profitability (studies 5a-5e).

REFERENCES


The Begging Game: On the Power of the Ask in Charitable Exchange
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Much of charitable giving results from formal solicitations. However, asking has been largely ignored in the altruism and generosity literature, which relies heavily on the dictator and ultimatum games. Through the begging game (a variant of the dictator game) we offer insights on the role asking plays in charitable exchange.

An extensive literature in the social sciences describes a systematic variation from rational self-interest in which relatively resource rich individuals have been shown to give more than absolutely required to those with fewer resources. For example, in the two-player dictator game (Kahneman, Knetsch, and Thaler, 1986; Forsythe et al., 1994), a proposer (dictator) offers a split of an endowment to a recipient who is entirely passive. The recipient gets whatever the proposer offers to them and cannot reject or counter-propose the endowment. A purely rational dictator should propose nothing to the recipient. However, findings typically suggest the majority allocate at least some money to the passive recipient. Only about 40% keep the entire sum, while the average amount given (by the other 60%) is about 20% of the sum (Guala and Mitton, 2010), with modal allocations at 50% and zero (Fehr and Schmidt, 2006). Researchers have attempted to explain this tendency toward “irrational” giving by focusing on social and psychological influences such altruism, warm glow giving, social pressure (e.g., experimental observation), or some combination of these motivations (e.g., Andreoni, 1989, 1990; DellaVigna, List, and Malmendier, 2012; Schmitz, 2016). This stream of research has in turn spawned numerous normative models of the impact of “social preferences,” “interdependent preferences,” and “intention based reciprocity” on individual utility functions (Fehr and Schmidt, 2006).

In the present paper, we study the “power of the ask,” and find the mere act of asking for money shifts power to the solicitor. The findings across three studies suggest that while giving in response to a direct solicitation may in part be a function of the altruism of the giver, the ask request itself may prime an aversion to violating an implicit norm of fairness (Forsythe et al., 1994; Hoffman, McCabe, and Smith, 1996). Asking imposes a norm of equitable exchange via the implicit norm of fairness (Forsythe et al., 1994; Hoffman, McCabe, and Smith, 1996), albeit the standard protocol. In the begging game (a variant of the dictator game) askers requested an average of $6.48 (SD=2.48), which is significantly greater than the average ask in Study 1 (M 1 =5.33; t(78)=5.33; p<.001) and Study 2 (M 2 =4.71; t(151)=5.17, p<.001). The average amount transferred was $3.03 (SD=1.98), which is directionally higher than the average of transfer in Study 1, but not significantly so (t(78)=1.65, p=.10).

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More than half (52.5%) of “askers” requested $5 of the “owner’s” endowment. Those asks were accepted 61.9% of the time. Asking for $4 was accepted 75% of the time, and asking for $3 was accepted 80% of the time. In the DG conditions, dictators transferred $3.50 (SD=2.79) to the passive recipient, while keeping $6.50 of the $10 sum. This result is in line with the findings of prior DG experiments (e.g., Engel, 2011; Hoffman, McCabe, and Smith, 1996), albeit slightly more generous in giving than in prior studies. The more generous DG outcome is largely the result of three (of 40) “dictators” who transferred the entire $10 sum.

Study 2 (N=404) was conducted using an online panel. Participants completed this online study in exchange for reward-contingent monetary compensation of between $0 and $10. The average age of respondents was 51.9 (range 18 to 84), 52% were female, average income was just over $60,000 per year and 84.8% had at least some college education. Subjects were randomly assigned to one of two conditions, either owner or asker in the BG, with approximately 70% of incoming subjects randomly assigned to the “owner” condition. All participants received the same instructions and overview for the BG as in Study 1. However, for this online study participants played against a computer with a pre-programmed decision strategy. On average askers requested $4.71 (SD=1.59) of the owner’s $10, with no significant effects of age, gender, income, or other demographics. In all, 51.3% of askers requested $5, while another 28.3% asked for $4. For those assigned to the owner condition, requests of $3 or less tended to be accepted (73.8% overall acceptance rate for offers in this range). In comparison, requests of $4 and $5 were substantially more likely to be rejected (42.3% acceptance rate for offers in this range).

Study 3 (N=80) was conducted at a large university in the United States. Undergraduate students took part in this study in exchange for both course credit and reward-contingent monetary compensation of between $0 and $10. The protocols were identical to the BG condition in Study 1 with the exception that owners could transfer any amount to the asker. They were not bound by the binary “accept” or “reject” options that appeared in Study 1. In this study askers requested an average of $6.48 (SD=2.48), which is significantly greater than the average ask in Study 1 (M 1 =5.33; t(78)=2.2, p<.05) and Study 2 (M 2 =4.71; t(151)=5.17, p<.001). The average amount transferred was $3.03 (SD=1.98), which is directionally higher than the average of transfer in Study 1, but not significantly so (t(78)=1.65, p=.10).


I’m Not Your Friend, Buddy: Friendliness Without Friendship Hinders Consumer-Firm Relationship Development

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Although the literature on consumer-brand interactions has identified a variety of different ways in which firms can forge relationships with their customers, one of the central, practical suggestions is to treat consumers with friendship. Several consistent characteristics of friendship have been identified by previous research to help define the friendship role, including “opening up” and sharing personal information (Price & Arnould, 1999; Grayson, 2007). Friendship is one of the most common forms of relationship (Chan & Cheng 2004; Hartup 1975; Hays 1985, 1988) and seems highly relevant to the context of consumer-brand and consumer-firm relationships (e.g., Aggarwal 2004). Being friendly and engaging in friend-like behaviors is commonly prescribed in the practitioner literature (e.g., Cummings 2015; Martin 2010; Turnali 2014) and in textbooks (Baron 1997). Moreover, a number of studies support the idea that friendliness, at least in a service context, leads to higher levels of satisfaction (Brown & Sulzer-Azaroff 1994; Pugh 2001; Tsai 2001; Tsai & Huang 2002; Barger & Grandey 2006).

While friendly behaviors are clearly symptomatic of friendship, it is less clear that they are causally responsible for friendship or that they are even appropriate in the early stages of friendship (i.e., when there is no friendship). Studies of relationship development, for example, show that relationship “initiation” behaviors are very different than latter-stage behaviors (Fox, Warber, & Makstaller 2013; Knapp 1978). Other work has shown that behaviors that conflict with the expectations for the relationship, such as whether it is business or friendship (Grayson, 2007), can elicit discomfort or unease (Clark & Mills, 1993) or even undermine relationships entirely (Fletcher et al. 2000). Thus, to the extent that friendly behaviors are not characteristic of the behaviors people generally engage in at the beginning of a relationship, it seems possible, contrary to common wisdom, that friendly behaviors may cause discomfort and might even harm the firm’s chances of establishing a friendship.

We conducted four studies to test various elements of our prediction. Study 1 tested the basic idea that consumers may react negatively to overtly friendly behavior by a firm representative. Friendly vs. neutral scenarios for each study were designed based on the conceptualization of friendly behaviours described by prior research (Price & Arnould, 1999; Grayson, 2007). We found initial evidence that friendly firm encounters were less favorable to consumers than neutral firm encounters. Studies 2 and 3 examined possible boundary conditions to the negative effect of friendliness documented in Study 1, and statistically ruled out perceived ulterior motives as a possible alternative explanation. Specifically, study 2 examined whether the negative effect might be mitigated or reversed when consumers could anticipate a future relationship with the firm. Not only did the negative effect of friendliness found in study 1 replicate, but we also found that the observed negative effect of friendliness was not simply an artifact of our manipulation – we saw a positive effect of friendliness in a context where friendliness should have been normative. Also, we found the same negative effect of friendliness in the context where consumers might anticipate a future relationship. Study 3 examined whether the effect was moderated by the desirability of the firm. We found that the negative effect found in the previous two studies replicated, and a (marginally) significant interaction suggested that the negative effect of friendliness was greater in desirable stores than in undesirable stores. Although somewhat surprising at first glance, examination of the means indicated the desire to stay in the undesirable store was universally low and that the nature of the interaction did little to change that. In contrast, in a desirable store, friendliness reduced an otherwise strong desire to stay in the store. The final study examined whether friendliness was really most appropriate in the context of a pre-existing friendship, rather than at the beginning of a possible relationship. We found a negative effect of friendliness on desire to stay when participants had no prior relationship with the salesperson, and in contrast, a positive effect of friendliness when participants had a prior relationship with the salesperson. These results were consistent with the idea that friendly behaviours are a consequence of friendship, rather than a cause of it. Therefore, it seems that friendliness in the absence of friendship appears to backfire. The results of these four studies demonstrate a consistent pattern that when firms act like friends, consumers react less favorably compared to when the firm acts neutrally.

The current research contributes to the consumer-brand relationship literature by demonstrating that acting like a friend at firm touchpoints may not be the best way for firms to develop a relationship with consumers. While the literature seems to imply that consumers view firms and brands as meaningful relationship partners, our studies suggest that, in fact, consumers may not characterize their relationships with firms and brands in this way. In four studies, we demonstrate a robust, counter-intuitive effect: acting like a friend can hinder relationship development efforts between firms and consumers. Evidence from four studies demonstrates that friendly encounters reduce consumers’ perceived comfort such that they would rather not stay or continue the interaction, thus impeding the relationship development process. So, acting like a friend reflects a customer service strategy that may unintentionally do more harm than good.

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Customers’ Magnitude Perception for Letters Versus Numbers
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Prior research in marketing has shown that cues do not need to be diagnostic, and over time relying on cues becomes so habitual that people do so even without awareness (Payne, Bettman, and Johnson 1991, 1994). Although prior work has not provided explicit distinctions, cues encountered in everyday life can have quantitative or qualitative features.

Quantitative cues embed numeric information (Thomas and Morwitz 2005; Monga and Bagchi 2012) with inherent cardinal properties (e.g., numbers), whereas qualitative cues embed verbal information with ordinal properties (Svenson and Karlsson 1986). For example, attribute information can be communicated in terms of numeric information such as volume, density, or price. Estimating magnitude from quantitative cues is easy because of their cardinal properties (e.g., 250 lbs is 100 lbs more than 150 lbs). However, on many occasions people need to infer magnitude from qualitative cues, such as the terror/safety levels ranging from green to red, stores using colors to indicate crowd density, or the distance to walk between airport exit gates numbered with letters. In this research, we focus on numbers (1, 2, 3, . . . ) to characterize quantitative cues and letters (A, B, C, . . . ) to characterize qualitative cues. Both letters and numbers are ordered left to right, are single digit, and are commonly used as labels. We examine whether providing letters versus numbers to estimate magnitude, such as distance or time, can produce differing outcomes for consumers. Consider, for example, a person exercising on a treadmill-using letters (e.g., “completed level A, B, C . . .”) rather than numbers (e.g., “completed level 1, 2, 3 . . .”), appearing on the monitor as milestones to evaluate the exercise level. Would a number cue lead to greater perceived and actual effort? Would there be a difference between estimates before and after performing the action? The aim of this research is to answer these questions in everyday consumer contexts.

Theoretical Background

We focus on findings that letters and numbers will affect judgments differently depending on whether people are contemplating taking an action or are actually performing the action. For ease of reference, we refer to these two stages as the estimation stage and the performance stage. When people are contemplating an action with a letter cue, they are likely to generate a lower estimate (i.e., effort and time) than when they make the decision with a number cue. However, a counter-intuitive reversal occurs when people perform an action. They perceive expending more effort with letters than when they make the decision with a number cue. Therefore, the lack of clear magnitude information from letters compared with number cues (M number/fluent = 55.15 mms vs. M number/non-fluent = 55.71 mms; t(96) = 0.1, p = .91; d = 0.03) shows that fluency played an important role in magnitude underestimation with letter cues compared with number cues (M number/fluent = 3.01 vs. M number = 3.39; η² = .17). Further, the results of the mediation analysis confirmed the mediating role of fluency in the relationship between the type of cues and magnitude estimates (β = -0.032; 95% CI [-0.069, -0.006]).

Study 2 manipulated fluency through providing broken subgroups of letters that reduced the reliance on fluent subgroup in letters; this subsequently reduced the difference in magnitude estimates between letters and numbers. This paper-and-pencil study was a 2 (fluency: fluent vs. non-fluent) × 2 (cues: letters vs. numbers) design. Participants were asked to place a mark on a 120-millimeter line, indicating how much distance they believed they would have walked from the start to the target row in the theater. The results of Study 2 showed that fluency played an important role in magnitude underestimation with letter cues compared with number cues (M number/fluent = 55.15 mms vs. M number/non-fluent = 55.71 mms; t(96) = 0.1, p = .91; d = 0.03).
We conducted Study 3 in a local gym to measure people’s perceptions of effort expended depending on whether letters versus numbers marked the laps completed on a treadmill. It was demonstrated that in performance stage individuals who exercised using letters perceived that they expended greater effort compared to those exercising using numbers ($M_{\text{letter}} = 2.31$, $M_{\text{number}} = 1.62$, $F(1, 134) = 8.531$, $p = .004$, $\eta^2 = .06$).

Finally, in Study 4 we examined both estimation and performance stages for the same individuals by using process evidence and video recording them as they walked from a start to an end location. Results revealed that in the estimation stage, participants in the number cue condition estimated a greater magnitude than those in letter cue condition ($M_{\text{number}} = 0.21$ vs. $M_{\text{letter}} = -0.20$; $F(123) = 8.27$, $p = .005$ , $\eta^2 = .06$). We obtained process evidence for our feedback-related negativity hypothesis and demonstrated using walk-time that individual using letter (versus number) cues slowed down while performing the task ($T_{\text{letter}} = 14.09$ seconds vs. $T_{\text{number}} = 11.34$ seconds, $F(1, 122) = 17.57$, $p < .0001$). Furthermore, we demonstrated the downstream influences on marketing variables such purchase postponement, impulsive choice, and preference for hedonic products.

Conclusion

In this research we demonstrate that qualitative versus quantitative cues (letters and numbers) produce differing estimates (of time, distance and effort). Moreover, we suggest that individuals underestimate magnitude with letter cues in the estimation stage but take longer to perform the task with letter cues. Across three laboratory experiments and two-field studies, we test our predictions in domains such as health, shopping, and seat-selection. We also document downstream effects of effort estimation with number and letter cues on purchase postponement, impulsive choice, and preference for hedonic products.

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Ritualistic Meal Consumption and the Temporal Reduction of Divisions Due to Economic Disparity

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In this paper, we illuminate how a social consumption practice in an ephemeral religious organization subverts systems of social inequality that otherwise prevail in and structure society. Specifically, drawing on a rich ethnographic study in Pakistan, we show how sharing food in the Tablighi Jamaat (TJ)—a religious organization originating in South Asia that is practiced intermittently by its followers—represents temporal spaces of egalitarianism. Within these temporal spaces, entrenched social hierarchies that are salient in organizing Pakistani society are deconstructed. We found that although the fundamental principles of the Tablighi Jamaat advocate for transgression from the social hierarchies that propagate myriad inequalities by demarcating local Muslims into spheres of different social and economic classes, it is in the practice of food consumption when challenges to these hierarchies become the most conspicuous.

With burgeoning social inequalities—which are only consecrated by growing income and wealth disparities—we respond to recent calls from scholars in the field to identify trajectories by which to disrupt systems that create, maintain, and reify stratification between individuals in a society (Fotaki and Prasad 2015). We demonstrate how a seemingly inconsequential social practice—in this case, meal sharing (Belk 2010)—can function as a powerful mechanism by which to destabilize entrenched social hierarchies that have historically structured the society in which the consumption practice occurs. Notwithstanding this point, we do not intend to romanticize our argument. Indeed, we appreciate the fact that the temporal nature of the TJ and the ingrained nature of the cultural codification of social hierarchies in Pakistan should not be neglected. We equally acknowledge that these realities of Pakistani society raise the question concerning the extent to which an apparently innocuous phenomenon such as food consumption transforms how individuals relate to one another following the religious experience in spaces not governed by the TJ. While these remain fair points, we contend that, at the very minimum, egalitarian food consumption practices in the TJ symbolically reveal alternative tenets by which to organize individuals in society—principles based more on equality than on inequality. The present study extends prior literature by highlighting how social inequality can be challenged through a consumption practice in a less-industrialized country context.

Methodology

This study uses multi-sited ethnography and in-depth interviews to understand how a consumption practice can collapse social boundaries that maintain systems of inequality. Specifically, we analyze food consumption by participants of the orthodox Islamic religious group Tablighi Jamaat (TJ).

Research Site

We use the context of TJ to illustrate the phenomenon of food consumption as a normalizing social force. TJ forms a traditional reformist approach to Islam that developed in late colonial India. The movement follows an approach accessible to the common Muslim, focusing on making participants lay preachers with periodic commitments that involve staying away from their residences, families, and workplaces. According to one estimate, TJ today has 80 million followers (Taylor 2009) in more than 200 countries.

Data Collection

The data for this study was collected from 2012-2016. As part of a more formal ethnography, the first author then undertook a 40-day sojourn with 10 other TJ participants. After the sojourn, purposive sampling was used to choose an additional 13 informants to interview to achieve better triangulation (Ritchie et al. 2013).

Findings

From the data, we found that food consumption in TJ sojourns subverts the everyday social and economic hierarchies present in Pakistani life. Our analysis yields two thematic explanations behind this temporary collapse in social boundaries: changing causes (religious cause versus the everyday routine of earning to sustain and consume); and bringing everyone to the same consumption lifestyle. While these themes are exposed during TJ activities, they are temporal in their effect to linger on post-TJ and differ by the socioeconomic profiles of the participants and their connection with the movement.

Discussion

From the results of this study, we can derive some contributory notes for existing literature. First, food consumption can be a social bridging activity. It has been previously established that where you eat, how you eat, and with whom you eat signifies social power or lack of it (Bourdieu 1984). Organizations in Pakistan like government institutes, corporations, and schools (where teacher and student separation is evident) use differing meal consumption practices (place, style, and group) to signal their social superiority. TJ participation challenges the strongly embedded social stratification prevalent in Pakistani society. Food consumption appears to be an exemplar of this practice.

Second, changing ideological causes can help lessen social divides. The foundation stone for driving the motivation of TJ travelers is their belief for success in a Hereafter which is accomplished through sacrificing and working for a higher spiritual cause in this world. We learn that a cause that is promoted to be larger than the everyday routines of working to earn, providing and caring for the family, and consuming to live can be a means to displace the social understandings that govern world citizens. In this regard, an egalitarian-motivated social cause, can aid in reducing barriers due to economic divides.

Third, while the concept of sharing has already been noted to be a means of bringing people closer (Belk 2010), this study illuminates that sharing can be a means of solving a cardinal social problem.

We additionally note that this study is limited in its focus to address economic disparity, while not considering other forms of inequality (religious, gender, etc.).

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Made by Mistake: When Mistakes Increase Product Preference
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Imagine a pastry chef is making a new batch of chocolate. Not paying attention, the chef leaves the chocolate in the oven for an extra five minutes by mistake, resulting in the chocolate having a different taste than the chef had intended. Would learning of the chef’s mistake increase or decrease consumer preference for the chocolate?

Intuition and past research suggest that the knowledge of a mistake (i.e., careless action) involved in the making of a product would decrease consumer preference. Indeed, prior work reveals that mistakes are perceived as undesirable and often result in negative inferences about the person or company that made the mistake (Chesney and Su 2010; Michael 1976; Palmer, Simmons, and de Kervenoael 2010). Consequently, individuals and companies tend to avoid sharing information about their mistakes with others (Edmondson 1996; Michael 1976; Stefaniak and Robertson 2010; Uribe et al. 2002). Despite this previous literature, we propose that knowledge of a mistake in the creation of a product can ironically enhance consumer preference for that product. We propose that this preference for products “made by mistake” is not limited to mistakes that enhance a product, but also extends to mistakes that detract from a product.

We posit that this preference results from how consumers reason about the relationship between intention and action. Specifically, we draw from a large body of work on the intentionality bias (Begue et al. 2010; Kana et al. 2015; Rosset 2008; Rosset and Rottman 2014; Spunt, Meyer and Lieberman 2015), which has found that people tend to assume that actions by agents (e.g., individuals, companies, etc.) are done intentionally. We propose that a product made by mistake deviates from this assumption, and thus, is perceived as more improbable than when the same product is made with full intent. In turn, this perceived improbability (for both products that are improved or worsened by a mistake) leads consumers to perceive the product as more unique and thus to prefer it. We test these predictions in a dataset of eBay auction sales, nine lab studies, and an additional study conducted in the field. We outline four of these studies below.

Conceptualization Of Mistake
The current research examines consumer preference for products made by mistake versus otherwise identical products made with full intent. We define a mistake as “an error in action, calculation, opinion, or judgment caused by poor reasoning, carelessness, insufficient knowledge, etc.” (Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary 2001). Importantly, a mistake is defined by an outcome’s cause (e.g., a careless deviation from intent) but not its valence (e.g., whether the outcome is positive or negative). For instance, returning to the example of the chef who mistakenly left the chocolate in the oven for five extra minutes, this mistake could have a positive outcome (the chocolate could be enhanced), negative outcome (the chocolate could be worsened), or neutral outcome (the chocolate could not be affected). Regardless of the outcome’s valence, the extra cooking time is a mistake because it is both a deviation from the chef’s intent and the result of carelessness. Thus, in our conceptualization of a mistake, consumers have to perceive the product as a result of an action that both deviates from the creator’s intent and is careless in nature.

Empirical Evidence

Study 1
Study 1 examined the preference for products made by mistake in a consequential choice setting. Participants learned about a new chocolate that either was (or was not) the result of a mistake. They were then given the choice of receiving either the chocolate or extra monetary compensation. A chi-square analysis revealed that the chocolate made by mistake was chosen (88.6%) more often than the chocolate that was made intentionally (70.3%), $\chi^2(df = 2, N = 144) = 7.31, p = .007$.

Study 2
Study 2 examined whether people still prefer a product made by mistake even when the mistake detracts from a product (i.e., a drawing of a face that is tarnished by a pen scribble). To examine this prediction, participants viewed a drawing of a face with a scribble, and either read information about the artist which included the fact that the artist made a mistake while making the drawing (in the mistake condition), read information about the artist which included the fact that the artist did not make a mistake while making the drawing (in the no mistake condition), or did not read anything about the artist (in the control condition). Thus, this design also examined our theorizing that people still prefer products made by mistake even after they experience them. As predicted, participants were more likely to purchase a drawing in the mistake condition ($M = 2.61, SD = 1.73$) compared to both the intention condition ($M = 2.05, SD = 1.44$; Fisher’s LSD: $p = .004, d = 0.35$) and the control condition ($M = 2.13, SD = 1.53$; Fisher’s LSD: $p = .031, d = 0.29$), which did not differ from each other (Fisher’s LSD: $p = .734$). Willingness to pay data revealed the same pattern, $F(298) = 5.25, p = .006$. Planned contrasts followed the same pattern, wherein participants were willing to pay more for the drawing in the mistake condition ($M = 3.11, SD = 3.28$) compared to both the intention condition ($M = 1.81, SD = 2.54$; Fisher’s LSD: $p = .002, d = 0.44$), and the control condition ($M = 2.28, SD = 2.79$; Fisher’s LSD: $p = .041, d = 0.27$), which did not differ from each other (Fisher’s LSD: $p = .257$).

Study 3
Study 3 provided converging evidence for the proposed mechanism via a moderation and mediation approach. Specifically, we predicted that if consumers are made aware that a particular product creator is likely to make a mistake, perceptions of the improbability of that creator making a mistake will decrease and the preference will attenuate. We tested this prediction in a 2 (Expertise: Novice vs. Expert) \times 2 (Creation Process: Mistake vs. Intention) between-subjects design. In the expert conditions, participants read that the creator was a hip-hop producer who works in the recording industry. In the novice conditions, participants read that the creator was a community college administrator taking a music production class, and that the class assignments included doing recording sessions. We adapted this expertise manipulation from Karmarkar and Tormala (2010). Participants then learned that during a recent recording session, the sound of the creator’s breath was added to a song. This addition was either intentional (in the intention condition) or made by mistake (in the mistake condition) and it enhanced the overall sound and flow of the song.
As predicted, the interaction between expertise and creation process on choice was significant ($b = 1.29, p = .029$). In the expert conditions, participants preferred the song when it was made by mistake (67.4%) compared to when it was made intentionally (39.5%; $b = 1.15, p = .012$). In the novice conditions, there was no difference in song preference when it was made by mistake (49.1%) versus intentionally (52.4%; $b = .13, p = .721$). Further analysis revealed a significant interaction between expertise and creation process on perceived improbability, $F(1, 198) = 3.93, p = .049$. Consistent with participants’ song decisions, the song was perceived as more improbable when an expert made it by mistake ($M = 4.37, SD = 1.77$) compared to when the song was made intentionally ($M = 3.47, SD = 1.41$; Fisher’s LSD: $p = .013; d = .56$). In contrast, when a novice made the song, there were no differences between the mistake ($M = 4.26, SD = 1.75$) and intention ($M = 4.29, SD = 1.55$) conditions, $F < 1$. The analysis also revealed the predicted interaction between expertise and creation process on uniqueness, $F(1, 198) = 7.67, p = .006$. The song was perceived as more unique when an expert made it by mistake ($M = 4.45, SD = 1.03$) compared to when the song was made intentionally ($M = 3.96, SD = 1.16$) (Fisher’s LSD: $p = .047; d = .45$). In contrast, when a novice made the song, the opposite was the case—when the novice made the song intentionally it was deemed as marginally more unique ($M = 4.44, SD = 1.22$) than when it was made by mistake ($M = 4.04, SD = 1.08$; Fisher’s LSD: $p = .055; d = .35$).

To test our proposed process, we ran a serial mediation model at each level of the expertise condition, with improbability and uniqueness as sequential mediators. As predicted, the model revealed that when an expert made a mistake (vs. made the song intentionally), the song was perceived to be more improbable, which increased perceived uniqueness, resulting in greater song choice (95% CI for the indirect effect: [-.7446, -.0465]). Importantly, we tested the reverse model with uniqueness preceding perceptions of improbability, and we found no mediating path from uniqueness and improbability leading to song choice (95% CI for the indirect effect: [-.2560, .0562]). Lastly, as predicted, for novices, there was no significant indirect effect from improbability to uniqueness leading to song choice (95% CI for the indirect effect: [-.1157, .0264]).

Study 4

Study 4 examined the preference for products made by mistake in a real market setting. We examined eBay auction sales of original photographs—some of which were made by mistake and some of which were not. The mistakes originated from a variety of causes, including double exposure, blurriness, and the photographer’s finger in the exposure (i.e., finger bombing). Critically, all photographs were advertised as original, with no copies and reproductions of any kind available. In other words, all photographs (both those with mistakes and those without) were one-of-a-kind and hence equally rare. The photographs were sold on eBay to the consumer who submitted the highest bid. We ran a regression on the price data with the mistake dummy code as a predictor variable, and the sale date and photograph size as control variables. The regression revealed a significant effect of photograph size on sale price, such that larger photographs sold for more money ($b = .529, p < .001$). There was no effect of sale date on sale price ($b = -.008, p = .292$). Most relevant to our focal theorizing, the regression also revealed that photographs with mistakes (vs. without mistakes) sold for more money ($b = 6.08, p < .001$). In other words, photographs with a mistake sold for a premium controlling for both photograph size and sale date.

Thus, we observe in an actual market context a premium for products with a mistake over products without a mistake. We posit, in line with our experimental evidence, that this preference is driven by the perception that a photograph with a mistake is a more improbable occurrence than a photograph made with full intent, and thus is conferred with more uniqueness and value. It is interesting to note that photographs containing arguably negative properties (i.e., blurriness) received a premium relative to those containing no such negative property. Thus, along with Study 2, these results may provide converging evidence that the preference for products made by mistake emerges not only in cases in which the mistake enhances the product, but also when it detracts from it.

General Discussion

Individuals and companies often avoid advertising their mistakes (Edmondson 1996; Michael 1976; Stefaniak and Robertson 2010; Uribe et al. 2002). However, we find that consumers sometimes prefer products made by mistake to otherwise identical products made intentionally. We identify the conditions under which this preference emerges, and find that this preference is driven by the perception that a product made by mistake is more improbable than a product made without mistake. This perceived improbability increases product uniqueness perceptions and subsequent preference.

In support of this process, we find that the preference for products made by mistake manifests both when the mistake enhances (Study 1 & Study 3) and detracts from (Study 2 & Study 4) the product. Study 3 provided moderation support for this process: When the creator had a high likelihood of making a mistake (a novice), the preference for products made by mistake was attenuated. Study 3 also found full process evidence, wherein perceptions of the improbability of the product’s creation enhanced perceptions of product uniqueness and preference. Finally, Study 4 documented the external validity of the current results—consumers pay more for products made by mistake in a real market setting.

Theoretical Implications

The current research is the first to reveal that consumers prefer products made by mistake, and that this preference emerges because mistakes are perceived to be improbable and the resulting product more unique. Beyond documenting a new phenomenon, our findings illuminate a novel mechanism through which information about the creation process influences consumer preference. We find that consumers differentially prefer identical products depending on the improbability of their creation. Further, we find that a typically negative occurrence (a mistake) actually increases product preference. This finding contributes to a growing body of work showcasing the positive effects of negative information (Berger, Sorensen, and Rasmussen, 2010; Ein-Gar, Shiv and Tormala, 2012; Reich and Tormala, 2013; Reich and Wheeler, 2016).

Second, our work contributes to the underexplored role of intentions in consumer preference. By focusing on mistakes in particular, we reveal a novel process by which intentionality plays a role in consumer preference. A product made by mistake deviates from the intentionally biased (Begue et al. 2010; Rosset 2008; Rosset and Rottman 2014; Spunt et al. 2015), and consumers thus perceive the process of making a product by mistake as more improbable and hence more unique than the same product made with full intent. Future work could examine other potential consequences of the intentionality bias in the context of how consumers assess the actions of individuals and companies.

Finally, our findings also contribute to work on the role of uniqueness in consumer preference. Prior work has focused on individual differences in consumers’ need for uniqueness (Simonson and Nowlis 2000; Tian et al. 2001) or on how uniqueness is distinct from other dimensions of value (Bhattacharjee and Mogilner 2014;
Keinan and Kivetz (2011). The present work illuminates a conceptual antecedent of perceptions of product uniqueness. Specifically, we find that product uniqueness stems from the improbability of the product’s creation. Our work suggests that these process features do not necessarily have to positive, but rather unlikely. We encourage future research to examine other antecedents that might enhance product uniqueness.

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Active Consumption: How the Architecture of the Experience Activates Consumer Engagement and Enjoyment

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Prior work has established the benefits of experiential over material consumption on consumer wellbeing (Nicolao, Irwin and Goodman 2009; Gilovich, Kumar and Jampol 2014), however, little attention has been devoted to the factors that enhance the very same experience. For instance, two individuals may attend the same art show or listen to the same song, but one might enjoy these experiences immensely, while the other feels disengaged. Holding constant the experience, what factors influence the extent to which consumers more or less enjoy it?

In this article, we focus on the role of providing the architecture of the experience on subsequent consumer engagement and enjoyment. Past research suggests two competing intuitions about the influence of prior information more generally on consumer enjoyment of an experience. On the one hand, revealing information could attenuate the enjoyment by both disrupting flow and reducing potential for surprise (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). On the other hand, other work has suggested that prior knowledge can increase enjoyment by enhancing consumer involvement (Bloom 2010; Humphrey, Thomas, and Joshua Gutwill 2005).

To reconcile these competing hypotheses, we propose that certain kinds of knowledge (as opposed to knowledge more generally) can enhance experiences. Specifically, we propose that information about the architecture of an experience uniquely enhances enjoyment relative to other forms of knowledge. Architectural information is defined as knowledge about the structure, arrangement, and/or framework of the experience (adapted from Fischer, Winter and Aier 2010; Winter, Buckl, Matthes, and Schweda 2010). For instance, in a song, the architectural information would be the arrangement of the chords and verses, but not the actual lyrics. In this way, architectural information is not about the content per se of the experience, but specifically about the organization or outline of it. Further, architectural information is embedded within the experience itself.

We propose that this combination of features leads architectural information to enhance experience in contrast to other kinds of knowledge. Because architectural information is embedded within the experience itself, consumers are cued to seek it as the experience unfolds, at the same time, because only architectural information, and not content, has been revealed, the potential for surprise is maintained. In some sense, architectural information is in a “sweet spot” where it is just enough information to induce engagement but not enough to induce boredom.

In the following studies, we test the basic hypothesis that architectural information enhances an experience relative to the same experience without prior architectural information. We then test people’s intuitions about the influence of architectural information on their experience. The last two studies employ a mediation and a moderation approach respectively in order to test our proposed process. Specifically, we test whether exposure to architectural information increases active participation and subsequent enjoyment of the experience. Finally, we contrast the effect of architectural information to other forms of knowledge about the experience.

Empirical Evidence

Study 1

Study 1 examined the basic effect by varying whether architectural, neutral, or no information was provided prior to the same experience. We predicted that the same experience would be enhanced by the architectural information relative to the other two conditions. Specifically, in all three conditions, participants read that they would listen to the song “Don’t Forget Me” by the Red Hot Chili Peppers. In the architecture condition, before listening to the song, participants read about the structure of the song (i.e., the chords). To control for cognitive load, participants in the neutral information condition, prior to listening to the song, read a paragraph of equivalent length on a neutral topic. Finally, in the control condition, participants proceeded to listen to the song with no further information provided. Participants in all three conditions then listened to the song and reported how much they had enjoyed listening to it. As predicted, planned contrasts revealed that participants enjoyed the song more when they were given information about the architecture of the song ($M = 5.56, SD = 1.41$) compared to when they were given unrelated information ($M = 4.80, SD = 1.85$) and when they were given no additional information ($M = 5.12, SD = 1.75$), $t(300) = -2.86, p = .004, d = 0.38$. Further, the neutral information and control condition not differ from each other, $t(300) = 1.38, p = .17$. Of note, the effect of condition on enjoyment did not interact with prior familiarity with the song ($p = .23$).

Study 2

In Study 2, we were interested in examining whether people intuit that information about the architecture of the experience will enhance their consumption experience. To test this, we asked participants to predict how information about the architecture of a song would influence how others would enjoy the song. Specifically, participants were asked to indicate whether people who were provided with information about the structure of a song would enjoy it more relative to those who were given no information about the structure. Consistent with our hypothesis, most participants (68%) predicted that the song would be enjoyed more in the no information condition compared to the architecture information condition ($\chi^2(1) = 29.42, p < .001$). In addition, this pattern of results did not vary as a function of familiarity with the song ($\chi^2(1) = .86, p = .355$). Thus, we find that people do not intuit that architectural information will enhance enjoyment.

Study 3

Study 3 had two aims. The first was to test our proposed process. Specifically, we proposed that information about architecture enhances enjoyment because it prompts consumers to actively seek it within the experience itself. This “structure-seeking” increases active participation in the experience and subsequently enhances enjoyment. The second aim was to test whether this active participation is uniquely related to architectural information as opposed to general knowledge about the experience. To do so, we also manipulated the type of knowledge about the experience (structure vs. general knowledge).
Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: architecture, general song information and control. As in Study 1, in all conditions participants read that they would listen to the song “Don’t Forget Me” by the Red Hot Chili Peppers. In the architecture condition, participants were provided with the same structure information as in Study 1. In the general song information condition, participants read information about the band. In the control condition participants listened to the song with no further information provided. Next, participants listened to the song and reported how much they enjoyed it using the same measure as in Study 1. To directly test our proposed process, participants then completed three randomized items. To capture structure-seeking, participants were asked to rate the extent to which they looked for structure when listening to the song (on a scale from 1: Not at all; 7: Very much). To assess active engagement, participants responded to the following two items: “When you were listening to the song, to what extent did you feel you were an active participant?” (1: Passive - 7: Active); “When you were listening to the song, to what extent did you feel you were an active listener?” (1: Not at all - 7: Very much). These two items were then combined into an active engagement composite (α = .69).

Consistent with our theorizing, planned contrasts revealed that participants enjoyed the song more in the architecture condition (M = 5.67, SD = 1.43) compared to both the general information (M = 4.82, SD = 1.64) and the control (M = 4.98, SD = 1.63) conditions, t(167) = -3.04, p = .003, d = .51, which did not differ from each other, t(167) = .54, p = .59. Further, in line with our proposed mechanism, participants in the architecture condition reported seeking structure more (M = 5.24, SD = 1.54) compared to both the general information (M = 4.18, SD = 1.69) and the control (M = 4.24, SD = 1.69) conditions, t(167) = -3.89, p < .001, d = .64, which did not differ from each other, t(167) = .18, p = .86. Further, active engagement paralleled the structure-seeking pattern, with participants in the architecture condition indicating higher active engagement with the song (M = 5.71, SD = 1.13) compared to both the general information (M = 5.03, SD = 1.39) and the control (M = 4.72, SD = 1.66) conditions, t(167) = -3.70, p < .001, d = .62, which did not differ from each other, t(167) = -1.17, p = .25.

Finally, we conducted a serial mediation model with bootstrapping (Hayes 2013), to test whether structure seeking and subsequent active engagement mediate the relationship between condition and enjoyment. The model revealed that indeed, participants in the architecture before song condition sought structure more, which led them to be more actively engaged with the song, resulting in greater enjoyment (95% CI for the indirect effect: [.0236, .2895]).

General Discussion

Across four studies, we find that the very same experience is enjoyed differently depending on what information people are exposed to prior to consumption. Specifically, we find that architectural information (as opposed to general knowledge or no knowledge) enhances enjoyment. Because this information is embedded within the experience itself, consumers are prompted to seek the structure of the experience as it unfolds. This, in turn, increases active participation in the experience and subsequent enjoyment.

Our work has several theoretical and practical implications. While prior research has focused on the contrast between experiential versus material consumption or on comparing different kinds of experiences (Bhattacharjee and Mogilner 2013; Nicolao, Irwin and Goodman 2009; Gilovich, Kumar and Jampol 2014), little attention has been devoted to what factors differentially enhance the very same experience. While experiences maybe more enjoyable relative to material goods, consumers do not always find experiences engaging. Our work explores a novel antecedent to enhancing experiential consumption—prior information about the architecture of the experience. Future work could further unpack other antecedents of active engagement in experiences.

Companies and marketers can use this work to be more cognizant of what kinds of information to reveal to consumers prior to consumption. Our work suggests that consumers do not always have the most accurate intuitions about what information or knowledge will enhance their experiences. Understanding what facilitates consumers to move from passive to more active consumption is a fruitful area for researchers and practitioners alike.

REFERENCES


Praise for Blame: Consumer Inferences following Cause Marketing
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Companies often engage in cause marketing (CM), defined here as any corporate communication of a company’s prosocial activities. A substantial literature is dedicated to exploring how CM produces positive consumer outcomes (see Peloza and Shang 2011), with recent focus on consumers’ inferences of the company’s motives (Reich and Armstrong Soule 2016; Sen, Du, and Bhattacharya 2016). We diverge from extant research in this regard, examining consumer inferences around blame. We propose and show that CM may be implicitly communicating blame for several blame targets around the issue. Crucially, the extent to which consumers perceive this blame may benefit or harm to the company depending on how well it fits with consumers’ own blame for the same issue (i.e., consumer-company “blame fit”).

In establishing these effects, we contribute to several relevant literatures. First, we reconceptualize and apply blame in novel ways. Specifically, we show that blame may be communicated through CM and inferred by consumers, irrespective of a company’s intent to blame. Second, we introduce a novel construct, blame fit, and establish its positive relationship with praise for the company. To our knowledge, this is the first demonstration of blame as a praiseworthy action. Last, we extend the scope of theoretical models of blame (e.g., Alicke 2000; Folkes, 1984; Klein and Dawar 2004; Malle, Guglielmo, and Monroe 2014), showing that an observer (e.g., consumer) may infer blame from another blame agent (e.g., company).

In a pilot study (N=75 undergraduate business students; M_age =21.24, SD_aage =2.34, 33.3% female), participants viewed an ad for an environmentally-friendly Toyota model, and reported whether they thought Toyota was blaming someone or something for environmental problems (0=No; 1=Yes). More than half of the sample (n=45, 60.0%), (74) =1.756, p=.083 responded affirmatively. The company did not explicitly blame anything, but the ad led a substantial proportion of consumers to infer blame.

Study 1A (N=200 MTurk workers; M_aage =38.99, SD_aage =13.06; 58.0% female) tested the blame fit hypothesis, i.e., that greater fit between inferred blame and consumers’ own blame increases praise for the company. Participants viewed a fictional Ben & Jerry’s ad depicting their cow mascot holding a sign with a twisted gun and reading “Stop the Violence.” On nine-point semantic differential scales, they rated (1) perceptions that Ben & Jerry’s was blaming four separate targets (violent media, the NRA, Congress, and violent individuals) for gun violence, (2) their own blame for these four targets, and (3) their praise for the company. Measured covariates were pre-existing attitudes toward Ben & Jerry’s, urge to help, issue seriousness, and political orientation.

We first tested interactions between inferred company blame and corresponding consumer blame for the four blame targets, with praise as the dependent variable. Results supported the blame fit hypothesis via significant interactions on praise when treating the NRA (b=.07, SE=.02, p<.001), Congress (b=.09, SE=.02, p<.001), and violent individuals (b=.07, SE=.04, p=.06) as the blame target (see the figure, panel A), but not when violent media was the blame target (p=.881). As an alternative test, we created an index of overall blame fit by calculating the absolute value of the difference between inferred blame and consumer blame for each target, and averaging these four difference scores (α=.653) such that lower scores represented greater fit. Regressing praise on blame fit showed the predicted negative relationship (b=-.69, SE=.10, p<.001), which remained significant (p<.001) when controlling for the covariates. These results suggest that inferred blame may determine praise for the company depending on how well it fits consumers’ own blame judgments.

Study 1B (N=92 MTurk workers; M_aage =36.70, SD_aage =12.60; 47.8% female) was identical to study 1A, except that blame measures were dichotomized (0=Congress, 1=Violent Individuals). We tested an inferred blame × consumer blame interaction on praise, and results further supported the blame fit hypothesis (b=2.22, SE=1.23, p=.074; see the figure, panel B). We also created a new blame fit variable, coded as 1 when participants selected the same target for both blame questions, and 0 when they did not. As expected, praise was greater among those who perceived blame fit (n=53, M=6.47, SD=2.73) than among those who did not (n=39, M=4.77, SD=2.78, t(90)=2.935, p=.004). This relationship held (p=.014) while controlling for the covariates.

Study 1C (N=185 MTurk workers; M_aage =33.01, SD_aage =8.61; 42.2% female) used a manipulation of explicit blame, testing whether blame fit effects would manifest similarly as in cases of inferred blame. The procedure was similar to studies 1A and 1B, except the ad included an additional block of text reading either “Unregulated sale of guns harms us all” (blame Congress condition) or “Gang violence harms us all” (blame violent individuals condition). Perceived blame (as manipulation checks) and consumer blame for these two targets were measured as in study 1A. Supporting the effectiveness of the manipulation, those in the blame Congress (individuals) condition perceived greater company blame for Congress (violent individuals; p<.001). Moreover, a condition × consumer blame interaction on praise was observed when treating consumer blame for Congress as the moderator (b=.21, SE=.11, p=.057; see the figure, panel C), but not when consumer blame for individuals was the moderator (p=.844). This study demonstrated that inferred blame may function as though it were explicit blame from the company, and that blame fit affects praise similarly in both cases.

A pilot study established the existence of inferred blame in response to CM, and three follow-up studies showed that the relationship between blame fit and praise appears robust. Pragmatically, this implies that CM may be communicating more than intended. Rather than leaving blame perceptions to consumers’ inferences, companies may benefit from explicitly blaming one target or another, depending on the target audience. This research also expands blame theory to include novel constructs (“inferred blame” and “blame fit”), outcomes (blame as a praiseworthy action), and perspectives (beliefs about another agent’s blame). Additional research may build on the present findings by examining boundary conditions to the observed effects. For instance, the presence or absence of a possible causal agent (Malle et al. 2014) may determine whether any blame is inferred.

REFERENCES


Using a Neural Network Model to Assess Advertising Effectiveness:
A Validation of the Strategy Assessment (Strata) Model
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
In this paper we draw a parallel between means-end decision theory and neural network analysis and apply this common perspective to empirically validate an advertising strategy assessment model with respect to predicting purchase intent. The results of the meta-assessment of 240 television ads offer strong support for the neural network-based model.

Introduction
Neuroscience is an emerging field of consumer research that has garnered much interest among advertising researchers in the hope that neuroscience tools can help them better understand why customers prefer some products over others (Nobel, 2012; Plassmann et al., 2012). This ambitious goal relies on several neuro- or brain imaging, techniques deployed to reveal the hidden elements of the consumer decision process to better understand how a product or an ad engages the pleasurable reward center in consumers’ brains (Karmarkar 2011; Nobel 2012; Smidts et al., 2014). Advantages of neuromarketing approaches are that they are potentially faster and cheaper than traditional advertising research tools that ask customers directly for their thoughts, feelings, and decision-making strategies (Ariely and Berns, 2010). Although cost savings is one possible outcome of this evolving area of research, most experts believe that the potential contribution of neuroscience to advertising is its ability to guide theory generation that can be used to shape new models of consumer decision making, and its ability to access and/or supplement traditional models of consumer responses to advertising currently in practice (Ariely and Berns, 2010; Plassmann et al., 2012; Smidts et al., 2014; Yoon et al., 2012).

Although the importance of neuroimaging studies of advertising is expected to increase, to date neuroimaging’s relevance for practice has been limited (Ariely and Berns, 2010; Smidts et al., 2014). Studies that have used neuroimaging to predict consumer choice in response stimuli have not been found to be more predictive than consumers’ own self-reports (Knutson et al., 2007; Plassmann et al., 2012).

One area of neuroscience that has advanced our understanding of consumer decision making is neural network research which was inspired by the neural architecture of the human brain (West et al., 1997). The strength of this approach is its ability to mimic the brain’s function. From a cognitive perspective, neural network models are consistent with a spreading activation model of memory making neural network models well-suited for representing judgment and decision making that involves the processing of information (Bhatt, 2012; Chowdury and Samuel, 2014; Payne et al., 1993; West et al., 1997). Therefore, we posit that neural network research is a particularly apt approach to better understand advertising effectiveness (Briesch and Rajagopal, 2010; Curry and Moutinho, 1993).

In this paper we apply a neural network approach to assess a theoretical model of consumer decision making used in advertising research, the Strata model (Reynolds, Gengler and Howard, 1995; Reynolds and Rochon, 1991). Specifically, we report on a meta-assessment of 240 television ads across a variety of product categories and levels of finish (finished ads and animatics) that served as stimuli for diverse samples of consumers. Study participants responded to questions via a computer-driven, tailored interviewing system such that the order of questioning reflected the spreading activation mod-

el underlying neural network theory. That is, to validate the neural network-based Strata model, we empirically assess if the neural connecting linkages caused by a given advertisement are related to an increase in the likelihood of purchase.

Background

Neural Networks

A neural network is a “connectionist” model of brain behavior often used to understand human cognition (West et al., 1997). The interconnections, or linkages between neurons, are referred to as “synapses.” Neural network models resemble the brain’s decision-making process where input neurons receive stimuli which are then fed into a pattern matching process yielding a decision (Bhatt, 2012; Curry and Moutinho, 1993). The fundamental principle of a neural network is that when a neuron is activated, or fired, it can then cross a synapse gap to activate another ‘connected’ neuron. Put simply, neural networks models are computational models intended to represent biological neural networks in the brain and are used by researchers to solve certain kinds of problems (e.g., Briesch and Rajagopal, 2010; Chowdury and Samuel, 2013). The basic logistical calculus of a neural network is that a neuron receives inputs, processes those inputs, and generates an output (McCulloch and Pitts, 1943). In general, neural networks do not follow a linear path as it is believed that information is processed collectively throughout the entire network of neurons, also called nodes.

It is worth noting that with respect to decision making Hebb’s (1949) synaptic plasticity postulate suggests that one’s neural network is strengthened over time, becoming more efficient and efficacious as a result of repeated activation (i.e., stimuli exposure) and personal experience. Thus, neural network analysis can be used to understand consumer decision making with respect to a problem that a product or service solves and subsequently offers the potential to assess advertising effectiveness.

In the next section we introduce a well-known consumer decision-making model, means-end theory (Gutman, 1982) and draw parallels to a neural network model of decision making.

Means-End Theory and Research Methods

A commonly utilized and frequently-referenced framework of consumer decision making is means-end theory (Gutman, 1982) and its associated research methodology, laddering (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988; Reynolds and Phillips, 2009). The laddering methodology begins with a trained interviewer asking a series of questions to a consumer with the goal of abstracting to the higher-order meanings that drive the consumer’s decision making. The first questions of a laddering interviewer usually elicit a distinction between two stimuli, or choice options, (e.g., Most preferred brand [Starbucks] vs. Second choice [Illy]), with regard to a stated preference (i.e., why do you prefer Starbucks to Illy?) or actual consumption (i.e., why do you drink more Starbucks than Illy?). Then the interviewer probes the consumer’s answers with some version of the question, Why is that important to you? The interviewer uses each answer as the basis for the subsequent probe moving the consumer up the “ladder of abstraction” from [1] Attribute distinction to [2] Functional Consequences to [3] Psycho-Social Consequences to [4] Personal Values.

The laddering methodology’s levels of abstraction are isomorphic to the neural network approach of obtaining the relevant connec-
tions both between and across the decision-based nodes. The result of a laddering interview is a complete means-end chain consisting of four concepts (i.e., nodes) and three adjacent, direct connections (i.e., linkages) [1-2; 2-3; 3-4] as well as indirect connections [1-3; 1-4; 3-4]. The end result of a laddering study is a directed graph depicting the “network” of direct and indirect connections across nodes for a given sample of consumers. This graphical network is called a Consumer Decision Map (CDM) as it illustrates the consumers’ key decision nodes and their dominant associative connections.

It is worth noting that means-end theory may be viewed as a top-down approach to understanding consumer decision making, while the laddering methodology is bottom-up whose goal is to identify the end-state that defines the motivating dynamic of the decision structure. That is, the lower levels develop their importance by satisfying the respective, adjacent higher levels, while the laddering methodology is initiated by a distinction that is typically at the lowest, attribute level. Thus, the goal of the laddering methodology is to uncover a network of meanings, which also defines the association network of connections, or linkages. Thus, the CDM may be viewed as a special case of neural network model: one that focuses on only the aggregate, relevant decision-making elements assuming that the levels of abstraction reflect the underlying decision-making process.

Advertising Effectiveness

Reynolds and Rochon (1991) draw a meaningful distinction between traditional copy testing methods and advertising strategy assessment which they operationalize as a neural network between the means-end levels of the MECCAS framework (Reynolds and Craddock, 1988). They suggest a model which is driven by a computer presentation of questions relating to what the ad caused them to think about that are tailored to the respondent depending on their prior answers that is comprised of: [1] affect-related questions (both Product and Ad), [2] assessment of the strength of communication of ‘nodes’ by level (the statements are developed from prior laddering research) and [3] the level of association between the adjacent-level nodes that were ‘clearly communicated’. During this tailored interview each ad is viewed four times. Noteworthy is that the Strata methodology requires that two ads are assessed by the respondent at the same time during the interview session to avoid the respondent over-analyzing a given ad (thereby avoiding the ‘expert effect’). The summary quantitative output provided for a given advertisement across a sample of respondents.

- Average node (0-100) strength with a two-step rating [a] if the node concept is ‘clearly communicated’ or not, and [b] if the node concept is determined to be ‘clearly’ communicated the respondent is asked if it is ‘perfectly communicated’ or (just) ‘clearly’ (Perfectly is scored as a 100, Clearly is scored as 62 and Not Clearly is 0). (Note: for the predetermined key strategic elements if the concept was ‘clearly communicated’, the respondent is asked what specifically in the ad was communicated that led to endorsing that concept statement. Analysis of this qualitative data has used to understand what executional cues activate the higher level meanings.)

- Linkage strength is computed by asking for only those nodes that are ‘clearly communicated’ between adjacent levels the degree of ‘associative meaning’ caused by the ad. A Venn diagram defines the graphical rating scale. The computation of the summary index is based upon a probabilistic function derived from multiplicative model of Node i x Node ii x Linkage i-ii, which is computed from a 0,1 or 2 score for each node and their linkage, meaning the maximal linkage score possible for each connection is 8. The likelihood of possible scores is used to convert the multiplicative score to a 0-9 connection score.

The Affect ratings are scored in the same manner as the node ratings (0-100 scale), with a slightly modified question format.

Meta-Assessment Framework

The Strata model permits the assessment of the validity of interpreting the linkage connectivity as a neural network, both in relation to the correspondence of an individual level and overall combining all three linkages (Low=Product Bridge; Middle=Personal Relevance Bridge; Highest=Value Bridge), to the advertising effectiveness dependent measure of ‘Motivates Purchase’.

Sample

The 240 ads in the sample were from eight countries with roughly half from the United States. There were 131 finished ads and 109 animatics in the sample. Overall, the respective number of ads for each of the four general ‘product’ categories of ads were: n=131 beverages (including both alcoholic and non-alcoholic); 56 automobiles; 27 trade organizations; and, 26 ads across a diverse variety of consumer goods. The average number of the sample for each ad assessment was 42. The respondent sample composition was typically a combination of ‘most often’ brand users and ‘competitive brand most often’ users, balancing for gender and age. For the trade organization samples only gender and age were used.

Findings: Correlations and R2 with Purchase Motivation

Table 1 summarizes the zero order correlations with Purchase Motivation for 240 ads with respect to the three linkage scores levels (L→M→H) representing the largest nodes-in-common ‘ladder’ connecting from Lowest (Message Element) to Highest (Personal Value) and the simple sum of the three levels, which represents a ‘neural-based’ strategy model L+M+H, compared to the traditional copy testing proxy of Ad Affect. The square of the correlation representing the variance accounted for can be viewed to contrast the magnitude of the difference between the neural-based approach to quantifying overall strategy assessment to traditional copy testing. The likelihood of the statistical difference between the correlations can be summarized by a z-score reflecting likelihood, z-[S-A], based upon the ad sample size.

<p>| Table 1. Correlations of Connections and Ad Affect with Purchase Intent (Motivation) |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#Ads</th>
<th>Lowest</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Highest</th>
<th>Sl+M+H</th>
<th>Ad Affect</th>
<th>z[S-A]</th>
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<td>240</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.61</td>
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<td>r²2</td>
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</table>

The correlations by linkage level with Purchase Motivation are, of course, all statistically significant. And, the difference between the Lowest level of .70 and the Highest of .61 is not statistically different. The key overall model correlational contrast of the [L+M+H] of .78 to Ad Affect of .45 reveals that the neural-based strategy model accounted for almost three times the variance as the traditional copy testing approach. The likelihood of that difference is represented by the z-score of 6.1. In sum, the neural framework underlying the decision process is validated.

Research Implications and Future Directions

Given that the Strata advertising assessment measures of neural connection are validated in terms of quantifying their effect on decision making, the general means-end approach grounded in under-
standing the consumer bases of competitive preferences to develop advertising strategy is also validated. There are several implications of these findings.

**Formalizing the Advertising Creative Development Challenge**

Given that these analyses strongly suggest the key to effective advertising is to cause the associative connections between the four nodes, asking the creative team to specify as precisely as possible what exactly in a proposed execution will result in the linkages being made provides a process to focus meaningful discussion and ongoing learning. (Gengler and Reynolds, 1995).

**Advances in Laddering Methods**

The central role of preference-based laddering to develop strategic positioning options, as well as the development of product-specific statements to be used in Strata for decades has involved one-on-one in-depth interviews. This significant time and cost limitation of this standard approach to laddering has been addressed by an internet-based, one-on-one interviewing system termed Stream, which has been shown to produce significantly higher quality data in a significantly more efficient manner (Reynolds and Phillips, 2009). The Stream software also contains an on-line coding function which greatly facilitates this tedious process, along with a decision segmentation methodology (Reynolds, 2006) which permits straight forward contrasts with traditional types of marketing research classification data and facilitates the strategy development process (Phillips, Reynolds, and Reynolds, 2010).

The likely next research advance will be the use of artificial intelligence (AI) software to conduct decision-based laddering interviews. The author is aware of one such system which has shown promise. Interestingly, because the software teaches the respondent how means-end-based decision making functions, including how choice trade-offs are framed (Reynolds, 2005), the AI approach to laddering results in very high respondent involvement with the questioning process.

**Summary**

To assess the neural theoretic underlying the identification of the decision network activated by advertising the Strata model (Reynolds and Rochon, 1991) was used. A meta-analysis of 240 ads was analyzed yielding data measuring the strength of cognitive association linkages (neuroscience) between levels abstraction (Means-end theory) caused by advertising stimuli. This aggregate data is seen to be highly related on a correlational basis to advertising effectiveness, operationalized as the level of Purchase Motivation for the advertised product.

The critical finding of this meta-analysis is that a decision-based methodological platform for understanding advertising effectiveness defined by directional changes in Purchase Motivation has been validated.

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The Intent to Persuade: Spontaneous Emotionality in Word-of-Mouth Communications

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumers provide online product reviews for reasons that range from a desire to help others to an effort to boost their own ego (e.g., Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004). One prominent self-serving motive among consumers is an intent to persuade others (Berger 2014). For example, individuals who want a restaurant to succeed might post and share a review to persuade others to dine there. Despite the recognition that people can be driven by the intent to persuade, far less research examines how this motive transforms how people communicate their views to others. To address this gap, we propose that the intent to persuade leads to subtle but detectable shifts in consumers’ emotionality. Moreover, we demonstrate people turn to emotionality even when such appeals can backfire.

The Intent to Persuade: A Catalyst for Emotionality

Influential models of emotion posit that emotions evolved not only to provide information to the person experiencing the emotion (Pham 2004), but also to influence others (Van Kleef 2009; Frijda and Mesquita 1994). Although research shows that emotional appeals from others can affect participants’ behavior (e.g., Van Kleef, De Dreu, and Manstead 2004; Clark and Taraban 1991), there is a relative lack of research demonstrating whether and when individuals themselves spontaneously increase their emotionality to impact others. In the present work, we propose and explore the idea that the intent to persuade acts as a catalyst for consumers to spontaneously engage in the use of emotionality.

An obstacle to answering this question for consumer communications is that many communications in the modern world occur primarily through text (e.g., online reviews), thereby making the measurement of emotionality difficult. However, Rocklage and Fazio (2015, 2016) have recently developed the Evaluative Lexicon (EL) – a computational linguistic tool that enables researchers to quantify language in terms of its implied emotionality. The EL allows researchers to quantify differences between more emotional adjectives such as “wonderful” and “lovable” versus more cognitive adjectives such as “helpful” and “excellent.” The EL has been validated through in-laboratory experiments as well as in natural, archival text.

The Current Research

Experiment 1 examined the link between the intent to persuade and emotionality. Participants wrote a review for one of 20 products (n = 778). To examine the extent of individuals’ use of emotionality in persuasion, we utilized topics that varied both in emotionality (hedonic versus utilitarian products) as well as content (books versus non-book products). All participants wrote a 5-star review. However, those in the “Persuade” condition were given the additional instructions to persuade others to purchase the product. Moreover, we compared the emotionality of these reviews to real-world 5-star reviews of the same products from Amazon.com (n = 840). These reviews provide a naturalistic baseline for the emotionality expressed toward these products. Across the 20 products, participants with the intent to persuade used greater emotionality compared to both those in the control condition as well as the real-world Amazon.com reviews.

Experiment 2 (n = 288) was designed to provide a further test of the relationship between the intent to persuade and emotionality. Moreover, it has been theorized that using emotionality to affect others can often be enacted without much deliberation due to its relatively overlearned association with impacting others’ behaviors (Frijda and Mesquita 1994). Therefore, we also manipulated the cognitive load participants experienced. To begin, we ensured that all participants had equal knowledge of the product they would write about. To this end, we had participants recall a novel they had read that they would issue 5 stars. Next, we manipulated cognitive load via a secondary task. Finally, we manipulated the intent to persuade more naturally using a referral program. Specifically, we informed half of the participants they would be paid $1.00 for each future participant who selected their book based on their review. We replicated the results from Experiment 1: individuals with the intent to persuade expressed greater emotionality than those in the control condition. Moreover, these results were not moderated by cognitive load; even under high load individuals used greater emotionality.

The pervasiveness of these effects raise the possibility that consumers may rely on emotional arguments even in situations when such appeals may be suboptimal. Previous work indicates rational appeals are more impactful on audiences with cognitively-based attitudes (Fabrigar and Petty 1999) and that emotional appeals can even backfire with cognitive audiences (Haddock et al. 2008). Will people continue to use more emotional appeals even when emotional appeals could backfire? Experiment 3 tested this possibility.

In Experiment 3, we used a similar procedure to Experiment 2 but we added conditions to test the effect of audience. Based on the results from a pilot study, we conducted a preregistered experiment (https://osf.io/vbuqn/). There were four conditions in the experiment (n = 781). Two of the conditions (control and “Persuade – No Group”) provided similar instructions as in Experiment 2. However, two additional “Persuade” conditions were given specific groups to persuade. Based on pretesting, those in the “Rationalists” condition were told their reviews would be shared with artists, dancers, and musicians from a group named “The Emotionalists.” Those in the “Rationalists” condition were told they would be shared with a group of scientists, mathematicians, and economic analysts named “The Society for Applied Rationality and Mathematics.” We replicated the results of Experiment 2: those incentivized to persuade used greater emotionality than the control condition. Most importantly, we found that those in the “Rationalists” condition also used greater emotionality compared to those in the control condition. Thus, despite previous research demonstrating the effectiveness of more rational, unemotional appeals for such individuals, participants continued to utilize emotionality.

Discussion

Although prior work has enumerated the motives consumers have for sharing information, little work has examined the consequences of these motives. We find that the intent to persuade led consumers to spontaneously intensify the emotionality of their language. This result occurred across topics and even in situations where emotional appeals might backfire. We also provide evidence that using emotionality may represent a default approach to persuasion that requires relatively few cognitive resources to implement.
REFERENCES


Keep Calm and Smell the Roses: The Differential Impact of Low and High Arousal Emotions on Consumption Outcomes
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumption experiences can elicit different emotions (Cohen & Areni, 1991). For example, a consumer can feel energized while consuming a cold, fizzy drink, or calm while consuming a warm cup of tea. While there has been research that explores the impact of the consumption emotions’ level of arousal, most of this research has focused on high arousal emotions. For example, high arousal emotions have been found to have a positive effect on information sharing and talking (Berger, 2011), as well as on desire and readiness for action (Rucker & Petty, 2004). And while consumption can also elicit low arousal emotions (Richins, 1997), they have received less examination. In our research we address this gap in the literature by focusing on low arousal emotions (e.g., contentment, peacefulness, relaxation) and identifying their impact on several favorable consumption outcomes. Specifically, we propose and find evidence in four studies that experiencing low (vs. high) arousal emotions during consumption has a positive impact on product liking, willingness to pay, self-brand connection, and desire to continue the consumption experience, as well as slows down hedonic adaptation (or the rate at which utility derived from the consumption erodes). We find that this occurs because low arousal emotions, during a consumption experience, reduce the extent to which the mind wanders to other thoughts and stimuli, increasing the consumer’s focus on the consumption experience itself, allowing the consumer to develop stronger connections with the product.

We follow past classifications of emotions (Barrett & Russell, 1999; Mogilner, Aaker, & Kamvar, 2012; Tsai, Knutson, & Fung, 2006) in using level of arousal as a key dimension for categorizing emotions. Low arousal emotions include emotions such as peaceful, calm, and relaxed, whereas high arousal emotions include emotions such as excited, elated, and energized. We propose that high arousal (vs. low arousal) accelerates the speed of people’s thoughts. Past research has found that thought speed creates an urge for action that has been compared to that of fight-or-flight (Pronin, 2013). When people experience this type of response, their attention narrows (Skosnik, Chatterton, Swisher, & Park, 2000). Low arousal emotions, on the other hand, are likely to slow down the speed of people’s thoughts, broadening their focus of attention.

Based on these findings, we hypothesize that low arousal positive emotions (e.g., contentment, serenity, calmness) will slow down the speed of both actions and thoughts. The reduced action orientation and increased tendency to talk and do less (which comes with quietude and contentment), slows down the mind from jumping to other thoughts and stimuli, instead allowing it to focus on the current experience and increasing the extent to which the consumer absorbs it in, experiences it more fully, and thinks about it. This increased focus on the experience can have several benefits. Past research has shown that merely giving more attention to a target can imbue it with more value and weight (MacKenzie, 1986). Furthermore, Sheldon & Lyubomirsky’s (2012) hedonic adaptation prevention model posits the more people keep thinking about the target, the more they continue to derive positive feeling from it, sustaining their initial happiness boost. Thus, we propose low arousal emotions, by allowing people to focus on the consumption experience, will result in consumers feeling a stronger sense of connection with the consumed product, which will in turn have other positive consequences, such as higher willingness to pay. Additionally, this type of focus on the consumer experience will slow down hedonic adaptation (i.e., the rate at which consumption happiness erodes).

In four experimental studies, we find evidence that low (vs. high) arousal consumption emotions will have a positive impact on product liking (studies 1 and 2), willingness to pay (study 2), desire to continue the consumption experience (study 3), and self-brand connection (studies 2 and 4). We also find that low arousal consumption emotions slow down hedonic adaptation (i.e., the rate at which the happiness derived from the consumption erodes) in a longitudinal study with actual purchases (study 4). Furthermore, we find evidence that the level of emotional arousal impacts the extent to which people’s mind wanders off from the consumption experiences (as indicated by participants in study 1) and the extent to which they remember details of the consumption experience (specifically, accurately remembering the name of a slow or fast tempo song in study 2). Our studies span different types of products consumed (pen, song, tea, actual purchases), different types of manipulation of level of arousal (incidental, stimulus-generated, primed with product positioning and communications), and different methodologies (consumption in lab, longitudinal study), adding robustness to our findings.

REFERENCES

Thicker than Water: The Influence of Familism on Consumer Response to Brand Extensions

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Brand extension strategies are widely used by firms to leverage the equity built into their brands. Every year, companies spend billions of dollars introducing new products under established brand names, as exemplified by Apple’s iPhone, Arn & Hammer toothpaste, and Jeep baby strollers. Despite firms’ reliance and investment on this strategy, many brand extensions fail. In this regard, research has identified a number of key determinants that shape brand extension success. For instance, consumer acceptance of brand extensions may be shaped by their trust toward or liking of the parent brand as well as the perceived fit between the parent brand and extension (see Loken, Joiner, & Houston, 2010, for review). Additionally, the extent to which brand extensions are viewed favorably can be determined by consumers’ risk aversion (Yeo & Park, 2006), innovativeness (Völckner & Sattler, 2006), and cultural orientation (e.g., Ng & Houston, 2006).

We explore a novel consumer characteristic that impacts consumers’ responses to brand extensions, familism. Familism is defined as a strong identification and attachment of individuals with their families (nuclear and extended) and strong feelings of loyalty, reciprocity and solidarity among members of the same family (Triandis, Marin, Betancourt, Lisansky, & Chang, 1982). We propose and find evidence that familism (either chronic or primed) can improve consumers’ evaluations of brand extensions by increasing perceptions of the extensions fit with the parent brand. We theorize that this is the case because familism makes the family schema more accessible, which activates associations of relatedness.

Terminology used in past literature hints at the application of a family schema when discussing brand extensions. For example, this literature constantly refers to a “parent brand” to indicate the brand from which the extension originates, a “brand family” in reference to the group of products and extensions that fall under a given brand, and a “brand offspring” to indicate a brand extension. There is also evidence that consumers use relationships, including family, as metaphors when building bonds with brands (Fournier, 1998). However, the question remains whether consumers use the family schema to guide their attitudes when evaluating brand extensions. We propose that it does, resulting in a perception of greater similarity between the parent brand and offspring, which in turn positively impacts the evaluations of certain brand extensions.

Generally speaking, people value family. However, what distinguishes people high in familism is that they tend to put the needs of their family above their own. This type of ties to family is particularly apparent when family members are in need, or not doing very well. As such, we propose that the effect of familism will only emerge when the brand extension is of lower price and quality than the parent brand. Another reason why we don’t expect to see any differences with high price/quality brand extensions is related to the asymmetric effect of quality (Heath & Chatterjee, 1995). When the price and quality of a given product is good, people can appreciate that. It’s only when the price/quality is bad that people use other heuristics (e.g., decoys, schemas) to make their evaluations.

Furthermore, we propose the distance from the parent brand as a boundary condition. More specifically, we propose and find evidence that the effect of familism only emerges when evaluating brand extensions that don’t stray too far from the parent brand. We argue that when the extension is too far from the brand (e.g., a calculator as an athletics brand extension), the similarities between the concepts of family and brands will weaken, which will prevent the family schema to be applied.

Across three experimental studies, we show that familism positively impacts consumers’ response to brand extensions that don’t stray too far from the parent brand and which are lower in price and quality than the parent brand. We observe this effect when familism is measured as a chronic individual difference (study 1), and when it’s primed with writing exercised (studies 2 and 3). We also find evidence in studies 1 and 3 that the underlying mechanism is an increase in perceived similarity with the parent brand, providing evidence that familism make the family schemas are being mapped onto the brand extension domain. We identify distance from the parent brand as a boundary condition (studies 1 and 2), rule out analytic-holistic thinking as an alternative explanation (study 1), and provide evidence that the effects of familism extend beyond the nuclear family. Furthermore, our studies span different populations (college students, MTurkers) and different categories (electronics, athletics), adding robustness to our findings.

This research aims to contribute to the brand extension literature by empirically investigating a novel consumer characteristic that impacts consumers’ responses to brand extensions, namely familism. Furthermore, our work has important managerial implications. Every year companies spend billions of dollars introducing new brand extensions, and many fail. Our research could provide guidance to minimize the risk of failure. For example, if a brand wants to downwardly extend itself by introducing a brand extension that is lower in price/quality, it could consider targeting consumer who are chronically high in familism (e.g., Hispanics) or it could prime familism in its communications (e.g., by portraying families).

REFERENCES


Preference Refinement After a Budget Contraction

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Most models of consumer choice assume that preferences are independent of budget levels. Specifically, consumers are thought to react symmetrically to increasing and decreasing budgets, landing at their optimal combination of options for any given budget level. Empirically, however, prior research has demonstrated that this is not the case (Carlson, Wolfe, Blanchard, Huber and Ariely 2015; Dargay 2001; Kamakura and Du 2012; Shea 1995). For example, Carlson et al. (2015) showed that rather than making small changes in consumption across all options, consumers who faced a contracting budget cut out entire categories of consumption while maintaining full consumption in others.

In the current work, we examine whether allocations of a given budget for a person are the same before versus after a budget contraction (i.e., when the budget re-expands to pre-contractive levels). In other words, do the allocations that emerge under budget contractions reflect a temporary shift in preferences akin to transient preference shifts, or are these shifts in preference more stable and lasting? We contend that the trade-offs necessary during a contractionary period persist when the budget re-expands; consumers engage in a process of refining their preferences as they reconcile trade-offs (Hoefller and Ariely 1999) and figure out what really matters to them. We use change in number of unique items selected as our metric of preference refinement. That is, we count the number of unique items to which the re-expanded budget was allocated ($X$) and difference it from the initial budget allocation ($X_0$). We then test for a positive difference ($M_0 > 0$) to determine if there has been a refinement in preferences.

Studies 1A-1C: Time, Money and Space

Study 1 examines the preference refinement effect across time, money, and space. Specifically, study 1A (N=119 students, 43% female; median age=19) examined allocations of a sequence of travel budgets (21 days to 7 days to 21 days) to cities. Study 1B (N=130 MTurks, 42% female; median age=36) examined allocations of money to holiday gift recipients under a sequence of financial budgets ($350-$850) to cities. Study 1C (N=276 students, 30% female; median age=19) measured allocations of vegetable seeds across a budget of planting rows in a garden plot (21-10-21). In all studies, participants exhibited preference refinement (Study1A: $M_0=0.42$, $SD=1.49$, $t(118)=3.07$, $p=.003$; Study 1B: $M_0=0.31$, $SD=1.10$, $t(129)=3.19$, $p=.002$; Study 1C: $M_0=0.18$, $SD=1.18$, $t(275)=2.51$, $p=.01$). Participants consistently allocated their final budget to fewer unique items than they allocated the same budget before experiencing a contraction (i.e., preference refinement occurred in all three studies).

Study 2: Time Delay

Study 2 was conducted to examine the opposing forces of preference refinement and preference consistency by examining allocations two days apart. Student participants (N=77, 56% female; median age=19) allocated time to travel (as in S1A); 63 completed a follow-up 21 day allocation two days later. Preference refinement appeared in the initial 21-7-21 survey ($M_0=0.33$, $SD=1.15$, $t(62)=2.30$, $p=.03$. Two days later, the 21 day allocation was significantly lower than the initial 21 day allocation ($M_0=0.46$, $SD=1.20$, $t(62)=3.04$, $p=.003$). There was an additional decline between the second 21 day allocation on the first day and the 21 day allocation two days later, though it was nonsignificant. Preference refinement that began as a result of contraction outlasted desire to make allocations that were consistent with initial allocations.

Study 3: Strength of Contraction

Study 3 examined different levels of budget contractions (21-7-21 vs 21-14-21) in the domain of time. Those experiencing a more extreme contraction face more trade-offs, which should lead to greater preference refinement. Students (N=200, 49% female; median age=19) exhibited greater preference refinement under an extreme contraction (21-7-21: $M_0=0.64$, $SD=2.24$, $t(99)=2.86$, $p=.005$) than under a modest contraction (21-14-21: $M_0=0.28$ ($SD=1.62$, $t(99)=1.73$, $p=.09$). Extreme contractions led to greater preference refinement.

Study 4: Trade-Offs and Anchoring

Trade-offs made during the contractionary period should mediate the relationship between condition and final allocation. To examine this, MTurk workers (N=420, 42% female; median age=36) were randomly assigned to either simple expansion ($350-$850) or a contraction re-expansion condition ($850-$350-$850) (using the stimuli from S1B). Three measures of trade-offs were completed after the $350 allocation: “Were you making trade-offs?” (1=“definitely not” to 7=“definitely yes”); “Were your decisions governed by trade-offs?” (1=“not at all” to 7=“extremely”); and “How many trade-offs did you make during the $350 allocation?” (slider bar from 0 to 10).

For simple expansion, allocations moved from 7.16 to 8.23 as the budget increased. In the contraction re-expansion condition, we observed the standard preference refinement effect ($M_0=0.54$, $SD=2.01$, $t(210)=3.87$, $p=.001$) and directionally less variety in the final allocation under re-expansion (8.23). This result helps dispel anchoring as an alternative explanation for the findings. Additionally, individuals believed trade-offs were more instrumental under re-expansion compared to simple expansion (all $p<.01$). Trade-offs partially mediated the relationship between (re)expansion and the final $850 allocation (PROCESS, model 4, $b=0.30$, $SE = 0.00$, BC 95% CI = [0.16, 0.47].

Study 5: Self- Versus Other-Determined Allocation Variety

Study 5 examines the source of constrained choice in the contraction period as either self- or other-determined. If the contractionary choice is made by another, participants will not need to make trade-offs, and we should not observe preference refinement. Students (N=219, 46% female; median age=18) participated. In the self-determined condition, the 7-day allocation was based on personal preference. In the other-determined condition, a travel partner picked three cities for the 7-day trip. Participants completed trade-off questions.

When self-determined (N=113), preference refinement occurred ($M_0=0.36$, $SD=1.76$, $t(112)=2.19$, $p=.03$). However, when the contraction allocation was driven by another’s preferences (N=106), the preference refinement effect did not obtain ($M_0=0.22$, $SD=1.13$, $t(105)=0.94$, $p=.34$). The preference refinement effect was driven by the decision-making context.
If anything, participants exhibited preference expansion under this condition.

Discussion

When budgets contract, consumers face difficult trade-offs that help them discover what really matters to them. This process leads to non-transient preference refinement – preferences were narrower and more consistent after a contraction. The work has implications for brand relationships that must be reinforced during economic downturns to prevent less-preferred brands from being cut permanently.

REFERENCES


How Discount Price Negatively Influences Ethical Consumption
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Over the years, the topic of pricing has been of great interest in ethical consumption. In particular, the high price of ethical products has been considered an obstacle for consumers when they want to make an ethical purchase decision. To promote consumers’ purchase of ethical products, marketers and scholars have suggested that ethical products need to be offered at a discount price. The current research, however, made a counterargument that a discount price negatively influences consumers’ purchase behavior. Guided by the price-product efficacy beliefs, we argued that consumers perceive ethical products with discount prices to be less efficient, which in turn leads them less willing to purchase the discounted ethical products.

To demonstrate the hypothesis, four experiments were conducted. In Experiment 1, 75 participants who were recruited from Amazon’s MTurk randomly assigned either to the discount price condition or to the premium price condition. Whereas participants in the discount price condition received information that organic tomatoes are on sale for a dramatically discount price ($1.89 → $ 0.89/lb), those in the premium price condition were told that organic tomatoes are selling at a premium price ($1.89) as usual. Participants then expressed how they are willing to purchase organic tomatoes with five items on a seven point scale (Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal 1991). The findings provided preliminary evidence that organic foods with discount prices ($M = 4.65) can decrease consumers’ willingness to purchase the organic foods (vs. premium price: $M = 6.03; $F = 18.052, $p < .001).

The purpose of Experiment 2 was to demonstrate the moderating role of consumers’ ethical mindsets. A total of 125 participants were recruited from Amazon’s MTurk and randomly assigned either to the discount price condition or to the premium price condition. Participants were shown an online coupon for a cup of fair trade coffee that is available any grocery store near them. In the discount price condition, the coupon was worth $0.89, whereas the coupon in the premium price condition was worth $2.56. After expressing their willingness to purchase fair trade coffee coupons, participants also measured their moods with the PANAS scale (Watson, Clark, and Tellegen 1988) and ethical mindset with the EMCB scale (Sudbury-Riley and Kohlbacher 2016). After controlling for the mood effects, the results showed that there was a significant interaction effect between the price of a fair trade coffee coupon and consumers’ mindset ($β = .271, t = 3.957, p < .001). The spotlight analysis (Aiken and West 1991) revealed that the boomerang effects of discount prices are prevalent among those who have high levels of ethical mindset ($M_{discount} = 4.97$ vs. $M_{premium} = 6.54; t = -5.82, p < .001), but this relationship was not significant among those with low levels of ethical mindset ($M_{discount} = 6.3$ vs. $M_{premium} = 6.39; p > .1$).

In the context of the ethical clothes consumption, Experiment 3 aimed to demonstrate how the perceived product efficacy mediates a negative impact of discount prices. A total of 135 participants who were recruited from Amazon’s MTurk were randomly assigned to a price condition (premium vs. discounted). They were shown a picture of an ethical T-shirt and hypothetically given a chance to purchase the product. The price was manipulated by indicating different prices on the label of the T-shirt (i.e., $2.5$ for the discount price condition vs. $5$ for the premium price condition). Along with the questions that were measured in Experiment 2, participants then answered questions concerning the perceived product efficacy with three items on a seven point scale (White, MacDonnell, and Ellard, 2012). Social desirability (Ballard 1992) was also measured and controlled as a confounding variable. The PROCESS analysis (Hayes 2013, Model 8, 5000 bootstrap resamples) showed a significant moderated mediation effect ($95\% CI, -3.9 to -1.3). In particular, the price × ethical mindset interaction had a significant effect on perceived product efficacy ($β = -.32, t = -4.32, p < .001; 95\% CI, -.43 to -.17). Perceived product efficacy, in turn, had a significant positive effect on WTP$_{ethical}$ ($β = .752, t = 7.965, p < .001; 95\% CI, .56 to .94). Consistent with the predictions, participants with high levels of ethical mindset in the discounted price condition ($M = 4.83$) were less likely to purchase the ethical T-shirt than those in the premium price condition ($M = 6.32; 95\% CI, -1.01 to -.49) when the perceived product efficacy was included in the model. Participants’ willingness to purchase an ethical T-shirt was not different among those with low levels of ethical mindset ($M_{discount} = 5.37$ vs. $M_{premium} = 5.3; 95\% CI, -.32 to .16).

In the last experiment, we suggested how additional information about product efficacy can prevent the boomerang effects of discount prices. The procedure and measurements were in keeping with those used in Experiment 4. However, in Experiment 4, 117 participants were exposed only to a discount price even if the half of them received information that boosts the efficacy of the discounted ethical products whereas the others did not. The significant additional information × ethical mindset interaction ($β = -1.25, p < .001$) indicated that participants did not receive information about product efficacy were less likely to purchase the discounted fair trade coffee coupons as their ethical mindset (EMCB) increased ($β = -.91, p < .05$). However, when the information was presented, the level of ethical mindset (EMCB) did not predict the likelihood of purchasing the discounted coupon ($β = .25, p > .1$).

The findings collectively indicated that price promotions without a consideration of consumers’ belief system would backfire. The present research first demonstrated the boomerang effect of ethical products with discounted prices in the wide range of ethical consumption contexts (e.g., fair trade coffee, organic foods, and ethical clothes). In addition, the present research provided deeper understandings about consumers’ responses to pricing actions by demonstrating a mediating role of the product efficacy. In particular, this research suggested a boundary condition of the boomerang effects of discount prices by examining the moderating role of consumers’ ethical mindsets. This highlighted that the individual-related factor plays a vital role in ethical consumption and the boomerang effects are predominant in certain consumer segments.

REFERENCES


Driven by the Cues: Goal Attainment Makes Consumers More Responsive to Shopping-Related Contextual Cues

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The literature on consumer behavior considers shopping behavior as predominantly goal-oriented (e.g., Kopetz et al., 2012). Nonetheless, shopping goals do not always need to be at the top of consumers’ minds and they can sometimes be pushed to the background by other, overriding, more desired goals. To date, scant research has been devoted to the interplay between consumer shopping goals and other salient, concomitantly active goals and the impact of such interference on consumer decision-making. Various goals can accompany consumers in their daily life (e.g., taking a train, arriving at a specific location, going to work) and disparate goals of differing motivational intensity could be active at the same time (Pieters, Baumgartner and Allen, 1995). In this research we focus particularly on the anticipation and the attainment of such highly desired goals, investigating how either having a salient, highly desired goal that needs to be attained in the near future or having attained this particular goal influences responsiveness to shopping-related contextual cues and subsequently location-based preferences, that is, selecting products from specific locations.

We posit that when a shopping goal is pushed to the background, the influence of shopping-related cues on consumer decision-making will be attenuated (Ferguson & Bargh, 2004). Therefore, when other salient, highly desired goals are potent enough to inhibit the goal of shopping, we expect that consumers become less susceptible to the influence of shopping-related contextual cues (i.e., assortment structure). On the other hand, when other, shopping-unrelated goals have already been attained, consumers open up and approach shopping in a more goal-oriented way, dedicating greater processing capacity to their product selection (Gable & Harmon-Jones, 2010). They process not only separate products, but also their global visual configuration. As a result, consumer decision-making is more likely than to be shaped by subtle contextual manipulations in product organizations.

Our expectations are derived predominantly from goal systems theory (Kruglanski et al., 2012). Various goals that are simultaneously activated compete for cognitive resources, pulling mental resources from each other. The more resources are dedicated to a particular goal, the less resources are left for other coinciding goal pursuits (Kruglanski et al., 2002). An important factor determining the allocation of resources across competing goals is motivational intensity. Goals characterized by highest motivational intensity pull the most mental resources, leaving only a limited processing capacity for other, less desired but coinciding goals and associated with them contextual cues (Kruglanski et al., 2002). Therefore, we expect that sensitivity towards goal-irrelevant contextual cues is attenuated when other, more desired goals are concurrently active.

In order to test this proposition, following Bar-Hillel (2015), we expect that when other goals have been attained, consumers will select products located closer to the center of an assortment (i.e., edge aversion) while selecting from equivalent assortments of products varying only across a few attributes), whereas selecting products from nonequivalent assortments (assortments composed of products varying across numerous attributes) will shift consumers’ product preferences closer to the edge of an assortment (i.e., edge preference).

Study 1

100 students participated in a 2 (goal state: anticipation vs. attainment) × 2 (assortment structure: equivalent vs. nonequivalent) mixed design experiment, where goal state was manipulated between-subjects and assortment structure within-subjects.

Participants were invited to play a Tic-Tac-Toe game and were informed that the study examined their performance during games. Five games of Tic-Tac-Toe were played in total by each participant. We varied goal states by either asking participants to make the choice of their most preferred product before (anticipation) or after (attainment) they have played the game. Participants selected products from two different assortments: evidently equivalent (Ice Creams) and nonequivalent (Candy Packages) assortments, consisting of 64 different products. Our focal dependent variable was the centrality of the product choice, coded from 1 to 7, with the higher value representing a more central option chosen.

Results

A repeated measures ANOVA with goal state as a between-subjects factor and assortment structure as a within-subjects factor revealed a significant interaction between goal state and assortment structure ($F(1, 90)=4.04, p<.05$). Additional simple main effects analysis showed that the interaction was predominantly driven by participants in the goal attainment condition. Participants who have already attained monetary rewards and were selecting products from an equivalent assortment were more likely to go to the center of the equivalent assortment ($M=4.44, SD=1.53$) in comparison with those who attained monetary rewards and were choosing products from a nonequivalent assortment ($M=3.42, SD=1.62; F(1,90)=9.86, p<.01$). When the rewards were anticipated assortment structure did not steer participants to choose products from different locations ($F<1$).

Study 2

100 students participated in a 2 (goal state: anticipation vs. attainment) × 2 (assortment structure: equivalent vs. nonequivalent) mixed design experiment, where goal state was manipulated between-subjects and assortment structure within-subjects.

Participants were approached with a survey either before they ate in a Burger King restaurant or after they had already eaten there. Participants were presented with two different assortments: evidently equivalent (donuts) and nonequivalent (bread spreads). For each assortment 99 products were shown ($9\times11$ grid).

Akin to study 1, our core dependent variable was the centrality of the choice, coded from 1 to 10, with the higher value representing a more central option chosen.

Results

A repeated measures ANOVA with goal state as a between-subjects factor and assortment structure as a within-subjects factor revealed a significant interaction between goal state and assortment structure ($F(1, 89)=5.07, p<.03$). Additional simple main effects analysis showed that, in line with our expectations, the interaction was predominantly driven by participants in the goal attainment condition. Participants who had already eaten and were selecting products from an equivalent assortment were more likely to go to the center of the equivalent assortment ($M=6.54, SD=2.12$) in com-
comparison with participants who had already eaten and were choosing products from a nonequivalent assortment ($M=5.41, SD=2.32; F(1, 89)=10.67, p<.01$). The structure of assortment did not make participants choose products from different locations when they were anticipating to satisfy their hunger ($F < 1$).

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Self-threat occurs when a person encounters information that calls into question the positivity of a given self-view (Gao et al. 2009), resulting in psychological discomfort (Festinger 1957). Symbolic self-completion (Wicklund and Gollwitzer 1981) is one strategy (Mandel et al. 2017) consumers deploy in response. As supported by the compensatory consumption literature, products can be consumed for psychological value (Ariely and Norton 2009) and their symbolic associations incorporated into consumers’ self-concepts (Belk 1988).

Self-threat also affects consumers’ decision to spread WOM. People are more likely to spread WOM about symbolic products (Chung and Darke 2006) that signal identity-related aspects of their self-concepts (Berger 2014), and to spread WOM after self-threat (Packard and Wooten 2013). We propose that WOM can actually resolve specific, self-concept related self-threats when spread about a brand that is symbolically congruent with the threat domain, termed a restorative brand. Under self-threat, consumers who spread WOM about a restorative (non-restorative) brand should exhibit higher (lower) self-perceptions on the threatened attribute (H1). Further, psychological discomfort should mediate the interactive effect of threat and brand restorativeness on self-perceptions (H2). Evidence suggests that self-esteem may moderate the proposed effects as low-esteeem consumers feel lower self-efficacy (Sherer et al. 1982) and exhibit stronger attachment to symbolic brands (Dommers et al. 2013). Under self-threat, spreading WOM about a restorative (non-restorative) brand will enhance (reduce) self-perceptions on the threatened attribute through psychological discomfort for low self-esteem consumers (H3).

Study 1: Participants (n = 128, average age 36, 46% male) were randomly assigned to a condition where they were told about a time they acted ethically (no self-threat) or unethically (self-threat). Participants were also randomly assigned to a restorative (picture of Brawny paper towels with packaging promoting relationship with the Wounded Warrior Project) or non-restorative (picture of Brawny paper towels with original packaging) brand condition. All participants spread WOM by commenting on a mock Brawny Facebook page. Participants rated self-perceptions of ethics using items adapted from Reed, Aquino, and Levy (2007; α = .60).

A two-way ANOVA with threat and brand (IVs) and self-perceptions of ethics (DV) revealed a direct effect of threat (F(1, 124) = 13.82, p < .001; no threat: M = 5.56, SD = .81; threat: M = 4.97, SD = 1.07), qualified by a significant threat by brand interaction (F(1, 124) = 3.77, p = .05). Probing the interaction reveals that self-threatened consumers exhibit higher self-perceptions on the threatened attribute after spreading WOM about a restorative (M = 5.21, SD = .96) versus non-restorative (M = 4.67, SD = 1.14) brand (F(1, 59) = 4.01, p = .05). Self-perceptions of self-threatened consumers who spread WOM about a restorative brand did not significantly differ from consumers who did not experience self-threat (p = .18), supporting H1.

Study 2: Participants (n = 140, average age 36, 48% male) completed a fake IQ assessment and were randomly assigned to a self-threat condition. Half were told their IQ was above average (no threat), half were told their IQ was below average (threat). Participants were randomly assigned to a restorative (Special K cereal) or non-restorative (Lucky Charms cereal) brand condition. All participants spread WOM by posting comments to a mock Facebook page for the brand. Participants reported self-perceptions of intelligence (α = .79) using items adapted from Rick and Schweitzer (2012). Psychological discomfort (α = .81) was measured with items adapted from Elliot and Devine (1994).

A two-way ANOVA with threat and brand as IVs, covariate age, and self-perceptions as DV resulted in no main effect for brand (p = .50) or threat condition (p = .36), but the predicted threat by brand interaction emerged (F(1, 135) = 5.19, p < .05), replicating the same pattern observed in study 1.

PROCCESS model 7 (Hayes 2013; 5,000 bootstrap resamples) supports psychological discomfort as a mediator of the threat by brand interaction self-perceptions (index of moderated mediation: .54, 95% CI = [.1038, 1.054]). The interaction affects psychological discomfort (b = –1.19, t = –2.47, p < .05) and psychological discomfort reduces self-perceptions (b = –.45, t = –9.68, p < .001). For the non-restorative brand, the indirect effect suggests psychological discomfort explains threat’s negative effect on self-perceptions (–.57, 95% CI = [–.7941, –.2211]), but was not significant for the restorative brand (–.03, 95% CI = [–.3378, .2575]). Self-threat negatively affects self-perceptions through heightened psychological discomfort when WOM is spread about a non-restorative brand, partially supporting H2.

Study 3 mirrors study 1, except all participants (n = 224, average age 38, 40% male) were exposed to self-threat and completed three items measuring trait self-esteem (α = .87; Rosenberg 1965), along with items measuring self-perceptions (α = .64) and psychological discomfort (α = .82).

PROCCESS model 1 was significant (R2 = .17; F(3, 220) = 15.45, p < .001). Direct effects of brand (b = 1.20, t = 2.24, p < .05) and self-esteem (b = .41, t = 5.85, p < .001) were qualified by an interaction (b = –1.19, t = 2.02, p < .05) revealing a significant positive influence of restorative brand WOM on self-perceptions when self-esteem is at or below 4.73 (b = .29, t = 1.98, p = .05).

PROCCESS model 7 (5,000 bootstrap resamples) supported moderated mediation (–.05, 95% CI = [–.1111, -.0045]). The interaction significantly affects psychological discomfort (b = .24, t = 2.21, p < .05), reducing self-perceptions (b = -.21, t = –4.47, p < .001). For low self-esteem consumers, spreading WOM about the restorative brand positively affects self-perceptions by reducing psychological discomfort (indirect effect: .08, 95% CI = [.0023, .2051]), supporting H3 and clarifying H2.

In closing, the current research reveals that following self-threat, spreading WOM about restorative brands can repair consumers’ self-concepts. This effect is shown to be mediated by psychological discomfort and moderated by self-esteem. It would be beneficial for future research to examine these findings to extend to the purchase of restorative brands. Similarly, it would be advantageous for research to examine additional moderators to these effects and to compare the current results to instances where WOM is not spread.

REFERENCES


**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Although progress has been made toward eliminating inequities caused by prejudice and discrimination, underrepresentation is still an important issue in many fields such as Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, and Business (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; Nosek et al., 2009; Ong, Wright, Espinosa, & Orfield, 2011). While marketing research supports the intuition that campaigns targeting underrepresented groups have positive effects in general (e.g., a diet soda advertisement featuring an ethnic minority as a spokesperson; Aaker, Brumbaugh, & Grier, 2000; Luna, Ringberg, & Peracchio, 2008; Stayman & Deshpande, 1989), scant research exists that explores diversity marketing in stereotyped domains specifically, where the marketing campaigns are by definition counter-stereotypical (e.g., an ad for a STEM program with a female spokesperson). The present research addresses this gap, regarding counter-stereotypical marketing, by deriving competing predictions and building a novel theoretical model to reconcile them.

Almost two decades of research on exposure to role models (see Stout, Dasgupta, Hunsinger, & McManus, 2011 for a review) suggests that counter-stereotypical advertisements may help by weakening implicit stereotypes (Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004) or by inoculating consumers against the stereotype via a strengthened self-concept (Dasgupta, 2011; Hoyt & Simon, 2011; Lockwood & Kunda, 1997, 1999; Marx & Roman, 2002), both of which suggest a positive effect of counter-stereotypical marketing. Over two decades of research on stereotype threat (for reviews see Pennington, Heim, Levy, & Larkin, 2016; and Spencer, Logel, & Davies, 2016), however, suggests an alternate view: counter-stereotypical advertisements may act as cues that activate stereotype-consistent cognitions (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996; Jamieson & Harkins, 2012; Lee, Kim, & Vohs, 2011; J. R. Steele & Ambady, 2006), leading to stereotype-consistent behavior and thus suggesting a negative effect of counter-stereotypical marketing.

Drawing on research from information processing including cognitive consistency and categorical learning (e.g., Greenwald, et al., 2002; Nosofsky, Palmeri, & Mckinley, 1994), we build a theoretical model that accounts for both positive and negative effects of counter-stereotypical marketing via conceptual-contingency learning. Consumers may be unable to successfully process counter-stereotypical information because it is inherently cognitively inconsistent with the consumer’s prevailing stereotype knowledge (Greenwald, et al., 2002; Heider, 1946). Thus, seeing counter-stereotypical information would only activate the prevailing knowledge structure (e.g., the stereotype; Allen, Sherman, Conrey, & Stroessner, 2009; Cunha, Janiszewski, & Laran, 2008), leading to stereotype-consistent behavior. However, stereotypic social groups are also stereotypically linked to a number of other concepts (e.g., “handsome = male” and “beauty = female”). If consumers are able to successfully link such a second-order concept to the domain (e.g., science is beautiful), this may allow successful incorporation of the counter-stereotypical information by creating a contingency (i.e., exception) rule in the knowledge structure (Nosofsky et al., 1994). Specifically, the new knowledge structure may be such that the stereotyped group is generally negatively associated with the domain, except in the presence of the second-order concept that serves as the conceptual-contingency cue. Further, we argue that the process is reliant on the stereotypically positive link between the group and the concept to create the consistent, balanced cognitions necessary for conceptual-contingency learning; simply linking any second concept to the domain (e.g., science is fun) is insufficient. As such, one stereotype (i.e., a group-attribute association) is being utilized to overcome another. The ability of consumers to integrate cognitively inconsistent information in a single exposure via conceptual-contingency learning is inexplicable using current models of associative or categorical learning.

In sum, the present work addresses the research gap surrounding counter-stereotypical marketing. We contribute to theory by deriving predicted positive and negative effects from role models and stereotype threat literatures respectively, and by reconciling the competing predictions with a novel theoretical model of conceptual-contingency learning. The model uniquely identifies conceptual-contingency cues as a moderator of whether counter-stereotypical information helps or hurts. The integration of these alternative theoretical stances has important implications not only for theory on stereotypes and learning, but also for managers and policy makers concerned with diversity.

**Empirical Evidence**

Three studies across multiple stereotypes provide converging evidence for the impact of conceptual-contingency learning on the processing of counter-stereotypical information. All studies recruit participants from Amazon MTurk in exchange for compensation (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Study 1 (n = 125) shows that a stereotype-inconsistent (vs. -neutral) ad for an engineering program containing a quote from a female (vs. unidentified) spokesperson has a positive (null) effect on evaluations when the quote contains a conceptual-contingency (neutral) cue: “I found the beauty [fun] in engineering;” F(1, 121) = 4.27, p = .041. This supports the contention that a counter-stereotypical ad only has a positive effect in the presence of a cue that positively links the group to the domain. In the context of the ethnicity-academics stereotype (C. M. Steele, 1997), study 2 (n = 121) extends these findings by showing that the effect reverses as the link between the conceptual-contingency cue (street smarts) and the domain (higher education) is perceived to be more negative, as captured by an individual difference measure: B = -.526; t(121) = -3.36, p = .001. In the context of the gender-business stereotype (Powell & Butterfield, 1994), study 3 (n = 138) directly manipulates the positivity of the cue-domain link with pre-tested ostensibly “research articles” stating that social skills may have positive (vs. negative) effects in business. Results show that both positive and negative effects of the cue-domain link occur, but only when the cue is also positively linked to the group (social skills-women); F(1, 134) = 5.09, p = .026. This provides further evidence for the proposed cognitive-consistency/balance process.

Taken together, the findings show that counter-stereotypical ads can lead to positive evaluations when they contain a conceptual-contingency cue that positively links the stereotyped group to the domain (e.g., beauty in engineering). Lacking such a cue, results show that counter-stereotypical ads may lead to negative evaluations. These results demonstrate the importance of conceptual-contingency learning in the processing of stereotype-inconsistent stimuli, supporting our
theoretical model and providing important implications for researchers, managers, and policy makers concerned with diversity.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The development of self-service technologies, in an attempt to make customers autonomous, have paradoxically created new situations in which individuals may need help, for instance in the case of technological failure or customer mistakes (Bittner, Ostrom, and Meuter 2002; Meuter et al. 2000). A traditional response from companies has been to offer assistance via chat on websites, as a mean to assist and humanize websites. Thanks to its dialogical form, chat has also been presented as a way to alleviate the higher level of perceived risk encountered within e-service (Kumar and Benbasat 2002; Xu 2016).

The concept of customer assistance has not been clearly defined in the literature. We define it as the encounter between a customer acknowledging a problematic situation with a product or service, and a proposal for assistance by the company. Studies investigating chat as an assistance channel have relied on two main assumptions. First, the fact that e-retail and e-service need to be humanized (e.g. Hassanein and Head 2007; Park, Chung, and Rutherford 2011). Second, the fact that it is perceived as more risky by consumers than face-to-face interactions (Paluch and Wunderlich 2016; Featherman and Pavlou 2003). Moreover the limited studies looking at chat have taken a company’s point of view, rather than a consumer one. As a result, the research field lacks an understanding of customers’ perceptions of chat. This research addresses this gap and aims at i) understanding perceptions of chat as an assistance channel, and ii) explore customers’ motivations and limiting factors for the use of chat in an assistance context. Doing so, it addresses recent calls for research on customer experience in context (Klaus 2013) and on customer-initiated communications, which go beyond a purchasing context (Polo and Sese 2016).

This research investigates customers’ perceptions of online chat as an assistance channel in their own real-life assistance context. We adopt a service and customer-centred point of view to study chat and customer’s need for assistance, relying on Human Computer Interaction (HCI) theories. We adopt a qualitative research design using semi-structured interviews. Our findings identify key criteria, which determine the need for assistance and willingness to use chat as perceived by customers.

Literature Review: Live Chat vs. Virtual agents, Technology Acceptance, and Perceived Risks

Chat has been defined in the service literature as the “sending and receiving of short text-based messages where the sender and the recipient communicate usually with no (or minimal) delays” (Froehle 2006). A main limitation of this definition is that it does not consider the nature of the interlocutor – whether the interlocutor is a human being or a virtual agent. Customers, however, may not be aware, before starting a conversation, whether their interlocutor will be of a human or virtual nature. Chat, in a customer assistance context, generally comes in two distinct forms. First, live chat refers to chat between humans. Live chat is often assimilated to a generic form of computer-mediated communication, and scholars draw from theories such as media richness theory (e.g. Froehle 2006; Graetz et al. 1998) or social presence theory (e.g. Verhagen et al. 2014) to study it. Live chat is considered synchronous text and a rather low media in terms of its richness (Froehle 2006). Second, virtual agents, which are artificial-intelligence-operated chat-robots (or chatbots), and have been studied in great detail in the field of HCI (Yee, Bailenson, and Rickertsen 2007).

Customer’s decision to use chat in an assistance context can be framed using HCI. First, Davis’ (1989) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) provides an effective way to predict whether a user will be likely to use a given technological tool. His model puts forward two factors that predict this intention: the first one being the “perceived usefulness” and the second one being the “perceived ease of use” of the tool. This model has been largely applied to analyse customer’s adoption of new technological tools, and has been refined over the last decades. For instance, e-service adoption studies have added the notion of perceived risk to the initial dimensions (Featherman and Pavlou 2003), leaning on categories of risk identified by Cunningham (1967) such as performance risk and psychological risk. Assistance-seeking situations typically entail a certain degree of uncertainty and various degrees of stake, which is representative of risky situations. In their study on channel choice in customer-initiated communication, Polo and Sese (2016, 278) argue that amount of perceived risk, which differs depending on the nature (channel) of the interaction, will “determine customer channel preferences”. Perceived risk is thus also likely to play a role in a customer assistance channel decision.

Methodology: Semi Structured Interviews Investigating “Life Stories”

This research adopts a qualitative approach to explore and understand customers’ perceptions. We conducted 23 semi-structured interviews (totalling to 1165 minutes), using a purposive sampling strategy. Diversity was sought in terms of age, gender and type of occupation, in order to obtain the most diverse customer experiences. 17 interviewees recalled having used chat for online assistance. These were asked to recall one (or more) chat experience with a customer service representative online – whether live chat or virtual agent. They were encouraged to generate “life stories”, based on a narrative introspection (Carti, Cova, and Pace 2014). Six did not recall ever using chat as an online assistance channel. For these, interviews focused on their experiences of customer assistance (e.g. trying to solve a service failure). In addition, they were called out to imagine how assistance by chat might have been helpful – or not – in these situations. The use of a projective technique facilitate customers’ verbalisation of the obstacles that he / she imagines concerning the use of chat (Lavorata, Nilles, and Pontier 2005). Interviews, transcripts, and analyses were conducted in French, and subsequently translated in English by the first author. Interviews were coded separately using thematic analysis, and categories emerged thanks to constant comparison over the data (Corbin and Strauss 2015).

Findings: Heterogeneity of Customer’s Perceptions and Appreciations of Chat usage in Assistance Situations

Respondents point out the perceived nature of the interlocutor as key in their perceptions and interpretations. They characterize chat features according to two dimensions: a performance one and a relational one. We also identified four main types of motivations, which guide respondents through their assistance experience. The importance of the nature of the chat interlocutor.

Understanding Chat Perceptions in a Customer Assistance Channel

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The question of the nature of the interlocutor lies at the heart of the perception of chat in an assistance context. As summarised by one of the respondent:

*It is somehow mysterious, I am not sure whether it is like Siri in a written manner or if real people write themselves. When I see these chat proposals, I wonder: “Is there really someone behind?” Maybe it depends on websites.* (Mathilde, 25)

Respondents often express doubts about the true nature of their interlocutor – i.e. human vs. computer – when discussing a past chat experience. When the interlocutor is perceived as being a virtual agent, participants elaborate on the fact that companies may not be willing to use humans either because it would be too costly or because companies are not genuinely willing to help customers. Chat interlocutors identified as virtual agents generated mostly negative appreciations. When chat interlocutor is identified as a human, participants describe the interaction as “flowing freely”, they feel considered as dealing with a dedicated interlocutor.

**The perceived performance of customer assistance via chat**

Interviewees perceived the overall performance of chat in terms of two main dimensions: i) the outcome of the conversation, and ii) the time required to find a solution.

When reflecting on the outcome of a chat experience, most customers assessed the performance and usefulness of chat based on their perceptions of the nature of their interlocutor and of the company’s perceived intention to help or not. A chat interlocutor perceived as a virtual agent, does not, typically, seem useful to some:

*I feel it [chat] is not going to be of any use, I still believe chat is a machine. If a machine with the picture of a woman asks me « What are you looking for? » and that you get ready made answers like FAQs... I would rather look by myself.* (Nelly, 40)

Respondents also reported a perceived need to have some specific abilities or skills – for instance being able to use specific terms - when chatting with a virtual agent. Conversely, chatting with a human is generally perceived as easier. Some respondents reported communication failures, mostly when interacting with virtual agents, when they did not succeed to receive valuable information.

In terms of the time dimension, overall, respondents put forward a series of performance characteristics of chat, in comparison to other assistance channels: its free nature, its immediacy, ease of access and initiation – especially the fact that, compared with phone customer assistance, a representative can be reached directly, without having to listen to an option menu first – and its flexibility allowing multitasking.

**The relational dimension of chat**

Chat is predominantly seen as less spontaneous and less warm than a conversation on the phone or face-to-face, as it conveys fewer emotional cues. Some respondents paradoxically perceived this distance as an asset in an assistance context:

*Chat is perfect, you have all advantages of email, like being more anonymous than phone, not to have to discuss with someone, but it is more immediate and you can react to it live* (Florent, 28).

More specifically, for some customers, the lack of richness of chat as an assistance channel means that customers tend i) not to feel judged by a perceived condescending tone of voice, ii) not to be directly exposed to a representative’s disengagement, iii) not to feel influenced (e.g. feeling obliged to buy a product or service), and iv) to feel in control over the course of the interaction (e.g. being able to interrupt it easily). Thus, chat alleviates risks traditionally associated with interacting with a representative.

For respondents who dealt with virtual agents, the evaluation of relational features of chat were overall negative. In this case, participants perceive virtual agents to lack the capacity to understand customers. This was often interpreted as a lack of consideration from the company. On some occasions, when participants reported a sudden realisation that they had been conversing with a virtual agent rather than a human representative, they generally felt deceived.

**Chat as a customer assistance channel: customers’ motivations**

As for the motivations that led customers to choose a specific assistance channel, four main categories emerged: *assistance request avoidance, impression of having no choice, performance seeking and minimum direct contact*. The assistance-request avoidance customer is deferring as much as possible the moment where they will look for assistance, trying to solve problems autonomously first. The other three categories gather customers, who more readily accept to look for assistance. Some customers report an *impression of having no choice*. For these, chat might be the only option offered (e.g. those on a low cost mobile phone contract) or they might have become used to using a specific channel (phone or chat) as a default option to contact companies. In sum, some respondents do not feel that they are making a conscious channel choice. The *performance-seeking* customer is consciously setting up a performance-oriented strategy, based on former positive experiences, what they know about the company and what they anticipate about the complexity, importance and emergency of the situation. Finally, the *minimum direct contact seeking* customers, though willing to be assisted, drive their contact strategy towards minimizing direct interactions, sometimes at the expense of performance.

Overall, some customers feel genuinely motivated by the avoidance of direct interaction with the company. Chat seems to somehow address this concern by offering a more distant and customer-controlled form of communication. However chat also raises heterogeneous evaluations from customers, these differing mostly based on their interlocutors’ perceptions (human vs. virtual agent, see above).

**Discussion, Limitations, Future research and Conclusion**

**Discussion**

The contribution of this article to this emerging field of research is threefold. First, and paradoxically, results suggest that some respondents put forward the lack of richness of chat as one of its main assets. Two properties of chat appear beneficial to customers: i) the fact that chatting communicates fewer cues in the conversation, which lessens the risk of negative emotions. This can be seen as an illustration of the ‘neutrality effect’ (Byron 2008), which refers to the fact that a media providing less non-verbal cues generally creates less arousal. This neutrality effect, seen as positive feature in the context of assistance, appears to challenge the assumption that humanisation and social richness should always be sought for within customer-company relationships. And ii), the fact that chat is a less formalized way of communicating, which gives back some control and freedom to customers. This, in turn, contributes to reducing threats associated with assistance situations, such as loosing face. In sum, customers seeking assistance via chat may do so because of the fact that chat offers a way to focus on a specific problem, without caring about the form or richness of the interaction.
Second, chat can be perceived as a way to lessen some of the performance and psychological risks associated with assistance seeking. In terms of performance risk, chat is perceived as a way to reduce time spent on assistance. Following Bellman, Lohse, and Johnson (1999) time consideration is an important driver for e-services usage. In terms of psychological risks, the neutrality and specific form of interaction of chat alleviates the risk of losing face in an interaction. One of the contributions of this research is thus to better understand consumers who are seeking to avoid contacts in an assistance situation. This statement challenges the idea that e-service is necessarily perceived as riskier than services involving direct interaction.

Third, this study shows that the nature of the chat interlocutor in an assistance context can be elusive albeit of the greatest importance for customers. The perceived nature (human or artificial intelligence) is critical to understand the adoption of this technological media. Thus, this study contributes to the technology acceptance literature by confirming perceived risk as a factor influencing channel/technology choice (Featherman and Pavlou 2003; Polo and Sese 2016).

Limitations and future research

This study carries two main limitations. First, experiences and representations of chat are likely to evolve rapidly, as consumers get additional opportunities to experience chat in a customer assistance context. Second, the artificial intelligence used by virtual agents is likely to improve dramatically in the coming years, which could eventually also change perceptions and representations.

Future research should focus on a wider non-chatters population to better understand the barriers to the use of chat. Moreover, it would be interesting to investigate chat perceptions in specific contexts (e.g. pre-purchase, after sale, technological failure, etc.) as they may vary accordingly. Finally, the concept of “need for customer assistance” appears pivotal to understand assistance seeking behaviours, and could be further explored and operationalized in order to evaluate customers’ propensity to seek assistance, and engage with chat.

REFERENCES


Do Financial Restrictions Deteriorate or Improve Self-Control?  
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT  
Perception that your monetary situation does not let you to consume what you desire or want is something prevalent that each individual might experience in life. This paper examines how the duration of financial restrictions influence self-control behavior of individuals.

One stream of research on financial constraints demonstrate different coping strategies that people might use such as considering opportunity costs (Spiller 2011), efficiency or priority planning (Fernbach et al. 2015) or preferring material goods over experiences (Tully et al. 2015). All these findings suggest that those who are financially constrained are somewhat mindful (i.e., being aware of the present-moment and accept it non-judgmentally) of their current situation which helps them in controlling themselves from engaging in activities that might have positive consequences now but do not lead to long-term benefits. However, another stream of research suggest the negative effect of financial restrictions on self-control performance, as those who have scarce resources (e.g., financial resources) focus single-mindedly on managing the scarcity at hand and they might neglect other and even more important things (Mullainathan and Shafir 2013).

In this paper, we provide a solution to these conflicting results about the effects of being financially restricted on self-control. We differentiate between duration of financial restrictions and suggest that these different findings actually refer to either having short-term or long-term financial restrictions. More specifically, we suggest that when someone perceives him/herself to be financially restricted for a short period of time, the person would not be mindful about the situation, which would deteriorate self-control. However, we suggest that the results would not be the same for those who perceive financial restrictions for a longer period of time. Imagine you go out for shopping. You like several items, having in mind that you have financial restrictions (i.e., you have mortgage bills to make, your expenses for the month are over your budget, etc.). Hence, you are mindful of your current financial situation. You control yourself and go to the cashier with the items that you would like to purchase (self-control task 1). You make the payment and then the cashier suggests you an offer with a discount on an item (self-control task 2). In this case, because you are mindful of your current financial situation, you would simultaneously experience the second self-control task with the first one and you would be better off resisting the offer. Hence, we suggest that you would be better in self-control.

We first preliminary tested our prediction using archival data of Bank of Italy for a period between 2006 and 2014. More specifically, using the archival data, we demonstrated that those who have financial restrictions for a longer period of time (a) spend less for both durable and non-durable goods ($\beta = .02$, $p < .001$) and (b) have more deposit savings ($p = .069$), controlling for the income and liabilities.

In study 1, using an online panel, we randomly assigned participants to short-term or long-term financial restrictions writing-task conditions. The result demonstrated that those who have financial restrictions only for a short-period of time are more willing to pay for products that are offered to them impulsively compared to those who have financial restrictions for a longer period of time ($t(130) = 1.86, p = .065$).

In study 2, we replicated the findings of study 1 using again an online panel. After the financial restrictions manipulation as in study 1, we asked participants to imagine themselves in two situations taken from Dewitte, Bruynel and Geyskens (2009), where they need to decide between ordering a healthy versus unhealthy option in order to measure their self-control performance. In this study, we demonstrated that those who have short-term financial restrictions also behave impulsively in an unrelated domain compared to those who have long-term financial restrictions ($t(143) = 2.105, p = .037$).

In study 3, we tested our predictions again in an unrelated domain by comparing preference for healthy versus unhealthy products in eating domain for both short-term and long-term financial restriction conditions. The result showed that those who have financial restrictions for a shorter period of time prefer more unhealthy food over healthy food compared to those who have financial restrictions for a longer period of time ($t(109) = -1.668, p = .098$). Furthermore, we asked participants to complete the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (Brown and Ryan 2003). We have also demonstrated mindfulness as the underlying mechanism explaining the effect of stage of financial restriction on self-control ($ab = .1855$, 90% confidence interval $[CI] = [−.43, −.04]$).

In study 4, we demonstrated the effects in a behavioural context. Upon arrival to the lab, participants were randomly assigned to the mindfulness or control conditions; we manipulated mindfulness by asking participants to meditate following the instructions of the mindfulness app for fifteen minutes on a yoga mat. Participants in both meditation and control conditions were assigned randomly to short-term or long-term financial restrictions conditions. After reading two scenarios adapted from Spiller (2011), participants engaged in a writing task, to reinforce the duration of the financial restriction (i.e., short-term versus long-term) manipulation. Next, participants were shown the menu of the bar and they were asked to choose the items that they would purchase. For each item, participants were provided with calories and cost information. In this study, we demonstrated that while in the control condition, we replicated our key findings so that those who have financial restrictions for a shorter period of time engage in behaviour that is low in self-control compared to those who have financial restrictions for a longer period of time ($F (1, 93) = 20.94, p < .001$), the results were not the same for those who were in the mindfulness condition ($p = .218$). In the mindfulness condition, the effect attenuated so that self-control behaviour did not significantly differ among the different stages of financial restrictions.

The results of this paper have implications for self-control, financial restrictions, and mindfulness literature by demonstrating the effect of stage of the financial restrictions on self-control.

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**Those Who Have Financial Restrictions Cannot Buy but Can Save Time: I Have to Do Everything by Myself BUT with One Product Fits it All**

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**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Although previous research investigates how having one’s monetary situation as scarce influences one’s behaviour or how having one’s time as scarce influences one’s behaviour, previous research is silent on how these two scarce resources might interact. In this research, we investigate how those who are financially restricted perceive their time and how their perception of time influences their product preferences.

How do people who have financial restrictions perceive time? Previous research signals that those who have financial restrictions would perceive their time as restricted as well. On one hand, previous research suggests that because those who have financial restrictions would perceive stress (Sarial-Abi et al. 2016), they would perceive their time as limited, which would result as paying more for time-buying activities (e.g., expedited shipping; Etkin, Evangelidis, and Aaker 2015). Another stream of research suggests that because one focuses single-mindedly on the scarce resource (i.e., money), one cannot consider other important resources (Mullainathan and Shafir 2013). As a result, those who have financial restrictions might end up not efficiently managing their time, resulting in neither time-buying nor time-saving activities. In this paper, we suggest that those who have financial restrictions might perceive the time as being more restricted than those who have no financial restrictions when they experience more stress and anxiety compared to those who do not have financial restrictions. When individuals perceive time as restricted, they might engage in activities to save time. We show that those who have financial restrictions might save time by purchasing and using multi-purpose products.

In study 1 (N = 129), we examine whether having financial restrictions makes consumers feel time as limited. We manipulated salience of financial restrictions and measured subjective time perceptions. We have asked participants in the financial restrictions condition to think about the factors that contribute to their financial restrictions (Tully et al. 2015). More specifically, participants in the financial restrictions condition read:

Everyone has financial constraints in their lives, but the factors that contribute to these constraints tend to vary. What are the factors that require you to be careful with how you spend your money? What limits your monthly discretionary income? Include the aspects of your current situation that most contribute to your financial constraints (e.g., mortgage or rent, family expenses, uncertainty of future income, health care costs, student loans, lack of income, limited savings, bills that need to be paid, expensiveness of entertainment . . . ).

Participants were asked to write minimum of 250 characters and write in detail as much as possible.

To provide a similarly demanding task for the participants in the control condition, we asked them to list 10 facts that they knew to be true (Tully et al. 2015).

Next, we measured subjective time perceptions. Participants reported their perception that time was expanded (reverse-scored), boundless (reverse-scored), constricted, and that they do not have enough time on seven-point scales (1 = “not at all,” and 7 = “very much”; adapted from Etkin et al. 2015). We combined these measures to form a time perceptions index (α = .55).

As predicted, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on subjective time perceptions showed that having financial restrictions made people to feel that their time is restricted (Mfinancial = 4.82, SD = 1.39 versus Mcontrol = 4.08, SD = 1.21, t(127) = 3.22, p = .002).

In study 2 (N = 123), we replicate the results of study 1 and test the effect of stress and anxiety as the mechanism that explains the effect of financial restrictions on time perceptions. First, we manipulated salience of financial restrictions as in study 1. Second, we measured feelings of stress and anxiety as in Etkin et al. (2015). More specifically, participants reported their current stress and anxiety levels on seven-point scales (1 = “very little” and 7 = “very much”). The measures were highly correlated (r = .85) and combined. Third, we measured subjective time perceptions. To increase the generalizability of our findings, we added more items to the questions from those in Study 1. Other than the measures that we had in study 1, we also asked participants to indicate their agreement with four other statements (Etkin et al. 2015; Rudd et al. 2012): “I am in a rush,” “I don’t have enough time,” “Time is slipping away” and “I am pressed for time” on different seven-points scales (1 = “not at all” and 7 = “very much”). All items were then combined to form a time perceptions index (α = .76).

As predicted, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on time perceptions showed that those who have financial restrictions perceived the time as more restricted (Mfinancial = 4.19, SD = 1.19) than those in the control condition (Mcontrol = 3.82, SD = 1.13, t(121) = 1.78, p = .078). To test the proposed underlying process, we also used bias-corrected bootstrapping to generate 95% confidence interval around the indirect effect of stress and anxiety. The analysis revealed a significant indirect effect (ab = -.36, 95% confidence interval [CI] = [−.69, −.05]).

In study 3, we tested our prediction using the results of The Survey on Household Income and Wealth (SHIW) that is conducted by Bank of Italy since 1960. For the purposes of this study, we analysed the data starting from 2006 until the most recent one (i.e., 2014). The survey reports consumption of several types of insurance options. More specifically, it asks respondents whether they possess any of the following insurance funds: a) life products with profits, b) unit-linked insurance funds, c) index-linked insurance funds, d) capitalization products, e) multi-branch insurance funds, f) open pension fund, and g) death insurance and other pure risk. Based on the characteristics of each of the previous insurance funds, we classified them into single-purpose use or multi-purpose use. Our dataset includes 5,992 observations from 2006 to 2014. As a proxy for multi-purpose insurance consumption, we used a dummy variable which takes the value 1 if individuals have chosen a multi-branch insurance, general life products insurance, or an open pension fund, and zero if they have chosen a single-purpose insurance option (i.e., unit-linked insurance, index-linked insurance, capitalization products insurance, death insurance and other pure risk insurance). We controlled for the individual income with the logarithm of net income. As a measure for financial restrictions we used the total sum of liabilities that individuals have. To test our hypothesis, we estimated the following panel regression:

\[
MP = \beta_0 + \beta_z z + \beta_{inc} inc + \beta_{fr} fr + \epsilon
\]
Where MP is the indicator of multi-purpose choice, \( z \) is a vector of socio-demographic variables, \( inc \) is the log of financial income, \( fr \) is the log of liabilities of the respondent, and \( \varepsilon \) is a standard normal random error.

We tested our prediction using a probit model utilizing data from 5,992 observations over an 8-years period. The probability of choosing multi-purpose insurance options was higher than the probability of choosing single-purpose insurance options, when individuals have higher financial restrictions (\( \beta = .04, p = .054 \)), controlling for the net income level of individuals and their demographic characteristics.

In study 4 (\( N = 206 \)), we randomly assigned participants to financial restrictions and control conditions and tested the effects on preference of several multi-purpose items. Results supported the predicted effects (for multi-purpose shampoo: \( M_{financial} = 4.42, SD = 3.11 \) versus \( M_{control} = 3.76, SD = 2.17, t(204) = -1.67, p = .096 \); multi-purpose printer: \( M_{financial} = 110.01, SD = 120.023 \) versus \( M_{control} = 79.34, SD = 64.17, t(204) = -2.10, p = .037 \); cake mix: \( M_{financial} = 3.44, SD = 3.00 \) versus \( M_{control} = 2.56, SD = 2.61, t(204) = -2.16, p = .032 \); acne treatment: \( M_{financial} = 7.02, SD = 5.95 \) versus \( M_{control} = 5.54, SD = 4.41, t(204) = -1.92, p = .057 \); multi-purpose cooker: \( M_{financial} = 71.69, SD = 49.21 \) versus \( M_{control} = 57.60, SD = 67.91, t(204) = -1.72, p = .086 \); multi-purpose detergent: \( M_{financial} = 7.02, SD = 5.95 \) versus \( M_{control} = 5.54, SD = 4.41, t(204) = -1.92, p = .057 \).

Results of this paper contribute to the literature on financial restrictions and control conditions and tested the effects on preference of several multi-purpose items. Results supported the predicted effects (for multi-purpose shampoo: \( M_{financial} = 4.42, SD = 3.11 \) versus \( M_{control} = 3.76, SD = 2.17, t(204) = -1.67, p = .096 \); multi-purpose printer: \( M_{financial} = 110.01, SD = 120.023 \) versus \( M_{control} = 79.34, SD = 64.17, t(204) = -2.10, p = .037 \); cake mix: \( M_{financial} = 3.44, SD = 3.00 \) versus \( M_{control} = 2.56, SD = 2.61, t(204) = -2.16, p = .032 \); acne treatment: \( M_{financial} = 7.02, SD = 5.95 \) versus \( M_{control} = 5.54, SD = 4.41, t(204) = -1.92, p = .057 \); multi-purpose cooker: \( M_{financial} = 71.69, SD = 49.21 \) versus \( M_{control} = 57.60, SD = 67.91, t(204) = -1.72, p = .086 \); multi-purpose detergent: \( M_{financial} = 7.02, SD = 5.95 \) versus \( M_{control} = 5.54, SD = 4.41, t(204) = -1.92, p = .057 \).

Results of this paper contribute to the literature on financial restrictions, time, and product preferences. First, we contribute to the literature on financial restrictions by demonstrating the relationship between financial restrictions and time perceptions. More specifically, we demonstrate that those who have financial restrictions perceive the time as more scarce compared to those who have no financial restrictions. Second, we demonstrate that stress and anxiety are the underlying mechanism that explains the effect of financial restrictions on time perceptions. Third, we demonstrate that those who have financial restrictions cannot buy time when they perceive the time as scarce. Rather, they save time to cope with their scarce time perceptions. We show that they save time by preferring multi-purpose items compared to those who have no financial restrictions.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Storytelling is a central part of the consumption experience (van Laer et al. 2014). Traditionally, consumers are exposed to brand stories through advertisements (e.g., Phillips and McQuarrie 2010) and social media (e.g., van Laer and de Ruyter 2010). Recent innovations in augmented reality (Scholz and Smith 2016) and geo-media (Lapenta 2011) have provided marketers with additional opportunities to tell their brand stories: ones that are emplaced in consumers’ everyday environments. For example, transit riders might find themselves in the presence of zombies as part of an augmented reality campaign to promote the TV show The Walking Dead.

While emerging spatial media offer tremendous potential for telling brand stories, the ways in which consumers respond to these geo-mediated narratives are little understood. Previous research has introduced narrative transportation theory (Green and Brock 2002) to explore how consumers are drawn into a narrative and enjoy a story. However, as we will describe below, central assumptions of narrative transportation theory are called into question when the story is told through a nexus of GPS-enabled mobile devices, location-based content, and augmented reality technologies that create multiple realities through “the subjective coming together in time and space of material and virtual experiences” (Graham, Zook and Boulton 2012, p. 465).

Pokémon GO is a well-known story situated in this type of mixed reality. In this research, we explore the mechanics of narrative transportation when a story is told and experienced through geo-media that create a mixed reality. We present findings from a qualitative study on Pokémon GO and contribute understanding about narrative transportation in the context of this new storytelling approach.

Narrative Transportation

The role of stories in consumer behavior has frequently been explored through the concept of narrative transportation (Gerrig 1993; Green and Brock 2002), which describes the process of getting lost in a story. This detachment from reality and immersion in a narrative world has been shown to affect consumers’ attitudes and intentions (van Laer 2014), as well as their enjoyment and engagement with a story (Green, Brock and Kaufman 2004).

Previous research has predominantly explored narrative transportation in the context of audio and/or visual media, while interactive media such as computer games have received comparatively less attention (Green and Jenkins 2014). Some studies have explored narrative transportation in completely virtual environments such as computer games (Elson et al. 2014) and virtual reality (Ahn, Le and Bailenson 2013), but no study, to our knowledge, has thus far examined narrative transportation in the context of mixed realities that emplaces the story in the physical environment of the story receiver.

Geo-mediated stories are similar to stories told via digital games and virtual environments by virtue of their highly interactive and social nature (Biocca 2002). However, the glaring difference is that geo-mediated stories are emplaced in the physical environment of the receiver. Unlike digital games or virtual environments where the story is told on digital screens or in self-contained heads-up displays, respectively, geo-mediated stories unfold in the everyday spaces of consumers.

The emplacement of story content in consumers’ physical surroundings is at odds with core assumptions of narrative transportation theory, which posit the story world as entirely separate from the physical and social reality of everyday life (van Laer et al. 2014). Furthermore, the act of transporting is typically described as creating a narrative in the story receiver’s head. While this emphasizes the agency of the story receiver, it also characterizes the task of narrative transportation as a purely cognitive and emotive process of creating mental imagery associated with the story’s text. The paradox of geo-mediated storytelling is thus that the world of origin, which is supposed to be left behind through a cognitive process, is exactly the same place where the story unfolds, and where story receivers create a narrative while being embodied in the mixed reality of the story-world/world-of-origin hybrid.

Given the emplaced nature of stories told via geo-media, and the embodied nature of how these stories are consumed, our research aims to explore how narrative transportation is experienced in mixed realities. In particular, we are interested in how story elements such as characters and plot lines are experienced as “real”, and more generally how the story world becomes stabilized in the physical world and accepted as part of everyday life.

Conceptual Lens: Mixed Realities

Mixed realities describe hybridized experiences in which virtual content is inexorably linked with physical materialities through a mutual constitution of media, content and space (Farman 2012; Graham et al. 2012). Human geographers and communications scholars have suggested “geo-media” (Lapenta 2011) and “spatial media” (Leszczynski 2015) as terms that describe the nexus of location-aware devices, geo-coded content, and augmented reality technologies that gives rise to mixed realities, in - for example - large-scale games such as Pokémon GO and Ingress that constantly interweave the story of the game with the actuality of the physical world where the game is played (Chess 2014).

Mixed realities research thus recognizes the important role of (narrative) content, for example, when exploring how “code blends content and place” (Graham et al. 2012, p. 468). In particular, previous mixed realities research has detailed how geo-mediated content produces unstable representations of space that are always ‘of-the-moment’ and remade through the embodied, social, and technological practices of those that produce these mixed realities. Content shapes the meaning of certain places, for example, when global infrastructure is made invisible in Ingress, and patterns of social relations, for example, when Ingress players need to interact with strangers to achieve certain game-related goals (Chess 2014).

Context & Methods

We investigate geo-mediated narrative transportation in the context of Pokémon GO. Pokémon is a narrative brand centered around the adventures of Ash — the Pokémon trainer — and an assortment of monsters. The entire Pokémon experience — collecting, training, and battling against other Pokémon — has been confined to this fictional world, until the release of Pokémon GO in July 2016. Pokémon GO uses geo-location technology to merge consumers’ real-world environments (e.g., the city they are walking through) with game-relevant content such as landmarks (i.e., “Pokéstops”), activi-
ity zones (i.e., “gyms”), and most crucially brand story characters (i.e., Pokémons). It allows consumers to take on the role of Ash, the trainer, and live out the Pokémon experience in real life.

We study narrative transportation in the context of Pokémon GO through unstructured, in-depth interviews. We interviewed 13 respondents in August and September, 2016, and focused our discussion, broadly, on understanding consumer experience with Pokémon GO. The interviews lasted, on average, 60-90 minutes, and were transcribed, coded, and analyzed. It was through the iterative coding and analysis process that we came to focus analytically on narrative transportation. To further inform our understanding of the phenomenon and data, we also actively played the game and read media coverage.

Findings

Geo-media enable storytellers to emplace narratives in the physical world amidst a nexus of spatial and social relations. Under these conditions, transportation morphs from being a mental journey in an imaginary, external world into a joint cognitive and embodied process that interacts with the lifeworld of the consumer. In our findings, which are visually represented in Figure 1, we explore the experience of narrative transportation with geo-media, along with the factors that support it.

Dual-Move Narrative Transportation

Geo-media enable a form of dual-move transportation: the narrative moves into the physical lifeworld of the consumer, just as the consumer moves into the story world. We find that consumers speak of story world elements and physical world entities interchangeably as if they co-exist with each other in the same reality. They visit story world Pokéstops and Pokémon gyms, just as they would visit bus stops or brick-and-mortar gyms (Quote 1.1). They imbue the Pokémon monsters with agentic qualities, describing how they live out in the world as independent entities that possess the will and ability to evade capture (Quote 1.2). Consumers are deeply immersed in the story and internalize the role of Pokémon trainers as they go on organized day long ‘hunts,’ as well as plan their schedule and travel routes around their participation in the narrative.

These attitudes and behaviors provide compelling evidence that consumers experience transportation into the Pokémon story world, even as it is integrated in their own physical world. This dual move stands in contrast to traditional conceptualizations of narrative transportation in which the consumer, only, is cognitively transplanted into a separate, imaginary world. The question with transportation through geo-media becomes: how do stories come to be stabilized in the physical world and accepted as a part of everyday life?

Narrative Emplacement in the Physical World

Geo-media facilitated stories are spatialized. The characters are in one’s home and the plot plays out around the consumer amidst day-to-day activities. These are not the ethereal worlds of fictional books and movies. We find that perceptions of, and movement through, space is shaped by this location-based story content (Quote 2.1). Consumers seek out and express excitement about areas that feature a high concentration of Pokéstops, or that are rumored to be home to rare Pokémon. They also make pilgrimages to new places and move deliberately (e.g. zig-zagging, travelling in loops, etc.) through space as a result of this narrative content. The impact of locative content on space is represented by the dotted arrow pointing towards ‘space’ in Figure 1.

Consumers also engage in efforts to cognitively validate the status of the emplaced narrative in the physical world (solid arrow pointing away from ‘space’ in Figure 1). They identify pre-existing parallels between story content and the physical space in which it is embedded, helping to bolster perceived story verisimilitude. For example, they search for, and express delight about, instances in which Pokémon characters appear to fit realistically in the spatial environment (e.g. when they are sitting on a sofa) (Quote 2.2). Consumers even engage in more imaginative sensemaking to help construct the vision of a hybridized reality. For example, they draw on their knowledge of the physical world to explain aspects of the story world, such as the localized presence of Pokémon characters in certain places, which they attribute to the existence of nests, a concept not integrated into Pokémon GO. In doing so, consumers act in co-creative capacity to help elaborate on the ontology of the story world, and make it seem more plausible. In both examples, the fact that the narrative content adheres to the properties of the physical world helps to spatially validate the story world for consumers.

Social Story Experiences

Geo-media embeds stories in the physical world, and that means those stories often have bearing on social relations or are intertwined with those relations. Due to the public and distributed nature of the story world, consumers regularly report interacting with strangers also immersed in the Pokémon GO narrative. Yet, consumers’ most consistent and profound social experiences are with those they already know: co-workers playing with each other outside of office hours; old friendships, forged over past Pokémon games, being awakened through play after periods of dormancy; close friends altering the rhythm and routines of their relations with Pokémon-related trips (Quote 3.1). In this way, the story narrative structures social relations, providing people with a reason to be together as well as a social script to follow.

In turn, these social relations validate the locative content and make it seem more real and appealing. Acquaintances and strangers, alike, talk about story world elements, visit Pokéstops and hunt Pokémon, and share pictures of their captures; they are creating shared knowledge, participating in rituals, and enacting norms and values. In short, they are constructing a culture that recognizes the existence of a hybridized narrative-physical reality. In this culture, some consumers even project social qualities on to the story world characters themselves, imagining that Pokémon have social relations with humans, pets, and other Pokémon (Quote 3.2). Taken as a whole, these findings suggest that geo-media storytelling can have powerful impact on social relations and the experience of narrative transportation.

Validated Imagery & Embodied Transportation Practices

Prior work on narrative transportation highlights the importance of story elements such as character and plot, and those cannot be underestimated in the context of geo-media either. Yet, as previously noted, the emplaced nature of geo-mediated stories in the real world also necessitates that these story elements be validated both spatially and socially through, for example, thoughtful integration into the surrounding context and social relations. Consumers, as story interpreters and co-creators, play a critical role in this process, imagining and discussing undeveloped aspects of the story (e.g. the existence of Pokémon nests and relations between Pokémon monsters and pets).

Another way that transportation differs with geo-media is that it is an embodied practice: the story character’s body and the consumer’s body are one and the same, travelling around the hybridized physical-story world. If a consumer wants to experience a particular narrative thread, he or she needs to physically access it. And some aspects of a story – those set in an ocean or in a foreign country – can be physically, socially, monetarily hard to access (Quote 4.1). It is not as simple as turning the page or pressing play. Consumers
go on hunts that leave them hot and sweaty, they get lost, and they avoid particular places because embodied narrative transportation is accompanied by real and felt risks (Quote 4.2).

Discussion
In this research, we explored how to conceptualize narrative transportation when a story is told using geo-media, creating a mixed reality through emplacing a story world within the story receiver’s world of lived experience. We have found that narrative transportation, in this case, involves more than just creating mental imagery to access a separate world. It involves embodied practices and mental acts of validation that create and stabilize a mixed reality in which the story world “feels real” as it is seamlessly emplaced in the physical world. Narrative transportation in mixed reality thus requires researchers and marketers to rethink the environment in which a story is consumed, as well as how the story is produced.

Narrative transportation research, due to its focus on laboratory studies, typically downplays the role of the environment. If considered at all, the environment is conceptualized as a locus of distraction, for example when a crying baby in a movie theater attracts attention to the real world, rather than the story world, and thus makes transportation difficult or impossible (Green et al. 2004). However, even in more traditional media, the environment can cross-fertilize mental imagery, for example when someone reads Heart of Darkness, a story set on a boat traversing the Congo River, next to a bubbling stream. This type of environmental propping of mental imagery (Kuzmičová 2015), while typically ignored in narrative transportation research, becomes especially important for people and brands who wish to use geo-media to tell their stories.

REFERENCES
Does Pulling Together Lead to Falling Apart? The Self-Regulatory Consequences of Cooperative Orientations for the Self-Reliant

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

To be successful you have to be selfish, or else you never achieve.
And once you get to your highest level, then you have to be unselfish. – Michael Jordan

Many successful individuals often attribute their personal success to their own self-reliance and individual effort in training and practice. As these individuals advance to managers who oversee others’ work, for example, or team captains, continued success often requires collaboration. Essentially, they must put their “selfish interests” aside and navigate the opinions and capabilities of others in order achieve. In these situations, the question arises: what happens when self-reliant individuals are placed in situations that depend on cooperation and others’ performance?

Past research shows cooperation can help individuals and organizations reach their goals (Johnson and Johnson 1986). Less understood, though, are the consequences for those involved in cooperation. Research has proposed that cooperation triggers personal costs for collaborators since cooperation requires restraining selfish urges (Kocher et al. 2017), but support for this hypothesis is mixed with findings in support of this relationship (Kocher et al. 2017; Verkoeijen and Bouwmeester 2014) and in conflict (e.g. Bear and Rand 2016; Lottito, Migliel, and Ortona 2013). One explanation for this inconsistency is that not all individuals may experience cooperation’s depleting effects. Our research introduces an important moderator, self-reliance, that we believe may help explain why cooperation sometimes appears to require the expenditure of self-regulatory resources, while at other times, self-regulatory resources remain intact.

We employ ego depletion theory (Baumeister et al. 1998) and suggest that whether cooperation depletes an individual’s self-control depends on that individual’s level of self-reliance. Since the self-reliant believe they can, and prefer to, succeed through their own efforts, ego depletion theory would suggest that for the self-reliant, cooperating may be taxing. Cooperation requires relinquishing control to others, switching mindsets, navigating other perspectives, and acting against one’s preferences—behaviors that, for the self-reliant, likely draw on self-regulation and force counter-attitudinal behaviors (Baumeister et al. 1998).

Experiment 1 predicts that individuals primed with self-reliance (vs. no-prime control condition) show more unethical behavior, a measure of self-control, when cooperating versus competing individually. 172 undergraduates participated in an online study. Participants first completed a writing task to prime self-reliance (vs. control). In the self-reliance condition, participants were asked to cooperate and either cooperated with or competed against their partner for five minutes to earn the highest score on the online search task. Participants received a shopping list of products and were to find those items on the retailer’s website using only their mouse, no keyboard. Last, participants completed a series of four anagrams—but unbeknownst to participants, the fourth anagram was unsolvable (Baumeister et al. 1998). The time spent on the anagram served as our measure of restraint.

Individuals who cooperated and were primed with self-reliance persisted for less time than those who competed individually ($M_{\text{cooperation, self-reliance}} = 101.54$ seconds; $M_{\text{competition, self-reliance}} = 143.20$ seconds; $F(1, 168) = 4.23, p = .04$), demonstrating that for individuals primed with self-reliance, participating in a cooperative (vs. competitive individual) task led to less persistence on a subsequent task.

Experiment 3 tests self-regulation as the underlying mechanism and demonstrates that declines in self-regulation trigger these effects. 172 participants were recruited on M-Turk. The experiment consisted of a between subjects design with one manipulated factor (cooperation or individual competition) and one measured variable (trait self-reliance). Participants first saw the same cooperative and competitive individual manipulations from Experiment 1 and after, the number-summing task from Experiment 1, which served as our measure of restraint toward dishonest behavior. Last, participants completed a filler task, Triandis and Gelfand’s (1998) self-reliance scale, and Tangney, Baumeister, and Boone’s (2004) self-control scale.

Analysis shows a significant two-way interaction of the cooperative/individual competitive prime and self-reliance and a significant three-way interaction of cooperative/individual competitive prime, self-reliance, and self-control. The same pattern of results from the previous studies emerged among lower self-control individuals. Here, low self-control, high self-reliant individuals engaged in more unethical behavior under cooperation as opposed to individual competition (Effect = 1.92, $t = 2.59, p = .01$). The effect did not emerge among those higher in self-control.

Overall, our results show that whether cooperation requires self-control depends on an individual’s level of self-reliance. We find that self-reliant individuals show diminished self-control when co-
operating as opposed to competing individually. Our results delve deeper into why pulling together may lead to falling apart for self-reliant individuals.

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A Regulatory Focus Approach to Consumers’ Moral Decision Making
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This research demonstrates that consumers’ regulatory focus influences moral self-regulating consumption. Promotion-focused consumers’ moral decisions provide them with a license for subsequent consumption behavior that is more immoral, and more immoral deeds can be cleansed by successively more moral consumption decisions. Prevention-focused consumers repeat their past moral consumption decisions, irrespective of the moral valence of previous decisions though. We further show that these effects are contingent on the domain congruency of the decisions and the efficiency of a more moral option.

Recent literature has shown that consumers’ moral decisions largely depend on their behavioral history, though research into how previous decisions influence consumers’ subsequent behavior in moral trade-off situations offers contradictory results: On the one hand, consumers might persist in their moral history, leading to consistent behavior (e.g., Gino, Norton, and Ariely 2010; Karmarkar and Bollinger 2015; Zhang et al. 2014). On the other hand, consumers may deviate from the moral stance reflected in their past decisions, such that they balance their moral and immoral deeds (Gneezy et al. 2012; Krishna 2011). Presented with these opposing theoretical viewpoints, more research is needed to determine when consumers are motivated to balance their consumption decisions and when they tend to be consistent (Mullen and Monin 2016). Drawing on regulatory focus theory, we demonstrate that consumers’ regulatory focus influences moral self-regulating consumption.

Study 1 was a 3 (first decision: moral vs. immoral vs. control) ´ 2 (regulatory focus: prevention vs. promotion) between-subjects experiment with a sample of 188 students and university staff. Regulatory focus was manipulated by asking participants to write about their hopes/aspirations (promotion focus) or obligations/duties (prevention focus) (Freitas and Higgins 2002). To manipulate the morality of the first decision participants wrote about a situation where they helped someone unrewarded (moral) or were mean without any particular reason (immoral) (Conway and Peetz 2012). In all studies the control condition consisted of an unrelated scrambled sentence task. After the writing tasks, participants indicated their relative preference for organic versus conventional coffee which was the dependent measure. Interestingly, the results reveal that promotion-focused participants who had previously recalled moral decisions exhibited licensing behavioral patterns, indicating a lower subsequent preference for the organic coffee. Participants in the promotion focus condition who remembered past immoral decisions instead tried to “clean up” their behavior by preferring organic over conventional coffee. An induced prevention focus, however, causes consumers to repeat their past behavior which is consistent with past research (Zhang et al. 2014). Hence, participants with a prevention focus who recalled moral decisions preferred the organic coffee over the conventional alternative. If they confronted a prior immoral decision, prevention-focused participants indicated less preference for the organic coffee.

In study 2, we measured consumers’ chronic regulatory focus and manipulated the morality of the first decision, as well as the domain congruence of the first and second decisions, with a 2 (first decision: moral vs. immoral) ´ 2 (domain: same vs. different) between-subjects design and a morally neutral control group. The sample consisted of 291 students and university employees. For manipulating subsequent decisions of the same domain we first let participants choose from nine convenience goods (e.g., coffee, potato chips) that they would like to buy (Mazar and Zhong 2010). In the more moral condition, participants were shown seven green and two conventional convenience goods; in the more immoral condition, seven conventional and two green convenience goods appeared. Afterwards, they indicated their relative preference for organic versus conventional coffee as dependent measure. In the different domain condition, participants chose from a set of nine (moral: 7 green, 2 conventional: immoral: 7 conventional, 2 green) vouchers redeemable for green versus conventional clothes (e.g., T-shirts, jeans). The results indicate that promotion-focused participants show balancing patterns only for subsequent consumption situations in different behavioral domains. For subsequent decisions in the same behavioral domain they mimic their past decisions irrespective of the behavior’s moral stance. Prevention-focused consumers, however, show consistency in their consumption behavior in the same as well as in different consumption domains.

Study 3 manipulated the morality of the first decision, consumers’ regulatory focus, and the charity’s efficiency, using a 3 (first decision: moral vs. immoral vs. control) ´ 2 (regulatory focus: prevention vs. promotion) ´ 2 (charity efficiency: high vs. low) between-subjects design with 372 students and university employees as participants. The dependent variable was the choice in a moral trade-off, that is, the choice between keeping the reward in a customer referral program for themselves and donating the money to charity. Regulatory focus was manipulated as in study 1, while we used the scenario with nine different convenience goods from study 2 for manipulating the morality of the first decision. Charity efficiency was manipulated by indicating that the charity received a two-star (low efficiency) or four-star (high efficiency) rating by an independent institution (Winterich and Barone 2011). The results show that charity efficiency has no influence on the moral consumption behavior of promotion-focused participants. The authors presume that this is because promotion-focused consumers concentrate on the consequences of their behavior for their own moral self-perception, whereas the degree to which their moral decision benefits others may have relatively less importance. However, prevention-focused consumers refrain from mimicking the moral stance of their past behavior if the moral alternative is inefficient. Instead, they likely choose the more immoral option, irrespective of their behavior in subsequent situations. An inefficient moral choice option creates a situation in which the more moral alternative also is more risky, in that the donated money may not reach the intended recipient and thus would be lost. Hence, prevention-focused consumers may opt for the more immoral alternative, irrespective of their preceding decisions.

In sum, the findings show that a consumer’s inherent or situationally induced regulatory focus influences whether he or she regulates or repeats moral consumption decisions. These effects, however, are contingent on boundary conditions such as the domain congruency of the decisions studied and the efficiency of the more moral option. Thus, our research improves understanding regarding the dynamics of consumers’ moral self-regulation.
REFERENCES
The Chill of the Moment: Emotions and Pro-Environmental Behavior

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In the internet age, visual emotional appeals have gained a broader audience, and hence attracted great attention from marketing researchers, as many short videos or ads are shared online, generally watched only once. These videos, which often request immediate action (e.g., a video about world hunger followed by a donation request), have become an important tool to promote action on public policy issues. One important question is whether these social-marketing emotional materials will motivate the same action after a time delay once emotions have cooled off. This is especially important for environmental policies as many actions (e.g., purchasing a green product) are likely to be taken only after a time delay.

Climate change may be an appropriate target for interventions using emotional ads because it has almost all the hallmarks of an issue about which people are likely to experience scarce moments of emotional arousal to motivate pro-environmental action (Loewenstein and Schwartz 2010). Prior research has addressed the effect of emotion-evoking stimuli on environmental issues, focusing on intentions or attitudinal measures (Hartmann et al. 2016; Leiserowitz 2004; Lowe et al. 2006; Matthes, Wonneberger, and Schmuck 2014). However, studies that only provide hypothetical opportunities for taking action may actually underestimate the effect of emotion-evoking stimuli by not providing real opportunities to dispel negative emotions (Witte and Allen 2000). Furthermore, in most prior research, attitudes and intentions have been measured immediately following the emotion-evoking stimulus, raising the question of whether changes in attitudes or behavioral intentions would continue over time. We tackle these issues by measuring actual behavior immediately following, or with a delay after, an emotion-inducing stimulus.

We introduce two interventions to offset the effect of the time delay using tools that expand the literature of social marketing. First, as practitioners may assume that warning people about the consequences of time delay is an effective tool, we examine the effect of warning that emotions affect behavior, but this effect diminishes over time. Second, we examine whether intentions, through non-binding commitments adopted at a moment of emotional arousal, would translate into actions after emotions have cooled off.

Study 1 examines the differential impact of sadness-evoking and non-emotional videos, adding a time delay between videos and participants’ decisions. Participants (N = 687) were randomly assigned to watch either a sadness-evoking video or a non-emotional video, both previously pretested. Participants were randomly assigned to donate all or part of an announced $30 prize to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), either immediately or one hour after they watched the video. We found that those who watched the sadness-evoking video offered to donate 25% more money right after they watched the video than one hour later, p = 0.03. Time had no impact on those who watched the non-emotional video, p = 0.57. Participants who watched the emotion-evoking video offered to donate more money (30%) than participants who watched the non-emotional video when donations were made just after watching the videos, p < 0.01. However, one hour after watching the videos, there was no difference in donations, p = 0.89. Reported sadness mediated the decrease in donations, after the delay, by participants who watched the emotion-evoking video. Based on ELM theory (Petty and Cacioppo 1990), we found that people with lower (vs. higher) concern for global warming are more affected by sadness-evoking ads and, therefore, by the effect of a time delay. This result was replicated in the following studies.

Study 2 examines an informative intervention in which participants (N = 520) are warned of the effect of emotions on behavior (“When time has passed since people have watched the video, and the emotions that the video evokes have cooled down, people are less likely to donate, and when they do donate, they donate smaller amounts”). We also examined whether an active choice may increase donations (alone or with the warning) by asking participants whether they would like to postpone their donation decision. This study used the same sadness-evoking video from study 1, with a one-day time window between parts. We found that participants donated 45% more right after watching the emotion-evoking video than when asked to make a donation the day after (p < 0.01). When presented with the possibility of postponement, participants offered a donation 34% higher than those who could only donate the next day, p = 0.03, but very similar to participants who could only donate right after watching the video, p = 0.56. This suggests that choosing may be a useful strategy to avoid the diminution of donations following a delay. We found that explicitly warning participants that emotions will diminish and affect their donations has no effect (p = 0.63).

Study 3 adds a non-binding commitment just after participants (N = 476) watched the sadness-evoking video (“We would like to ask you how much you would like to donate in the second part of the study”). We found that adding a non-binding donation caused participants to donate, one day later, an amount very similar to what they proposed the previous day (r = 0.96). This high correlation resulted in higher donations on the second day of the study compared to participants who watched the same video but did not indicate any intention the previous day (30.8% difference; p < 0.01).

In summary, these studies reveal that sadness-evoking videos induce greater donations to an environmental organization than non-affective videos, but this effect disappears once emotions have cooled off after a delay. In addition, cautioning people that emotions, and their effects on behavior, cool off is not effective unless people provide a non-binding commitment just after watching the affective ad so that they can translate their initial intention into action after the time delay. Our results help explain why emotion-evoking ads that seek to promote pro-environmental behavior, such as reducing energy use, often fail to produce sustained behavioral change, and they suggest that if a sustained response is sought, behavioral commitments may need to be elicited in moments of high emotion.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

When consumers choose foods, some may prefer items for which they are offered specific information about the ingredients constituting the items they will be eating, whereas others may not form preferences based on such information. Thus, an important question regarding food marketing arises: Should food be marketed by providing specific information about ingredients to consumers?

The answer to this question may depend on the consumer’s cultural background. In this research, we propose that Chinese versus American consumers may have different lay beliefs about how different foods come together to form a meal, affecting norms for preparing and serving foods. Due to Confucian teaching and traditions, Chinese people tend to believe in the philosophy of yin and yang, such that apparently opposite forces are complementary and need to be balanced. This belief permeates the norms and values associated with foods and eating. When preparing foods, Chinese people want to balance yin foods (e.g., fruits and vegetables) and yang foods (e.g., beef and pork). Chinese food is an art of mixture that balances color, flavor, and texture. Chinese cooking involves looking at the combination of the ingredients as well as paying particular attention to the complex process and equipment involved. China has hundreds of cooking methods. Good cooking depends on the blending of various ingredients and condiments rather than the taste of the individual elements. Chinese people believe that various ingredients result in the overall harmony of flavors (Sundararajan 2015). For example, when preparing a dish of “Beef with mushroom and bamboo shoots,” Chinese people put all ingredients into a pan and deep-fry them repeatedly, to mix the flavors of all the ingredients. In the pursuit of balance and moderation, Chinese people do not perceive each ingredient to be a stand-alone, independent element of the meal, but rather consider the dish that has been formed to be a new, different entity—separate from its component parts. The Judeo-Christian traditions of Americans, on the other hand, eschew balance in favor of extreme stances (Briley, Morris, and Simonson, 2000; Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2009). Consistent with this belief, Americans tend to regard each ingredient as independent, and focus on how each element can contribute (Sundararajan, 2015).

Based on these considerations, we propose that Americans emphasize individual ingredients more than the Chinese do and therefore tend to be more interested in detailed descriptions of each ingredient when they consider foods. Study 1 provided initial evidence for our prediction. We asked participants to imagine going to a restaurant for a dinner and finding the restaurant has two versions of the menu available: one has the names of dishes with pictures, whereas the other has the names of dishes with detailed information about ingredients. American participants (60.7%) were more likely than Chinese participants (31.7%) to choose the menu with ingredient information, ($\chi^2 (1) = 17.28, p < .001$).

Study 2 used a 2 (culture: American vs. Chinese) × 2 (food type: soup vs. pizza) × 2 (ingredient information: present vs. absent) between-subjects design. We told participants we were interested in their choice of foods. Then they were either exposed to a pair of soup dishes or a pair of pizzas, depending on the condition. In addition, we manipulated the availability of ingredient information. In one condition, both food options had no ingredient information. In the other condition, however, both options provided ingredient information. American participants reported greater choice certainty when ingredient information was present for food options than when it was absent ($M = 5.57$ vs. 4.37, $F (1, 193) = 18.30, p < .001$). However, this difference was mitigated for Chinese participants ($M = 5.27$ vs. 4.95, $F (1, 193) = 1.31, p > .25$). The two-way interaction between culture and ingredient information was also significant ($F (1, 193) = 4.81, p = .03$), which was independent of food type ($F < 1.0$).

Study 3 used a 2 (culture: Chinese vs. American) × 2 (processing style: overall impression vs. ingredients focus) between-subjects design. Participants saw a picture of a seafood pasta and were either asked to form an overall impression of food or write down each ingredient in this dish. We then asked them to indicate the tastiness of the food. The two-way interaction between culture and processing style was significant ($F(1, 140) = 6.10, p = .015$). In particular, Americans evaluated pasta more favorably if they wrote down each ingredient than if they gave an overall impression ($M = .65$ vs. -.04, $F(1, 140) = 3.40, p = .07$). However, the reverse was true for Chinese people, though the difference was marginally significant ($M = .87$ vs. 1.45, $F(1, 140) = 2.71, p = .10$).

Study 4 used a 2 (culture: Chinese vs. American) × 2 (food presentation: separate vs. mixed) between-subjects design with the type of food as a within-subject factor. Participants saw a picture of a beef noodle dish and a beef burger, and the order of these pictures was counterbalanced. In the separate condition, each ingredient was displayed separately in both pictures. In the mixed condition, ingredients were presented mixed together in both pictures. A $2 \times 2$ ANOVA of culture and display on food evaluation revealed a significant interaction ($F (1, 1151) = 9.63, p < .01$), which was independent of food type. More specifically, separated (vs. mixed) presentation increased food evaluations for Americans ($M_{sep} = 1.09$, $M_{mix} = .49$, $F (1, 151) = 4.90, p = .03$) but decreased food evaluations for Chinese participants ($M_{sep} = .14$, $M_{mix} = .70$, $F (1, 1151) = 4.73, p = .03$).

In sum, our research contributes to literature examining consumers’ food perceptions, an area of increasing importance in consumer behavior research (Bagchi and Block, 2011; Bublitz, Peracchio, and Block, 2010; Wansink, 2015). Further, we address the influence of culture, showing that Chinese consumers may be less interested than American consumers in information about individual food ingredients.

REFERENCE


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In the last decade, two lines of research on uncertainty have found their places in the literature: one by Gneezy, List, and Wu (2006) documenting a strong uncertainty-aversion effect, and one by Shen, Fishbach, and Hsee (2015) documenting a strong uncertainty-loving effect. Each line is surprising by itself, and more surprising is the contrast between the two. This research aims to reconcile these two striking (and strikingly opposite) effects and build up a theoretical framework to understand responses to uncertainty in general.

Consumers have different responses to exogenous uncertainty, that is, the out-of-personal-control kind of uncertainty. It appears that most of the times, they are uncertainty averse (e.g., Arrow 1965; Holt and Laury 2002; Kahneman and Tversky 1979) and sometimes uncertainty loving (e.g., Dhar, Gonzalez-Vallejo, and Soman 1995; Goldsmith and Amir 2010; Mazar, Shampanier, and Ariely 2016). It is important to note that as long as the response to the uncertain outcome is still bounded by the responses to its worst and best outcomes for certain, both uncertainty aversion and loving here are still congruent to the dominance principle, that is, the certain incentive of a high value should dominate the uncertain incentive of the expected value, and in turn, the uncertain discount should dominate the certain incentive of a low value.

Anomalies do exist. As a violation of dominance against the lower bound, Gneezy et al. (2006) demonstrated a strong uncertainty-aversion effect. Research participants were willing to work even less to earn a lottery ticket of an uncertain payment than its worst possible payment. As a violation of dominance against the upper bound, Shen et al. (2015) demonstrated a strong uncertainty-loving effect. Research participants worked even harder to earn a bonus of an uncertain magnitude than a bonus of a certain, larger magnitude. We describe both above effects as “strong,” because each is a violation of the dominance principle.

In this research, we suggest that they actually do not happen at the same time. Strong uncertainty-aversion occurs before one engages in the activity, or “in-prospect,” while strong uncertainty-loving occurs when one engages in the activity, or “in-process.” Thus, the mode in which decisions are made, in-prospect versus in-process, moderates the effect of this incentive uncertainty. Specifically, we hypothesize that strong uncertainty aversion occurs in prospect, while strong uncertainty loving occurs in process.

The in-prospect and in-process decisions vary on many psychological aspects (see Figure 1 for a summary of the literature review). However, all psychological differences have their root in one physical feature: continuity. The in-prospect decision is often made on a single time point and hence can be seen as a static decision in a temporal isolation. By contrast, the in-process decision is often made over time and hence can be seen as a dynamic decision in a temporal continuity. Therefore, we propose a “continuity hypothesis”: that the effect from a single decision with continuity (in-process decisions) differs from the combined effects from multiple decisions in isolation (in-prospect decisions). Continuity adds extra utility into the process, and this process utility is usually in the form of high arousal and emotion. In the case of exogenous uncertainty, the extra utility can be in the form of excitement and engagement (Goldsmith and Amir 2010; Lee and Qiu 2009; Shen et al. 2015; Vosge rau, Wertenbroch, and Carmon 2006; Wilson et al. 2005).

We test this framework in a series of four experiments. All experiments entail real consequences for the participants and hence are incentive-comparable. In a typical experiment, participants were assigned to one of six conditions, which constitute a 3 (outcome: certain high (HI) vs. certain low (LO) vs. uncertain (UN)) x 2 (decision mode: in-prospect vs. in-process) between-participants design. In one study, participants were given the opportunity to repeatedly guess the meaning of a foreign word, and were promised to earn $0.25 (LO), $0.50 (HI), or either $0.25 or $0.50 (UN) if they made the correct guess. The word was designed to be so difficult that no one could guess it correctly, so the DV was persistence. As for an in-prospect decision, the participants, before starting the task, indicated how long they would persist. As for an in-process decision, the participants worked on the task and we observed how long they actually persisted. We found that for in-prospect decisions, the persistency pattern followed: HI > UN > LO, indicating not so strong uncertainty aversion and failing to replicate Gneezy et al. (2006), whereas for in-process decisions the persistency pattern followed: UN > HI > LO, indicating strong uncertainty loving and succeeding in replicating Shen et al. (2015). In another study, we found the strong uncertainty aversion did occur in in prospect, but as documented by Yang, Vosgerau, and Lowenstein (2013), the uncertain outcome had to be framed as a lottery.

In other studies, we further replicated this in-prospect/in-process discrepancy on (a) ambiguity (when UN does not specify the probability of each outcome), (b) choices (when the behavioral measurement was a discrete variable), and (c) pricing measurement (when the behavioral measurement has sensible financial consequences). In the last study, we directly tested the continuity hypothesis by breaking an in-process decision into several in-prospect decisions and gathered supportive evidence.

To the best of our knowledge, we are the first to reconcile the Gneezy effect and the Shen effect, and we are also the first to demonstrate both effects by manipulating a single factor in a single experiment with the same decision context and on the same magnitude level. This research does not only resolve a “conflict” in the literature but also greatly advances our understanding of how people behave under uncertainty in prospect and in process.

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Embracing Experiential over Material Consumption: Thinking about Death Increases Consumer Preferences for Experiences

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

And a moment came that stopped me on a dime,
I went sky diving,
I went 2.7 seconds on a bull name Fumanchu.
And I loved deeper,
And I spoke sweeter,
And I gave forgiveness I’ve been denying,
And he said someday I hope you get the chance,
To live like you were dying.

In this song, which was the number one country song on Billboard in 2004, a man who is going to die soon, makes the most of his last days by engaging in various experiential pursuits such as sky diving and mountain climbing. He further advises that people take the opportunity to live like they were dying because, in the face of his own impending death, he was finally able to live life to the fullest. Similar insights were portrayed by the film, The Bucket List (2007), which depicts a story about two men who end up sharing a hospital room at a crossroads in their lives and set out on the adventure of a lifetime to spend the time they have left doing everything they ever wanted to experience before they die.

Although these anecdotal examples of embracing experiences in response to reminders of death may seem intuitive at first blush, past research on mortality salience finds that people in fact tend to be more materialistic in the face of thinking about their own death (Arndt et al. 2004; Kasser and Sheldon 2000; Mandel and Heine 1999). In contrast to the research suggesting that people will consume material goods under conditions of mortality salience, we argue that, when people are given the choice between material and experiential options, thinking about one’s own death will make people prefer experiential over material consumption. We propose that the mechanism underlying this effect is the tendency for experiential rather than material options to fulfill one’s desire for meaning. We argue that reminders of one’s own mortality will lead people to imbue their lives with a sense of meaning and this activated desire for meaning will make people prefer more experiential rather than material consumption. To our knowledge, no work has looked at the comparative preferences for experiential versus material options in response to mortality salience.

Our conceptual framework extends previous work on TMT (Greenberg et al. 1986), which demonstrates that reminders of one’s own death creates existential anxiety, leading to responses that allow the individual to bolster their own cultural worldview in ways that increase perceptions of a life with meaning (Rosenblatt et al. 1989). Building upon this, we make a novel prediction that thinking about one’s own death leads individuals to prefer experiential purchases (i.e., those made with the primary intention of acquiring a life experience) over material purchases (i.e., those made with the primary intention of acquiring a tangible good or material possession; e.g., Van Boven and Gilovich 2003). We make this key prediction because experiential purchases are particularly associated with a person’s true self (Carter and Gilovich 2012; Schlegel et al. 2009), which serves as an important source of meaning in life (King et al. 2006). Thus, we suggest that the mechanism underlying the preference for experiential versus material options in response to mortality salience is the pursuit of meaningfulness. Specifically, we predict that people will perceive experiences (vs. material goods) as more meaningful following mortality salience threats and will demonstrate a preference for experiential options because of a desire to pursue meaning.

In five studies, we investigate whether mortality salience leads people to prefer experiential over material consumption, using multiple real-world field (Studies 1a and 1b) and experimental settings (Study 2). We further examine whether the observed tendency is mediated by differences in perceived meaningfulness of experiential and material purchases (Study 3). Finally, we test the moderating role of meaning-affirmation on the observed effect (Study 4).

Study 1a

In Study 1a, we sought to provide a preliminary test of our predictions in a field study. Borrowing a method from a global art project, Before I Die (www.beforeidie.cc), we examined whether people express greater desires for engaging in experiences than acquiring material goods when thinking about their own death. We created a chalkboard wall, stenciled with a grid of the sentence “Before I die, I want to _______” on campus, and then asked people walking by to fill in the blank (n = 227) (see Figure 1). Once the wall was full, we photographed wall and transcribed the responses for coding purposes. Then, the responses were erased so that a new set of sentences could be written on the wall. All of the responses were classified into one of the two categories (experiential vs. material) by two trained coders. We calculated the proportion of responses that reflected experiences and the proportion of responses that reflected material goods.

As predicted, people expressed a greater desire for engaging in experiences (e.g., go skydiving, ski in the Alps) than for acquiring material goods (e.g., get a Ferrari, buy all Apple devices) in the face of their own death ($M_{exp} = 97.4\%$, $SD = 0.1$; $M_{mat} = 2.6\%$, $SD = 0.37$; $\chi^2(1) = 203.63, p < .001$). Using a real-world setting, Study 1a provided initial correlational evidence for the notion that mortality salience is related to preferences for acquiring experiences rather than preferences for acquiring material goods.

Study 1b

In Study 1b, we adopted a different real-life approach and identified consumer preferences for experiences over material goods in response to thinking about one’s own death using a natural data source: Pinterest (www.pinterest.com). Pinterest is an online content sharing platform that allows members to pin images, videos, and other objects to their pin boards for others to view. To test our prediction in a real-world online setting, we explored what people have pinned on Pinterest by using a keyword phrase: “Before I die.”. A research assistant used Pinterest Quick Search by typing in a keyword phrase “before I die” in the search box and randomly selected 200 pin boards, which displayed a total of 2964 pins. The pins were classified into one of the two categories (experiential vs. material) by two trained coders. We calculated the number of experiences or material goods out of the total number of pins.

As anticipated, people posting a pin listed under “before I die” expressed a greater desire for engaging in experiences (e.g., go zip lining, stay in an ice hotel) than acquiring material goods (e.g., own a pearl necklace, have a luxurious bathroom) ($M_{exp} = 95.7\%$, $SD = 881
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.03; M_{null} = 4.3\%, SD = .12; \chi^2(1) = 2481.43, p < .001). The results of Study 1b provided supporting evidence for the impact of mortality salience on preferences for experiences over material goods.

**Study 2**

In Study 2, we sought more direct evidence regarding the causal effect of mortality salience on preferences for experiential over material consumption in a more controlled setting. Given that thoughts about death produce a unique type of anxiety (Greenberg et al. 1990), we predicted that participants who focus on thoughts about death only indicate higher WTP for experiential than material purchases, but this effect would not emerge for those who focus on thoughts about social rejection, physical pain, or a neutral topic.

**Method and Procedure**

We randomly assigned participants (n = 392) to one of four experimental conditions: 1) the mortality threat, 2) social rejection threat, 3) physical threat, and 4) grocery shopping (control) condition, and manipulated the conditions using a writing task (Arndt et al. 2002). After completing this task, participants were asked to list three experiential and material purchases and indicate their willingness to pay (WTP) for each of the purchases.

**Results and Discussion**

First, we calculated participants’ WTP for the experiential and material purchases by subtracting the average WTP of the three material purchases from the average WTP of the three experiential purchases. A one-way ANOVA on the index of WTP revealed a significant difference between the conditions (F(3,388) = 3.99, p < .01). As expected, participants who thought about their own death indicated higher WTP for experiential than material purchases (M_{mortality} = $178.37, SD = 1035.42), compared to those who thought about being socially excluded (M_{social} = -$131.65, SD = 592.77), dental pain (M_{physical} = -$154.75, SD = 794.06), and grocery shopping (M_{control} = $-108.83, SD = 514.34). Follow-up analysis revealed that those participants in the social rejection, the dental pain, and the control condition did not differ on the index of WTP for the experiential and material purchases (p > .97). Thus, Study 2 provided direct evidence in support of our prediction that reminding people of their own mortality leads them to prefer experiential over material purchases and this tendency is only caused by mortality salience (vs. social threats vs. physical threats vs. control).

**Study 3**

In Study 3, we explored the underlying mechanism by predicting that people who think about their own mortality (vs. control) will perceive experiential (vs. material) purchases as more meaningful, and the difference in perceived meaningfulness will prompt people to spend more money on experiences than on material goods in response to mortality salience threats.

**Method and Procedure**

Participants (n = 158) were randomly assigned to either the mortality salience or the control condition. Participants in the mortality salience condition were presented a short documentary clip about bighorn sheep (Heatherton et al. 1993). Afterward, as in Study 2, participants were asked to list three of future experiential and material purchases and indicate the WTP for each of the purchases. They were then asked to rate an item on each of the experiential and material purchases that they listed: “To what extent do you think this experiential (material) purchase would be meaningful to yourself?” (7-point scale: 1 = “not at all,” 7 = “very much so”).

**Results and Discussion**

We performed a mortality x meaning-fulfillment ANOVA with the index of WTP as a dependent variable. As expected, we found a significant interaction between the mortality salience and the meaning-fulfillment manipulation (F(1,226) = 4.00, p < .05). In the mortality salience condition, participants reported higher WTP for experiences than material goods.

A one-way ANOVA on the index of WTP revealed a significant difference between the conditions (F(3,156) = 4.45, p < .05). As predicted, participants who focused on thoughts about their own death indicated higher WTP for experiential than material purchases (M_{mortality} = $348.52, SD = 766.72), compared to those who thought about grocery shopping (M_{control} = $167.79, SD = 1101.02).

To test our proposed underlying mechanism, we first calculated an index of perceived meaningfulness by subtracting the average perceived meaningfulness of the three experiential purchases from the average perceived meaningfulness of the three material purchases. We then conducted a mediation analysis (model 4; Hayes 2013) with mortality as the independent variable, the index of WTP for experiential and material purchases as the dependent variable, and the index of perceived meaningfulness as the mediating variable. First, we found a marginally significant main effect of mortality salience (vs. control) on the index of WTP (b = 278.61, SE = 150.97, t = 1.85, p = .067), indicating that participants who thought about their own death (vs. control) indicated higher WTP for experiential than material purchases. Furthermore, there was a significant main effect of mortality salience (vs. control) on the index of perceived meaningfulness (b = .46, SE = .22, t = 2.08, p < .05), indicating that participants in the mortality salience condition perceived experiences (vs. material goods) as more meaningful (vs. control). Finally, the procedures generated a 95% confidence interval around the indirect effect with zero falling outside the confidence interval (b = 53.10, SE = 38.51, 95% CI = [7.9077 to 165.5168]), indicating that the mediating pathway is significant. Thus, Study 3 confirmed that the observed tendency to prefer experiential over material purchases in response to mortality salience was statistically mediated by differences in perceived meaningfulness between the experiential and the material purchases.

**Study 4**

In Study 4, we tested the effect of meaning-fulfillment following mortality salience threats on consumer preferences for experiential over material purchases. We theorized that engaging in an alternative task that allows the individual to recall a past meaningful experience (i.e., meaning-fulfillment) should mitigate the observed tendency for consumers to prefer experiences over material goods in response to mortality salience. Thus, we predicted that the observed tendency will not emerge when people are given an opportunity to fulfill their meaning by recalling their past meaningful experience.

**Method and Procedure**

This was a 2 (mortality: salient vs. control) x 2 (meaning-fulfillment: yes vs. no) between-participants design. Participants (n = 228) were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions. As in Study 2, we manipulated mortality salience (vs. control) by using the writing task and asked participants in the meaning-fulfillment condition to describe a past experience that they felt was meaningful and to explain why the event was meaningful to them. Those participants in the no meaning-fulfillment condition were not asked to describe any of their past meaningful experiences. Afterward, participants were asked to list three of future experiential and material purchases and to indicate their WTP for each of purchases they listed.

**Results and Discussion**

A one-way ANOVA on the index of WTP revealed a significant difference between the conditions (F(1,156) = 4.85, p < .05). As predicted, participants who focused on thoughts about their own death indicated higher WTP for experiential than material purchases (M_{mortality} = $348.52, SD = 766.72), compared to those who thought about grocery shopping (M_{control} = $167.79, SD = 1101.02).
experiential than material purchases when they were not given the opportunity to recall their past meaningful experience (M_{no-fulfillment} = 72.41, SD = 79.66). When they were given the opportunity to recall their past meaningful experience, however, the tendency was eliminated (M_{fulfillment} = 166.61, SD = 83.14; F(1, 226) = 4.31, p < .05). In the control condition, meaning-fulfillment had no influence on the observed effect (M_{no-fulfillment} = -103.72, SD = 80.99; M_{fulfillment} = -14.05, SD = 84.66; F(1, 226) = .59, p > .44). The results of Study 4 demonstrated recalling one’s past meaningful experience resolved the desires for meaning elicited by mortality salience and this, in turn, alleviated the tendency to bolster their meaningfulness in response to mortality salience threats.

**General Discussion**

The current research brings to light one of the key consumption domains in which mortality salience has a substantial influence: experiential versus material purchases. From a managerial perspective, we provide insight for marketing practice, especially for experiential consumption, by emphasizing the need to remind consumers of the limited amount of time left to them to do everything they ever wanted to do. Thus, it would be key for marketers to understand the meaningful nature of experiences and develop promotion plans (e.g. using images, advertising slogans) which can remind people of thoughts about death to differentiate their products from competitors.

We hope that the current research spurs other work examining the nuances of experiential consumption. Further, we would like to summarize the takeaway from this research with a quote from Brazilian novelist Paulo Coelho on his Twitter (@paulocoelho; 2012): “One day, you will wake up and there won’t be any more time to do the things you’ve always wanted. Do it now.”

**REFERENCES**


Mind The Gap: How Smaller Numerical Differences Can Increase Product Attractiveness

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This research explores situations in which smaller numerical differences can be perceptually larger and consequently increase product attractiveness. We find that when a product’s numerical information changes from a decimal to an integer (e.g., 3.4 to 4), consumers are likely to perceive the product as more improved and therefore more appealing than when the change is between two integers (e.g., from 3 to 4), even though the difference is larger in the latter case. Specifically, we propose that when a product’s version number or rating changes from a decimal number to an integer, consumers infer that the product has leapt over intermediate values and crossed the threshold into a new category, reflecting greater improvement.

A decimal number can draw attention to the fine-grained scale and may suggest the possibility of additional, intermediate values (Pandalaere, Briers and Lembregts 2011). Consequently, we propose that the change from a decimal to an integer (rather than to another decimal number) is perceived as the crossing of a threshold. Building on research showing the impact of category boundaries on consumers’ perceptions and behavior (e.g., Irmak, Walker-Naylor, and Bearden 2011; Isaac and Schindler 2013), we predict that a decimal-to-integer boundary crossing will lead consumers to infer that the product has improved substantively, which will increase product attractiveness.

This positive effect of a smaller, more precise difference is contingent upon the perception that a category threshold has been crossed. Therefore, we do not expect it to occur when the change is from one decimal number to another (e.g., from 2.1 to 2.7), as this is likely to be perceived as a relatively minor improvement. If the integer component of a number remains unchanged, consumers may focus on that rather than on changes in the digits after the decimal point.

The decimal-to-integer effect also depends on consumers’ familiarity with the product and the scale. When the scale is vague or unfamiliar, consumers need to infer the meaning of the numerical information from whatever cues are available which will lead to the decimal-to-integer effect. If consumers have existing knowledge or understanding as to what the number actually represents, they should be less prone to such inferences about the meaning of the numerical differences.

In four studies, we provide support for the proposed effect, and demonstrate the mediating role of product improvement and how (lack of) familiarity with the numerical information moderates the effect.

Study 1 demonstrated that a smaller difference between a decimal version number and an integer version number can increase perceived product attractiveness. We randomly assigned undergraduate participants (n=96) to one of two conditions: software whose existing version number was either 3 (integer condition) or 3.4 (decimal condition). The new version in both conditions was 4. We found that participants who were told that the upgrade under consideration was from version 3.4 to version 4 were more favorable about an upgrade than those who were told that the upgrade being considered was from version 3 to version 4 (t(94)=2.16, p=.03).

In study 2, participants (n=172) were randomly assigned to one of five conditions in which they read descriptions of two versions of a “social camera,” with different combinations of version numbers. A one-way ANOVA revealed significant differences between the conditions (F(4,167)=2.57, p=.04). Camera evaluations were more positive in the version 2.4 vs. 3 condition than when the version number had changed from 2 to 3 (F(1,167)=3.60, p=.06). It was also more positive than in the version 2 vs. 2.6 condition (F(1,167)=4.98, p=.03), and the version 2.1 vs. 2.7 condition (F(1,167)=8.75, p<.01). Differences between the other conditions in the study were not significant. These results indicate that it is not the precision of a decimal number in itself that is advantageous, but rather the combination of numerical precision and the crossing of a numerical threshold.

Study 3 provided support for the underlying mechanism of perceived improvement. Participants (n=85) were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: a hotel whose previous “eco-friendly rating” was either 8 (integer condition) or 8.3 (decimal condition). They read that this rating had increased to 9 following a recent renovation. We found that the hotel was perceived as better when its rating had increased from 8.3 to 9 compared to when it had increased from 8 to 9 (t(83)=2.35, p=.02). Interest in staying at the hotel was also greater in the decimal-to-integer rating condition compared to the integer-to-integer rating condition (t(83)=1.92, p=.06). Perceived improvement of the hotel mediated the effect (b=0.20, SE=0.11; 95% CI: 0.04 to 0.46).

In study 4, we examined a possible moderator: the type of numerical information that consumers encounter. Participants (n=190) were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in a 2 (previous product model: decimal or integer) × 2 (type of numerical information: familiar or less familiar) experimental design. They were asked to imagine that they wanted to buy a new camera. In the familiar condition, participants were told that the previous model of this camera had a display size of 3 or 3.4 inches, while the new camera had a 4-inch display. In the less familiar condition, participants were told that the camera’s “color accuracy rating” had increased from 3 or 3.4 to 4. We found a familiarity × type of numerical information interaction (F(1,186)=5.98, p=.02), such that participants who were presented with the unfamiliar color accuracy rating were more interested in buying the camera when the rating had improved from 3.4 to 4 than when it had increased from 3 to 4 (F(1,186)=4.13, p=.04). Among participants who read about the camera’s display size, the difference between the decimal and integer conditions did not reach significance (F(1,186)=2.05, n.s.).

While larger numerical gaps might be expected to signal a greater difference between product versions or ratings, our findings indicate that sometimes the reverse is true: smaller differences can be perceptually larger and boost product attractiveness. In other words, some small differences feel larger than others – and it is important to “mind the gap” and its implications.

REFERENCES


The Friend-Number Paradox
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Little research has examined people’s competence in predicting others’ perceptions of their own attractiveness in social networks. Mispredictions of this kind are consequential: They hinder the establishment and maintenance of desirable relationships and negatively affect the efficient allocation of resources to achieve particular goals in the social realm. For example, a woman might overestimate others’ liking for her and adopt an interaction strategy that actually decreases her popularity (Dai, Dong, and Jia 2014). A political candidate who over-predicts his or her favorability in the eyes of minority groups might distribute his or her attention and resources in a suboptimal manner that decreases the chances of winning. In short, correct insights into others’ preferences towards oneself are important for people’s well-being and functioning in general and for accomplishment of effective marketing campaigns in particular.

In this research, we propose and investigate a fundamental preference mismatch in social networking with regard to individuals’ numbers of friends. By “social networking,” we are referring to the will and practices undertaken to expand one’s social circle. It includes but is not limited to the use of Internet-based social media platforms. In addition, we focus on social networking for the purpose of establishing “pure” friendships rather than those formed in pursuit of economic, professional, or other interests (e.g., establishing business connections). We show that people expect others to be more willing to make friends with them when they already have a large number of friends, whereas others actually exhibit a preference that is diametrically opposed to that expectation: People are actually more willing to make friends with someone who has a small number of friends. We coin the term friend-number paradox to describe this mismatch between people’s expectation and others’ actual preference. In the following, we explicate the reasons behind this paradox and report the results of four studies confirming the validity of our propositions.

Theoretical Background

Preference for Small Number of Friends

Social ties are the building blocks of the social world and are thus highly valued, with larger numbers of social ties often reflecting higher social esteem and more likeable personality traits. It therefore seems reasonable to assume that people prefer individuals with larger numbers of friends as social networking targets (Feld 1991). However, social ties are valuable only to the extent that adequate levels of relationship quality are maintained, and relationship quality is essentially entrenched in the obligations and expectations inherent in social ties. Reliability and the due fulfillment of obligations and expectations cost attention, time, and other resources.

In his seminal paper, Coleman (1988) suggested that obligations and expectations constitute a major form of social capital that facilitates actions within social networks and is an important resource with regard to efficiency and well-being. Given the importance of social capital, its accumulation is an implicit yet fundamental objective in social networking. In other words, relationship quality is the primary concern of social networking. Hence, an individual’s ability to honor his or her obligations to another person and to meet that person’s expectations (i.e., ability to build social capital with that person) should be a predominant predictor of the latter’s preference for networking with the individual. We propose that this ability is negatively affected by an individual’s number of social ties because limited resources become more diluted with a larger number of social ties. Therefore, a person would expect the quality of his or her relationship with a given individual to be poorer if that individual had a large number of friends, and be less likely to make the effort to become friends with that individual. In other words, we predict that people are more likely to network with individuals who have fewer existing friends.

Preference Mispredictions in Social Networking

If the preceding observations are valid, then why would people overlook others’ concern for relationship quality and mispredict their preferences? For one thing, taking the perspective of others requires effort and motivation (Epley, Keysar, Van Boven, and Gilovich 2004; Lin, Keysar, and Epley 2010). As a result, people often exhibit an egocentric bias, focusing on self-relevant information while paying insufficient attention to concerns that might underlie others’ judgments (Ross and Sicoly 1979; Windschitl, Kruger, and Simms 2003). It is therefore proposed that when predicting the number of social ties that others prefer, people are prone to overlooking others’ concern for relationship quality and focus instead on the symbolic significance of social ties. In other words, they may infer that the greater the number of ties they have, the higher their social esteem and more likeable their personality traits, and thus the stronger others’ preference for networking with them.

Furthermore, we propose that this preference mismatch is also a result of people’s neglect of their own obligations and expectations in the social network when formulating the predictions. Research shows that people are inclined to neglect various kinds of “expenses” when they make judgments and predictions (Berman, Tran, Lynch and Zauberman 2016; Campbell and Warren 2015; Frederick, Novemsky, Wang, Dhar, and Nowlis 2009). For example, they often neglect opportunity costs in their decisions and choices (Frederick et al. 2009). If insufficient consideration has been given to the obligations and expectations inherent in social ties, individuals are likely to become insensitive to the decrease in relationship quality caused by increases in the numbers of social ties, and thus express a preference for a larger number of ties in their predictions.

In summary, we propose that people expect others to be more willing to make friends with them when they have a large number of friends. Others, in contrast, are more willing to make friends with someone who has a small number of friends. This preference mismatch arises because people overlook others’ concern with relationship quality and focus on the symbolic meaning of social ties when making predictions about others. Further, the difference in relationship quality concern is closely related to neglect of one’s obligations to and expectations from friends at the time these predictions are formulated. We conducted four studies that demonstrate this preference mismatch and test the validity of our hypotheses. We describe the major findings of the studies in the next section.

Study 1: Friend Number on Facebook

Method

102 participants (M_{age} = 35.21, 59% male) took part in a short choice study. The participants read that Facebook is one of today’s most widely used online social networking sites. Then, those in the
others’ preference condition were asked to predict whether others would be more likely to make friends with them if their Facebook page showed that they had 500 friends or 50 friends. Participants in the own preference condition were asked whether they would be more likely to make friends with a person whose Facebook page showed 500 friends or 50 friends.

Results

71% (36/51) of participants in the others’ preference condition predicted that others would be more likely to make friends with them if they had 500 rather than 50 friends on Facebook. In contrast, only 31% (16/51) of participants in the own preference condition preferred an individual with 500 rather than 50 Facebook friends. The difference between the two conditions was highly significant ($\chi^2(1) = 15.69$, $p < .001$).

Study 2: Preference for a Target Person’s Relationship Quality

The results of Study 1 are consistent with our proposed effect. However, another alternative explanation could also account for our findings: Individuals with an excessive number of friends are associated with certain negative impressions (e.g., frivolousness) that affect others’ inferences about their social esteem and personality traits. Therefore, participants in the own preference condition may have chosen the person with fewer friends not because of relationship quality concerns but out of concerns over the target person’s social esteem or personality traits.

In Study 2, we tested this alternative explanation by asking participants whether they would prefer a target person who had many good relationships (strong relationship quality) versus another who had merely many acquaintances (weak relationship quality). Like relationship quantity, average relationship quality should also negatively influence an individual’s ability to build social capital with others. However, stronger average relationship quality should be unconditionally associated with higher social esteem and more likeable personality traits. If the effects in Study 1 were indeed driven by differing concerns over relationship quality, then we would expect a significant difference in preferences to again emerge between the two judgment conditions.

Method

101 participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 35.61, 62%$ male) took part in this study. Participants in the others’ preference condition read a scenario in which they were asked to imagine themselves in each of two situations. In one situation, they had lived in a community for a long time and had good relationships with many people. In the other, they had recently moved to a new community and had made the acquaintance of the same number of people as in the first situation. They then selected the situation in which they thought others would be more willing to make friends with them.

In the own preference condition, participants were instructed to imagine two fictitious persons in their community who were similar to each other in all aspects except that one had lived in the community for a long time and had good relationships with many people, whereas the other had moved to the community recently and was merely acquainted with the same number of people. They were then asked to select the person with whom they would prefer a friendship.

Results

Of the participants in the others’ preference condition, 84% (42/50) thought that others would be more likely to make friends with them if they had many good friends rather than an equal number of acquaintances. In the own preference condition, however, only 51% (26/51) of participants expressed a preference for making friends with a person with many good friends over one with an equal number of acquaintances. The difference between the two conditions was highly significant ($\chi^2(1) = 12.51$, $p < .001$). These results therefore provide further evidence that the preference mismatch is driven by concerns over relationship quality rather than inferences about the target person’s social esteem or personality traits.

Study 3: Concern With Relationship Quality

Study 3 provided evidence supporting the mediating role of differences in relationship quality concern in the current effect.

Method

100 participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 38.89, 52%$ male) took part in this study. Study 3 adopted a design similar to that of Study 1. After participants made their choices, they were given four descriptions regarding their concerns for relationship quality and were asked to indicate whether those concerns had occurred to them when they were making their choices.

Results

The choice data replicated results of our previous studies. 72% (36/50) of the participants in the others’ preference condition predicted that another individual would be more likely to make friends with them when they had 200 instead of 50 friends. However, only 22% (11/50) of participants in the own preference condition expressed a preference for making friends with another individual with 200 versus 50 friends ($\chi^2(1) = 25.09, p < .001$).

Analysis of the combined measure of relationship quality concern ($\alpha = .90$) revealed that the participants in the own preference condition were concerned with relationship quality to a significantly greater extent ($M = 5.20, SD = 1.50$) than those in the others’ preference condition ($M = 4.33, SD = 1.44$; $F(1, 98) = 8.88, p = .004$; $d = .59$). We confirmed the mediating effect of relationship quality concern on the relationship between judgment perspective and friend-number preference using the bootstrapping method (Hayes 2013). With 5000 bootstrap samples, the indirect mediating effect was estimated to be -.93 (boot $SE = .57$), with its 95% bias-corrected confidence interval (-2.27, -0.23) excluding zero.

Study 4: Reminder of Obligations and Expectations

As previously noted, differences in the degree of concern with relationship quality are inextricably associated with the failure to consider the obligations and expectations inherent in social ties when predicting the preferences of others. Hence, reminding participants of those obligations and expectations should attenuate or even reverse a preference for large numbers of friends in their predictions, thereby bringing those predictions more in line with the actual preferences of others. Study 4 examined this prediction.

Method

Study 4 employed a similar design as in Studies 1 and 3. A reminder condition was added in which participants were asked to think about and write down what others would expect them to do in various situations as friends before they predicted others’ preference for their number of friends in social networking. 205 participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 33.31, 59%$ male) were randomly assigned to three between-participants conditions.

Results

The participants’ choices differed significantly among the three conditions ($\chi^2(2) = 31.18, p < .001$). Replicating our previous findings, the majority of participants (79%; 56/71) in the own preference condition preferred another individual with 50 rather than 200 friends, whereas only a small proportion of participants (32%; 23/71) in the others’ preference (baseline) condition correctly pre-
dicted that preference by the majority of others ($\chi^2(1) = 31.07, p < .001$). More importantly, compared with the baseline condition, a significantly larger percentage (57%; 36/63; $\chi^2(1) = 8.30, p = .004$) of participants in the reminder condition predicted that others would be more likely to make friends with them if they had 50 rather than 200 friends, although the percentage still differed from that in the own preference condition ($\chi^2(1) = 7.33, p = .007$). These findings again provide support for our proposed mechanism underlying the friend-number paradox.

**General Discussion**

One important motivation for engaging in social networking is to expand one’s number of social ties. In the studies reported herein, we found that in the process of such engagement, people paradoxically prefer individuals with a relatively small rather than large number of friends. At the same time, they are rather inept at predicting that preference of others, judging instead that others would prefer to network with them if they had more rather than fewer friends.

The current research examines a fundamental mismatch between people’s predictions of others and their own personal preferences. We investigated the mismatch in the context of social networking, which is highly relevant to daily life and important to well-being. However, we believe that the friend-number paradox is pertinent to a much wider scope of contexts, and hope that further studies will be inspired to explore its broader implications.

**REFERENCES**


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consider a consumer in the market for an iPad, who could purchase the current generation iPad (SS) or wait for the next generation version that is better, but available later in time (LL). In the current work, we show that patience may increase when wait time for LL is expressed using larger units of time. Importantly, we argue that this only occurs when the rewards are hedonic in nature, and not when they are utilitarian.

Theoretical Development

Patience in intertemporal choices may be affected by wait time perception (Kim, Zauber and Bettman 2012), as well as the nature of the rewards (Thaler 1981). We demonstrate a novel interactive effect of wait time and rewards. Specifically, we show that the units used to describe wait time (e.g., days vs. months) influence wait time perception, and consequently patience, but this is contingent on whether the rewards are hedonic or utilitarian. Our prediction for this interactive effect is based on past work on the numerosity heuristic and the hedonic vs. utilitarian distinction in consumer products.

People have a tendency to equate smaller numbers with smaller magnitudes, an effect known as the numerosity heuristic (Pelham, Sumarta and Myaskovsky 1994). For example, 10,000 Korean Won appear to be greater than 1,000 Japanese Yen, even though both are of equal value (Raghubir and Srivastava 2002). Thus, if the wait time for LL is expressed as 3 months instead of 90 days, people should perceive it to be shorter and, consequently, become more patient. The reason for this is that the larger unit of months results in a smaller number being used to express the wait time (i.e., ‘3’ rather than ‘90’). However, since numerosity is an effortless heuristic, it should impact intertemporal choice more when decision makers are relying less on careful calculation. We believe one such situation is when individuals evaluate hedonic rather than utilitarian rewards. Given that the primary purpose of hedonic consumption is pleasure rather than practicality (Khan et al. 2005; Pham 1998), hedonic consumption is associated less with careful thinking and more with reliance on feelings. The influence of the numerosity heuristic in intertemporal choice should thus be stronger in the case of hedonic rewards. Hence, we predict that larger time units should lead to shorter wait time perception and, consequently, higher patience, but that this should only be the case when the rewards are hedonic rather than utilitarian.

We observe support for our prediction in six studies, four of which provide process evidence. Studies 3 to 6 show that the interactive effect of time unit and reward type on patience is mediated by the perceived length of the wait time. Studies 5 and 6 demonstrate that this interactive effect attenuates when participants engage in careful calculation.

Studies

In study 1, participants made a hypothetical choice between the current version of a computer tablet versus an upcoming version. The tablet was manipulated to be either hedonic or utilitarian and the wait time for the upcoming version was expressed as 120 days vs. 4 months. Participants were more patient for the new version when wait time was expressed in months rather than days, but only when the tablet was hedonic (not when it was utilitarian).

In study 2, participants were first manipulated to think of money as a means to buy something hedonic versus utilitarian. Then they were offered either a small monetary reward that they could receive immediately or a larger monetary reward that they could receive later. The wait time for the larger reward was expressed as 4 days vs. 96 hours. Participants waited for the larger amount more when wait time was expressed in days rather than hours, but only when they thought of money as a means to buy something hedonic (not utilitarian).

In study 3, participants imagined receiving a $100 visa gift card and were asked to think about what they will spend it on. They were then informed that they could receive a $110 gift card instead if they were to wait. Wait time was expressed as 14 days vs. 2 weeks. Participants preferred to wait more when wait time was expressed in weeks rather than days, but only when they thought about buying hedonic (not utilitarian) products with the gift card. Participants’ wait time perception mediated the effect of units and reward type on patience.

In study 4, participants imagined buying headphones online, which were manipulated to be either hedonic or utilitarian. They chose between standard and expedited shipping, with shipping times expressed in hours vs. days. For hedonic (but not utilitarian) headphones, participants chose standard shipping more, and thus reflected more patience, when shipping times were in days rather than hours. Participants’ wait time perception mediated the effect of units and reward type on patience.

In study 5, participants were first manipulated to think of money as a means to buy something hedonic versus utilitarian. They then indicated preference between a $100 gift card in 2 weeks (vs. 14 days) vs. a $120 gift card in 8 weeks (vs. 56 days), and completed the lay rationalism scale (Hsee et al. 2015) as a measure of their natural inclination towards relying more on calculation. Results from earlier studies replicated, but only for participants who were relatively low on the lay rationalism scale.

In study 6, in a control condition, participants completed the same procedure as in study 4. In a calculation prime condition, participants first solved a few mathematical problems that would encourage careful calculation rather than the use of heuristics. Results from study 4 replicated in the control condition, but in the calculation prime condition no significant effects were observed even when the rewards were hedonic.

Discussion

We show that using larger units to express wait time can boost patience, but only when the rewards are hedonic and not when they are utilitarian. Reliance on careful calculation attenuates the effect even for hedonic rewards. These results reveal a novel interactive effect between the nature of the rewards and wait time perception in intertemporal choice.

REFERENCES


Lacking a Resource or Being One: Money Scarcity versus Time Scarcity Differentially Shape Self-value and Product Judgments  
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In this article, we investigate how time scarcity and money scarcity differentially affect consumer’s subjective assessment of the self-value via altering consumer’s view of the self as a resource. Time and money are both primary resources that are used to achieve certain ends (Becker 1965). However, consumer researchers have shown that time is systematically different from money in multiple ways (Leclerc et al. 1995; Mogilner and Aaker 2009; Okada and Hoch 2004). One important difference between time and money is that money does not require the self as an actor to have its value and meaning but time is bounded up with the self to have its value and meaning. Money is a medium of exchange that has a fixed value (Leclerc et al. 1995; Okada and Hoch 2004; Saint and Monga 2008). However, time is by its definition, an experience that the self is connected to (Liu and Aaker 2008; Mead 1934; Reed et al. 2007).

We suggest that due to this difference in interconnectedness of the self and the resources, the self-inferences that people make when feeling time (vs. money) scarcity can be different. Because money is not bounded up with the self, the self-inference that people make when feeling money scarcity is simply that ‘I don’t have the resource’. Money is a tangible resource that one can possess (Macdonnell and White 2015) and be used to exchange with desirable outcomes. Thus, people who are feeling money scarcity may have a negative self-inference such that they lack the scarce and important resource. However, time is a resource that the self is at root (Flaherty and Fine 2002; Mead 1932), thus scarcity of time entails meanings other than simply not possessing the resource. Because individual’s activities and experiences translates into spending time (George and Jones 2000; Mead 1932), lack of time means the shortage of the self as an actor who needs to take multiple roles at the same time (Jabs and Devine 2006; Kaufman et al. 1991). Thus, when feeling time scarcity, people may have a positive self-inference such that ‘I am the scarce resource’, over and above the negative inference of ‘I don’t have the scarce resource’.

We further suggest that this relative difference in self-inferences will differentially affect consumer’s self-value. We suggest that the desirability and positive aspects of scarcity can be applied to the self when making the positive self-inference that further leads to greater self-value. We measure the self-value through a variety of self-related variables such as self-esteem, self-importance, and self-achievement. Such increased self-value shapes consumer’s preference towards products that reflect the higher self-value such as choosing higher priced products and better evaluations of products that pitch the self as ‘being worth it’ or special. Furthermore, to test that these effects are driven by the positive self-inferences, we document conditions when time scarcity does not lead to favorable self-inferences (i.e., low personal control) and when money scarcity leads to more favorable self-inferences (e.g., when the scarcity arises from prioritization).

The objective of study 1 is to show that time (vs. money) scarcity leads to increased positive self-inference, which further affects consumer’s responses. We used pre/post measure of positive and negative self-inferences to test this link. We found that both time and money scarcity led to greater negative self-inference (i.e., I lack the scarce resource). However, we found that only time (vs. money) scarcity led to greater positive self-inference (i.e. I am the scarce resource). Moreover, we found that the increased positive self-inference significantly predicted self-value (e.g., self importance, self-esteem) and self-value significantly predicted consumer’s preference towards self-value promoting advertisement. We found a serial mediation in this study.

In study 2, we showed the effect of time (vs. money) scarcity on positive self-inference can be switched off by using personal control as a moderator. If time scarcity leads to greater positive self-inference because spending time requires the self as an actor, then those who perceive themselves as unable to change the outcome will be less likely to infer that they are the scarce resource. As predicted, we replicated our previous effect that time (vs. money) scarcity leads to greater positive self-inference, among those who have high personal control. However, we found that such difference was diminished among those who have low personal control.

In study 3, we showed that money scarcity effect can be switched on. If money scarcity does not lead to positive self-inference because the self as an actor is not salient to consumers, then highlighting the positive role of the self should boost their positive self-inference. We tested this using the self as the source of scarcity. Those who view themselves as a positive source of scarcity (i.e. feeling scarcity because the self was prioritizing the use of resource), we should see that even money scarcity leads to greater positive self-inference. However, those who view themselves as a negative source of scarcity (i.e., feeling scarcity because the self mismanaged the use of resource), we should replicate our previous effect. We used (2(money scarcity vs. time scarcity) x 2(prioritization vs. mismanagement vs. control) between subjects design. We replicated our previous findings in the control and the mismanagement condition, such that time scarcity condition indicated greater positive self-inference and preference towards indulgent product than the money scarcity condition. However, within the prioritization condition, the money scarcity condition showed increased positive self-inference and increased preference towards indulgent product.

Our findings suggest that compared to money scarcity, time scarcity leads to positive self-inference whereas both time scarcity and money scarcity lead to negative self-inference. This is due to that time is more bounded up with the self, such that spending time cannot be done without the self as an actor. Such positive self-inference leads time (vs. money) scarce people to have greater assessment of self-value.

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The Power of Negative Visualizations: When Fear Appeals Motivate Consumer Behavior
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Fear appeals are a common marketing tactic that intend to persuade consumers to buy products and services that aim to help avoid an undesirable outcome. It is proposed that the main mechanism involved is the arousal of fear or anxiety, a potent source of energy that propels people into action (Hull 1943). It is assumed that scare tactics should modify behavior when the undesirable outcome is perceived as severe, probable, yet surmountable (Rogers 1975). However, empirical evidence reveals that fear appeals are not always efficient despite meeting these criteria (e.g. Morales et al. 2012; Passyn and Sujan 2006). Various variables were examined to explain the inconsistencies in past findings (e.g. Manyiwa and Brennan 2012; Smith and Stutts 2003), focusing primarily on moderators relating to types of fear appeal, emotions and individual differences.

The present paper employs the technique of visualization to further understand instances when fear appeals are, and are not, efficient at motivating behavior. Work on negative visualizations is limited and generally affirms that mental imagery of feared self-states encourage consumers to engage in behaviors that will distance them from the undesirable outcome (Hoyle and Sherrill 2006). However, we propose that negative visualizations are not all equally efficient, and that processing style (abstract versus concrete) is a key determinant of the fear appeal’s persuasiveness. More specifically, abstract imagery of the feared self should increase motivation to avoid the undesirable outcome, while concrete visualizations do not produce such motivational tendencies.

These propositions are based on past research which affirms that abstract processing reduces perceived boundaries between an individual’s various self-concepts, while concrete processing heightens self-concept distinctions (Forster et al. 2008; Wakslak et al. 2008). This theorizing suggests that mentally simulating one’s feared self-state in abstract terms should evoke perceptions of assimilation to the imagined feared self, which is likely to evoke sufficient anxiety required to drive motivated behavior. Conversely, visualizations processed in a concrete fashion heighten perceptions of self-discrepancy, thereby reassuring individuals that the feared self is distant from their present state and hence, that no action is required. In sum, we propose that fear appeals have the potential to motivate consumer behavior, but only when they instigate abstract (not concrete) visualizations. Further, we also show that this effect is driven by feelings of anxiety.

Study 1

To verify whether abstract visualizations enhance motivation, we examine whether they increase people’s tendency to engage in goal shielding – i.e. a tendency to inhibit other goals from diverting attention from a focal goal (Shah et al. 2002). 128 participants were randomly assigned to a 2 (visualization task: feared self, control) by 2 (processing style: abstract, concrete) between-subject design. 12 participants (9%) were dropped for failing to complete the manipulation task. In the feared self condition, participants either visualized having achieved their feared body appearance in a general sense (i.e. abstract processing), or first specified important attributes associated with their feared body image (e.g. gain 20 pounds, cellulite) and then visualized having achieved these concrete attributes (i.e. concrete processing). In the control condition, participants visualized their daily routine in a general sense (i.e. abstract) or specifically visualized their morning routine (i.e. concrete). In a seemingly unrelated study participants were asked to write down their new year’s resolutions. Answers were coded for how many unrelated goals were reported (dependent variable). If the avoidance goal (i.e. feared body appearance) was still activated, participants should engage in goal shielding and list less goals unrelated to health and fitness. An ANOVA and simple contrasts verified that abstract fear visualizations motivated goal shielding tendencies more so than the other types of visualizations (Mviz_abstract=.85, Mviz_concrete=1.57, Mcontrol_abstract=1.79, Mcontrol_concrete=1.33).

Study 2

The main objective of study 2 was to confirm that abstract visualizations of the feared self motivate goal-congruent choices. 194 undergraduate students participated in a 2 (visualization task: feared self, control) x 2 (processing style: abstract, concrete) between-subject design. 12 participants (6%) were dropped for failing to complete the imagery task. Participants first completed the same visualization task as in study 1. After a short filler task, subjects were presented with a list of 20 consumer goods, and rated how likely they were to purchase each item (7-point scale). Included in the list were 6 health-related items (e.g. running shoes, smoothie maker). The mean score served as the dependent variable. An ANOVA and simple contrasts verified that abstract visualizations of the feared self motivated higher intent to purchase healthy goods, compared to the other visualizations (Mviz_abstract=5.12, Mviz_concrete=4.55, Mcontrol_abstract=4.65, Mcontrol_concrete=4.61).

Study 3

The objective of Study 3 was to provide evidence for the proposed affect-based mechanism, namely that abstract imagery evokes feelings of anxiety, and that these feelings prompt motivated behavior. 215 participants were randomly assigned to the abstract fear and routine visualization conditions (the concrete conditions were removed). They then reported their feelings, and completed the same consumer survey as in the previous study, measuring their level of interest in health-related products. A mediational analysis using model 4 of Hayes’s PROCESS macro indicated a partial mediation (5000 samples, 95% CI, 0.4-13) (figure 1). The indirect effect of abstract fear visualizations on healthy behaviors through anxiety was positive, however, anxiety only partially mediates this relationship since the direct effect of abstract fear visualizations on healthy behaviors, after the path through anxiety was accounted for, was still significant.

General Discussion

The present findings show when and how visualizations of the feared self motivate people to make goal-relevant consumer choices and engage in goal-congruent behaviors, as well as provide preliminary evidence for the mediating role of affect in this relationship. The present paper contributes to the literature in at least three ways. First, we are the first to employ the visualization technique when examining the effects of fear appeals in consumer research. Second, we are the first to examine the role of processing style as a moderator in the mental imagery literature. Third, we provide empirical evidence
that negative mental imagery motivates consumer behavior via emotional arousal (not only cognitive processes).

REFERENCES


How Does Power Distance Belief Affect Consumers’ Preference for User- versus Designer-Designed Products?

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

User design, whereby firms draw on their user communities to generate ideas for new products (Dahl, Fuchs, and Schreier 2015), has become increasingly popular among marketers. However, there are substantial differences in the effectiveness of this design approach across countries, suggesting that cultural orientation is important in understanding the effect of user design on consumer preferences. Until now, the extant research has not yet investigated the role of cultural orientation. We propose that power distance belief (PDB), defined as “the extent to which a society accepts and views as inevitable or functional human inequality in power, wealth, or prestige” (Oyserman 2006, 353), moderates the relationship between design philosophy and consumer preference. More specifically, we predict that consumers with high (low) PDB will prefer designer- (user-) designed products to user- (designer-) designed products (H1). Additionally, the impact of low PDB on preferring user-designed products to designer-designed products is mediated by a stronger identification with the user-driven company (H2a), while the impact of high PDB on preferring designer-designed products to user-designed products is mediated by a stronger trust in the designer-driven company (H2b).

Study 1 used Apache’s country-level market share to measure consumers’ preference between user- and designer-designed products. We used Hofstede’s country scores of power distance (PD) as independent variable, while individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation per capita GDP, educational index, and the Internet users index of each country as control variables. The results of regression on 75 matching countries indicated that only PD had a significant negative effect on Apache’s market share ($b = -.009, z = -2.21, p = .02$), such that Apache’s market share was smaller in countries with higher PD than in those with lower PD. Further, we found that the relationship between PD and user-designed product preference is robust by controlling for alternative explanations such as other cultural dimensions and economic variables. Taken together, the results supported hypothesis 1 at country level.

Study 2 was a 2 (PDB: low US vs. high China) × 2 (Design philosophy: designer design vs. user design) between-subjects design. The results revealed a significant interaction between country and design philosophy ($F(1, 463) = 24.67, p < .001$). American participants (low PDB) demonstrated a stronger preference ($M_{user} = .43$) for user-designed products than for designer-designed products ($M_{designer} = -.18$; $F(1, 463) = 10.31, p = .001$), consistent with Dahl et al. (2015). The Chinese participants (high PDB) indicated a reverse pattern ($M_{user} = -.36, M_{designer} = .39$; $F(1, 463) = 14.46, p < .001$). Thus, hypothesis 1 was supported at individual level.

Study 3 was designed to investigate the underlying mechanism proposed in hypotheses 2a and 2b. It was a 2 (PDB: low vs. high) × 2 (Design philosophy: designer design vs. user design) between-subjects design. We used the sentence-scrambling task developed by Zhang et al. (2010) to prime PDB, and we manipulated design philosophy following Schreier et al. (2012). The results revealed that the interaction effect between design philosophy and PDB ($F(1, 172) = 8.45, p = .004$) was significant. A planned contrast indicated a similar pattern to Study 2. More importantly, a bootstrap analysis revealed the significant moderated mediation effects of identification (95% CI: [-1.19, -.02]) and trust (95% CI: [-.50, -.03]) at different levels of PDB. For low-PDB condition, identification (95% CI: [.03, .92]) mediated the positive effect of user design on purchase intention, whereas trust (95% CI: [.27, .05]) did not. For high-PDB condition, the negative relationship between user design and purchase intention was mediated by trust (95% CI: [-.55, -.12]) but not by identification (95% CI: [-.48, .27]). Thus, hypothesis 2a and hypothesis 2b were supported.

Study 4 was a 4 (Design philosophy: novice designer design vs. designer design vs. user design vs. male user design) between-subjects design. The description in “designer design” and “user design” conditions was identical to Study 3. To manipulate the female participants’ identification with the user-driven company, we additionally described the members of the user-community as predominantly male in the “male user design” condition. We manipulated the expertise of the internal designers in the “novice designer design” condition. We measured purchase intention, identification, trust and chronic PDB. The results revealed a significant interaction effect between design philosophy and chronic PDB ($t(368) = -3.26, p = .001$). More importantly, when identification was manipulated to be low, there was no significant difference in purchase intention between the low-PDB participants in the “male user design” and the “designer design” conditions ($M_{male user} = 4.13$ vs. $M_{designer} = 4.18$; $t(368) = -.16, p > .90$), suggesting that identification was underlying low-PDB’s effect on preference between designer and user designed products. However, when trust was manipulated to be low, no significant difference was found between the high-PDB participants’ purchase intention in the “novice designer design” and “user design” conditions ($M_{novice designer} = 4.47$ vs. $M_{user} = 4.49$; $t(368) = .07, p > .90$), suggesting that trust was mediating high-PDB’s effect on dependent variable. Thus, this study provided stronger evidence regarding the underlying psychological processes using a moderation-by-process design.

This paper contributes to the relevant literature in several significant ways: advancing user-design research by uncovering a very important theoretical boundary condition, i.e., PDB; documenting a new psychological process for user-design evaluation by showing that trust is also essential to explain consumer’s preference for user- versus designer-designed products among high-PDB consumers; advancing the PDB literature by demonstrating that PDB effect can be mediated by different psychological process, depending on the decision contexts.

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Unethical Product Returning as a Function of Consumers’ Experienced Psychological Distance
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Unethical product returning refers to a form of consumer misbehavior that is characterized by abuse of a firm’s returns policy by a consumer. Harris (2008) defined unethical product returning to be knowingly returning “a functional but used or post-purchase damaged product to any store without informing the store of the use or the true cause of damage” (p. 464). Unethical product returning by consumers is a source of great expense for retailers in terms of re-selling, quality checks after the return, repackaging or even destroying the products. Therefore, research and practice warrant explanations for the prevalence of this misbehavior (Rosenbaum, Kuntze, and Wooldridge 2011).

Literature previously focused on issues such as which products typically are returned (Piron and Young 2000), motivations to defraud (Schmidt et al. 1999), demographic or psychographic factors that influence unethical product returning (King and Dennis 2003; Harris 2008), neutralization techniques of customers who defraud (Rosenbaum, Kuntze, and Wooldridge 2011), determinants of the success of the fraud (Harris 2010), the perspective of service employees on unethical product returning (O’Brien, Hill, and Autry 2009), and contextual factors that influence unethical product returning (e.g., firms’ return policies, Chu, Gerstner, and Hess 1998).

This article extends previous research on contextual influences on unethical product returning in terms of the following issues: First, we introduce and systematically test the impact of psychological distance experienced by consumers towards a company on the probability of executing unethical product returning. While recent research has shown the importance of psychological distance for the extent of trust associated with a retailer (Darke et al. 2016), we consider psychological distance in the area of consumer misbehavior. Psychological distance is connected to construal-level theory (Trope, Liberman, and Wakslak 2007). The basic assumption is that more distal entities are constructed on a higher level and are therefore represented more abstractly than proximal entities. Abstraction, then, can influence how consumers process and evaluate information (Dhar and Kim 2007). We focus on social distance as one facet of psychological distance because of its special importance for unethical product returning, as research has found consumers to hesitate to execute unethical product returning when they anticipate embarrassment in front of service personnel (e.g., Harris 2010).

Second, we systematically consider two contextual variables that may influence psychological distance; in particular, we analyze how the retail channel (offline vs. online) alone or in interaction with firm size (small vs. large firms) affects psychological distance and therefore the probability of unethical product returning (Study 1). We derive two hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** The probability of unethical product returning is higher when the product is purchased online than when it is purchased at a brick-and-mortar (offline) store. This relationship is mediated by the social distance experienced by consumers.

**Hypothesis 2:** Firms size moderates the effect proposed in H1. More specifically, the effect of an online (vs. offline) channel on unethical product returning via social distance is stronger for small firms while it is weaker or even absent for large firms.

As a third contribution, we consider ways to decrease unethical product returning. Previous studies have focused on financial methods to reduce unethical product returning, such as fees for (re)shipment (Chu, Gerstner, and Hess 1998; Hjort and Lantz 2012). The present paper supplements the consideration of financial costs by taking “psychological cost” (Chu, Gerstner, and Hess 1998, p. 143) into account. By suggesting that a smaller psychological distance affects the psychological cost of unethical product returning, we analyze possibilities for firms to reduce UPR via reducing psychological distance (Study 2). We analyze the impact of “giving the online retailer a face” – a personalization strategy that applies a personal purchase advisor on the website. We derive the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 3:** An online retailer can decrease the probability of unethical product returning by applying (vs. not applying) a personalization strategy on the website. The effect of personalization is sequentially mediated by reduced social distance and increased anticipated return risk.

**Hypothesis 4:** The effect proposed in H3 is stronger for small firms and weaker or even absent for large firms.

We conducted two experimental studies. Study 1 employed a 2 (retail channel: offline vs. online store) × 2 (firm size: small vs. large) between-subjects design. Study 2 focused on the online channel and used a 2 (personalization strategy: absent vs. present) × 2 (firm size: small vs. large) between-subjects design. We applied a scenario approach in the context of a jewelry retailer (Study 1) and a clothing retailer (Study 2). We used third-person scenarios, which are recommended to decrease socially desirable answering. Participants indicated the probability of returning the product and experienced psychological distance from the third-person perspective (Fisher 1993). Since only participants were included who had recognized the firm’s return policy, a higher probability can be interpreted as abuse of these rules. We used mediation analyses and moderated mediation analyses to calculate effects. The results confirmed retail channel to influence consumers’ experienced social distance and consequently probability of unethical product return (H1). This effect was moderated by firm size (H2). We found that personalization strategy on a website reduced social distance. The results confirm a chain of effects of personalization on the probability of unethical product returning via social distance and anticipated return risk (H3). H4, suggesting a moderation of the website personalization effect by firm size, was rejected.

Several further research avenues are worth considering. First, we focused on unfamiliar retailers. Since research has discussed the relevance of familiarity for social distance (Edwards et al. 2009), further studies should ask whether the effects found here hold for...
familiar retailers. In Study 2, participants were exposed to a purchase advisor they did not know. Therefore, research could consider the effects of avatars that are used in integrated communication (e.g., when consumers already know the avatars from advertising or other sources). Second, as the results for H3 have shown, anticipated return risk served as a mediator. However, processes that are more closely related to relational aspects should be considered (as the impact of reduced social distance on trust; Darke et al. 2016).

REFERENCES


Why Garlic Ice Cream? Innovative Line Extensions Can Increase Choice of a Brand’s Pre-existing Products

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

A common marketing strategy, especially recently, is to offer product line extensions that are innovative and unusual. Crest toothpaste recently introduced Mint Chocolate, Vanilla Mint and Lime Spearmint flavors. A serious concern with this strategy is that line extensions might cannibalize the sales of the original items in the line. Prior research has found that introducing new extensions often leads to cannibalization (Mason & Milne, 1994, Kerin, Harvey & Rothe, 1978, Copulsky, 1976).

We examine the effect of introducing innovative line extensions on the choice of existing items in the line. Prior work on attribute transfer has found that perceptions of specific attributes can flow between a brand and its extensions (Keller and Aaker 1992; Park, Milberg, and Lawson 1991). Furthermore, research on fit would suggest that line extensions should also transfer perceptions of attributes between the brand and its line extensions (Aaker and Keller 1990).

We specifically focus on whether an innovative line extension can transfer the perception of innovativeness back to the parent brand, making the brand more appealing. Previous work has found that higher perceived innovativeness is often related with more positive brand attitudes (Heath, DelVecchio, and McCarthy 2011). Thus, innovative brands are likely to be more positively evaluated and may increase purchase intent. We predict that introducing an innovative line extension will lead consumers to purchase a greater number of the brands existing items, ultimately reversing cannibalization.

Four experiments test our hypothesis. We first show that when a brand introduces innovative line extensions (versus non-innovative extensions), people choose to purchase more existing items (Studies 1A and 1B). We then show the effect replicates across various product categories and is mediated by perceived brand innovativeness (Study 2). Our last two studies rule out alternative explanations that 1) the effect is driven by disgust (Study 3) and 2) the effect is due to a contrast effect (Study 4).

In studies 1A (n=150) and 1B (n=601), participants were randomly assigned in a 3-cell (Extension: None, Non-Innovative, Innovative) between-subjects design. All participants saw three existing items offered by a hypothetical brand (Study 1A: Emmi’s) or a national brand (Study 1B: Breyer’s): Vanilla, Chocolate, and Strawberry. In addition to the existing items, participants saw three extension flavors based on their condition. Non-Innovative Extension: Cookies & Cream, Chocolate Chip, and Neapolitan. Innovative Extension: Garlic, Cheddar Cheese, and Avocado Jalapeno. No Extension: no extension items. After reading the list of items, participants indicated a purchase quantity for each item.

We found that choice quantity of existing items increased significantly when an innovative extension is introduced ($M_{innov}$=2.63, $M_{nov}$=2.40) compared to a non-innovative extension ($M_{innov}$=0.81, $p<.001$); $M_{innov}$=1.07, $p<.001$) or no extension ($M_{innov}$=1.45, $p<.001$; $M_{nov}=1.64, p=.001$).

Study 2 (n=297) was designed to show our effect replicates in other product categories and to examine if perceived brand innovativeness mediates this effect. The procedure was identical to study 1A, except that we used Kai’s Toothpaste in place of Emmi’s Ice Cream. Toothpaste flavors were substituted for the ice cream flavors. Replicating our previous findings, choice quantity of the existing items increased when innovative extensions were introduced ($M=2.01$) compared to non-innovative extensions ($M=1.36, p=.01$) or no extensions ($M=1.53, p=.04$). Our prediction that innovative extensions will lead to an increase in perceived brand innovativeness was also confirmed. A test of mediation supports that introducing innovative extensions leads to higher perceived brand innovation, which ultimately increases choice quantity of existing items (95% CI: [-.30, -.03]).

Study 3 (n=246) was designed to rule out an alternative explanation of our results. One could argue that the innovative flavors are also disgusting, leading to an attraction effect, in which introducing inferior (or disgusting) options boosts the choice share of similar but superior options. We test this alternative explanation by altering both the relative disgust and relative innovativeness of flavors.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in a 2 (Innovativeness: low, high) x 2 (Disgust: low, high) between-subjects design. Participants followed the same procedure as study 1A, however, we changed the extension flavors participants saw. Participants saw extension flavors either high or low on disgust and high or low on innovativeness, depending on their condition. We found a main effect of innovativeness, such that more innovative extensions increased choice quantity of the existing items. Yet there was no main effect of disgust. These results suggest that higher levels of innovativeness, and not disgust, increase the choice of existing items in the product line. The interaction was not significant.

In study 4 (n=410), we address another alternative explanation, that if customers find the innovative extensions unappealing for any other reason, aside from disgust, the extensions may yield a contrast effect. To rule out this alternative explanation, we ran a study with a competitor brand in the choice set to show that only choice share of the existing items of the parent brand increases – not choice share of competing brands. The design was identical to study 1A, except that a competing brand was offered in the choice set. Scoops Ice Cream (competitor brand) offered: Vanilla, Chocolate, Strawberry, Butter Pecan, Coffee, Mint. After seeing all items offered by both brands, participants indicated the number of each item (from Emmi’s and Scoops) that they would purchase.

Replicating our main effect, we find that when Emmi’s offers innovative extensions, people choose more existing items ($M=1.35$) than when no extensions ($M=1.08, p=.06$) or non-innovative extensions are offered ($M=0.67, p=.001$). People chose more items in total (existing + extensions) from Emmi’s when innovative extensions are offered ($M=2.41$) compared to non-innovative extensions ($M=1.93, p<.01$). Most importantly, the total number of Scoops items chosen did not increase when Emmi’s introduced innovative extensions ($M=2.62$) compared to no extensions ($M=2.78, F(1, 407)<1$), suggesting that an innovative extension does not benefit all brands (e.g., through a contrast effect), but mainly benefits the parent brand.

Altogether, we find evidence that innovative line extensions may reverse the effect of cannibalization. Innovative extensions increase perceptions of the brand’s innovativeness, which leads consumers to purchase a higher quantity of the original items in the line.
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The Name Game: How Naming Promotes Effects Beneficial to Marketers
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Toyota is encouraging car owners to name their cars and has provided close to 100,000 name badges for owners to affix to their autos (Diaz 2015). Yet, the phenomenon of consumers naming even nonhuman-like products has not been examined by academic researchers. When a person spontaneously names an inanimate object (such as a car), the person is probably doing so because he likes the object. But what about the inverse: what happens when a company asks or directs the consumer to name an object? In the research reported here, we hypothesize and find that naming of products bestows benefits to the products when consumers are directed or requested to name them.

We hypothesize that naming of an object may increase liking for it because it increases feelings of ownership. Naming is an activity generally performed for newborns or pets in one’s family, or for nonhuman objects (e.g. dolls, cars, stuffed animals) that the namer believes to “be mine”. Abundant research on the endorsement effect has shown that when consumers take ownership of an object, it increases in value (e.g. Kahneman, Knetsch, and Thaler 1990). These endorsement or ownership effects are also found when consumers feel psychological (rather than actual) ownership. (Pierce, Kostova, and Dirks 2003).

Study 1 explores the basic effect of naming and whether it persists over time. Student participants were recruited for a two-part study on stress reduction. Participants were randomly assigned to either a naming or no-name condition. During the first lab session, all participants received a plain yellow stress ball and were either instructed to name it or not. Four weeks later, participants were asked to report how much someone would have to pay them to buy their stress ball from them. As predicted, the naming condition placed greater value on their stress ball than those in the no-name condition, F(1,38) = 4.42, p < .05. In fact, price values were remarkably more than $1 higher for participants in the naming than no-name condition (M = $4.07 vs. $2.67).

In Study 2 participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions: naming, no-name, assigned descriptive name “Blue”, or assigned non-descriptive name “Steve”. All participants viewed a picture of a stapler. Participants in the naming condition were asked to provide a name for it whereas in the assigned name conditions the stapler had already been given a name. An ANOVA revealed a significant effect of condition, F(3, 196) = 3.75, p = .01, on purchase intention. Purchase intentions were highest in the naming condition (M = 4.49), followed by the “Blue” (M = 3.75), “Steve” (M = 3.74) and no name (M = 3.50) conditions. Planned contrasts showed that purchase intent was higher in the naming condition than each individual condition (p’s < .05). Additionally, mediation analysis demonstrated that psychological ownership mediated this effect.

In Study 3 we compare the effects of naming for an unbranded product (laptop) and for a brand product with a strong prior brand image (Apple laptop). Participants were randomly assigned to a 2 (brand, no brand) X 4 (naming, no-name, assigned descriptive name “Slimbook”, or assigned non-descriptive name “George”) between-subjects design. Participants reported their attitudes toward the laptop on five items. Results revealed in the unbranded condition favorability was highest in the naming condition (M = 5.03), followed by the “Slimbook” (M = 4.63), no name (M = 4.51) and “George” (M = 4.44) conditions. Planned contrasts showed the naming condition was significantly higher than all the other conditions individually (all p’s < .10). For the branded condition, none of the contrasts were significant (all p’s > .10). Once again, the naming effect was significantly mediated by psychological ownership. Potential alternative mediators such as attachment, self-efficacy, and involvement were not significant.

Study 4 attempted to understand what name features drive self-name success. We employed a mixed design where product (stapler, mug) was a between subjects factor and name condition (no name, assigned descriptive name, assigned non-descriptive name) was a within subjects factor (p’s > .05). There was no difference in the product conditions and so these data were collapsed for analysis. A repeated measures ANOVA on attitudes (F(2, 240) = 58.10, p < .01) and purchase intentions (F(2, 240) = 55.76, p < .01) revealed a significant main effect of name. Participants reported higher attitudes (M = 5.34) and purchase intentions (M = 4.84) for self-names than assigned descriptive names (attitudes: M = 4.26; purchase intentions: M = 3.89) or non-descriptive (attitudes: M = 3.36; purchase intentions: M = 2.98) names. Participants also reported higher attitudes and purchase intentions for descriptive versus non-descriptive names (all p’s < .05). Furthermore, the MORE macro (Montoya and Hayes 2017) for repeated measures designs demonstrated that this effect was driven by psychological ownership which in turn was driven by the fit and creativity of the name.

Study 5 compares the effects of naming to a form of co-creation, designing a mug. Student participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: naming, no-name, and designing. In the design condition, participants were given colored pencils to design a mug. All participants completed the same scales used in Study 3. An ANOVA on attitudes revealed a significant main effect (F(2, 101) = 10.37, p < .01). Participants reported higher attitudes for self-design (M = 5.23) than self-name (M = 4.48) or the control (M = 3.61). Importantly, participants still reported higher attitudes for self-name versus the control (all p’s < .05). Once again, this effect was mediated by psychological ownership. Interestingly, affective commitment also mediated the positive impact of self-design but did not mediate the difference between self-name and the control condition.

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The Influence of Visual Aesthetics on Food Choice:  
The Moderating Effect of Food Processing

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Each year billions of pounds of produce are thrown away due to aesthetic imperfections (i.e., blemishes, unconventional shapes; Bratskeir 2015), often because retailers and consumers refuse to purchase products that fail to meet strict cosmetic standards for visual perfection (Royte 2016). Interestingly, as safe-to-eat fruits and vegetables are discarded because of their imperfect appearance, food manufacturers and restaurant chains intentionally manufacture products that are aesthetically imperfect. For example, employees at Domino’s Pizza purposefully shape dough into irregular rectangles when preparing Artisan Pizza (Choi 2013). Why is it that retailers and manufacturers discard fruits and vegetables that contain aesthetic imperfections yet design processed foods to contain aesthetic imperfections?

In contrast to conventional wisdom that “beautiful is good” (Veryzer and Hutchinson 1998), our research provides evidence that in some cases consumers prefer aesthetically imperfect (vs. perfect) foods. We show that preference for aesthetically perfect (vs. imperfect) food depends on the level of mechanical processing the food has undergone. Specifically, in four studies we show that when given a choice between unprocessed foods (e.g., two apples) consumers prefer the aesthetically perfect option. However, when given the choice between two processed foods (e.g., two bowls of applesauce) consumers prefer the aesthetically imperfect option. These effects are attenuated for both unprocessed and processed foods when individuals have the opportunity to sample the items before choosing.

First, we conducted a pretest to identify images of unprocessed and processed foods that differed in terms of the degree of visual perfection, but were similar in terms of healthiness, size, and safety. In the main experiment (study 1a), members of an online panel were randomly assigned to view either a pair of unprocessed foods (i.e., carrots) or a pair of processed foods (i.e., pizzas). For each pair, one option was aesthetically perfect and the other option was aesthetically imperfect (as determined by the pretest). Participants were asked to indicate which item they would prefer to eat. The results showed that participants who viewed the pair of unprocessed foods were significantly more likely to choose the aesthetically perfect option than participants who viewed the pair of processed foods (P\textsubscript{carrots} = 79.59\% vs. P\textsubscript{pizzas} = 58.82\%; χ\textsuperscript{2} = 5.039, p < .05).

One shortcoming of study 1a is that we used two different food items for the processed and unprocessed foods. In study 1b we address this shortcoming by using the same food item and varying only the level of mechanical processing. Study 1b had a one-factor between-subjects design with two experimental conditions (food type: processed vs. unprocessed). Members of an online panel (N = 71, M\textsubscript{age} = 30.30; 52.1\% females) were randomly assigned to view a pair of apples (unprocessed condition) that were the same weight and type but varied in appearance (i.e., one had a uniform shape and texture and the other had a variable shape and texture). Participants in the processed condition viewed two bowls of applesauce. The applesauce was created by mechanically processing (i.e., blending) an apple and water. Each bowl contained the same amount of applesauce, but the bowls varied in appearance. The aesthetically perfect applesauce had a uniform texture and color due to a lack of apple chunks and apple skin. The aesthetically imperfect applesauce had a variable texture and color due to the presence of apple chunks and skin. The lateral position of the options was counterbalanced. After viewing the pair of foods participants indicated their preference (1 = definitely option A, 7 = definitely option B). The data was prepared so that “option A” always represented the aesthetically imperfect food option. A one-way ANOVA revealed that participants had a stronger preference for the aesthetically perfect option when they viewed unprocessed (vs. processed) foods (M\textsubscript{processed} = 4.3056 vs. M\textsubscript{unprocessed} = 6.1714; F (1, 69) = 25.587, p < .01).

Consumers rely on heuristics when information is ambiguous (Kruger et al. 2004), but are less likely to use such heuristics when information is unambiguous. Thus, in the context food choices, the effect of aesthetic imperfections should be less influential in driving choice when taste information is available (i.e., unambiguous). Study 2a tested this idea using a one factor between subjects experiment (taste information present vs. absent). Participants (N=71) chose between an aesthetically perfect and imperfect unprocessed food (i.e., whole oranges). The key finding was that participants were significantly more likely to choose the aesthetically imperfect orange when they had the opportunity to sample prior to choosing than when they did not have the opportunity to sample prior to choosing (P\textsubscript{sampling present} = 53.66\% vs. P\textsubscript{sampling absent} = 16.67\%; χ\textsuperscript{2} = 10.059, p < .01). Study 2b was similar to study 2a except that the study was a field experiment at a grocery store and shoppers (N = 41) choose between two processed foods (i.e., cookies) when taste information was present or absent. The results showed that preference for the aesthetically imperfect cookie decreased when taste information was present (i.e., when individuals were allowed to sample the food before choice) (P\textsubscript{multi-sensory absent} = 71.7\% vs. P\textsubscript{multi-sensory present} = 54.0\%; χ\textsuperscript{2} = 3.461, p = .07). Collectively, studies 2a and 2b suggest that retailers can overcome the effects of aesthetic imperfections on food choice by providing diagnostic taste information.

The results of four studies show that consumers prefer aesthetically perfect (vs. imperfect) unprocessed foods and aesthetically imperfect (vs. perfect) processed foods. These effects are attenuated for both unprocessed and processed foods when individuals have the opportunity to sample the items before choosing. Theoretically, our findings contribute novel evidence that the “form” of a product moderates the influence of visual aesthetics on choice. While much is known about the stimulus factors and individual differences that drive aesthetic impressions (e.g., Veryzer & Hutchinson 1998), we demonstrate that visual aesthetics can have either a positive or, counterintuitively, a negative influence on consumer choice. Our findings also contribute evidence that food processing influences consumer food choices (Szocs and Lefebvre 2016). From a sustainability perspective, our findings provide evidence that multi-sensory information can increase consumers’ acceptance of visually imperfect produce.

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Punishing Politeness: Moderating Role of Belief in Just World on Severity?
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Three studies demonstrate that politeness in advertising affect how consumers punish brands for unethical behavior. Those low in belief in just world (BJW) were more likely to punish a brand when more polite language was used. Both cynicism and trust mediated the effect of ethical practice on level of punishment.

Introduction
People are more likely to apply moral judgements to psychologically distant situations (Eyal et al. 2008). Psychological distance can be influenced through language. One aspect of language, politeness, has been shown to increase social distance between speakers (Brown and Levinson 1987; Holtgraves and Yang 1990; 1992). The purpose of this research is to understand the effect of politeness on moral judgements of the actions of brands.

We show that polite language in advertising can affect consumers’ intentions to punish a brand whose actions are ethically ambiguous. We explore the role of belief in a just world (BJW) when making such judgments. In addition, we also explore the underlying mechanism of trust and cynicism that drives punishment and moral perception of the brand.

Conceptual Development

Politeness
Formal titles, e.g. sir or Mister, are considered more polite than less formal terms of address, e.g. dude or mate (Ambady et al. 1996; Brown and Levinson 1987; Clark and Schunk 1980; Holtgraves and Yang 1990; 1992). Polite speech, however, increases the perception of social distance between speakers (Brown and Gilman 1989; Brown and Gilman 1960; Holtgraves and Yang 1990; 1992). Situational factors can also cause otherwise polite speech to be considered manipulative, sarcastic, or even offensive (Watts 2003).

The greater the psychological distance, the more abstract people’s thinking (Trope and Liberman 2010). More polite speech is associated with a higher level of psychological distance (Stephan et al. 2010). Judgements of morality are also associated with psychological distance. The greater the social distance between parties involved in a moral transgression, the more morally wrong an action is perceived (Eyal et al. 2008). It therefore follows that more polite speech, which increases social distance, should also increase the perception that a moral transgression is wrong.

Belief in a Just World
BJW is a belief that people get what they deserve (Lerner 1980). When encountering an injustice, BJW motivates us to punish a victimizer (Lerner 1980). Those high in BJW are more likely to punish those who violate social norms (Zhu et al. 2012). Those low in BJW perceive others as more motivated by self-interest, and that they believe that people often exploit others to their advantage (Lipkus 1992). BJW has also been shown to be related to psychological distance, such that as psychological distance increases, so too does BJW (Warner et al. 2012). As such, we believe that when more polite speech is used, social distance increases, so too does the need to restore justice.

Cynicism and Trust
Cynicism and trust are two important dimensions of moral judgment (Turner and Valentine 2001). The goals or values which motivate cynicism can be described by the belief that firms are disguising their own self-interest with altruism (Helm 2004; Odou and de Pechpeyou 2011). Cynical consumers seem to be motivated by a desire to punish companies whom they distrust (Helm 2004). Trust is the belief that the motives of others will be beneficial to one’s interests (Turner and Valentine 2001). Brand trust is the ability of a brand to elicit trust from consumers (Chaudhuri and Holbrook 2001). Trusting consumers seem to be motivated by a desire to reward trustworthy companies (Helm 2004).

Study 1
The objective of Study 1 was to evaluate whether consumers would penalize brands differently based on the politeness demonstrated in an advertisement by the brand.

Design and Participants
Participants (N = 124; 54.8% female; Mage = 35.79) were randomly assigned to one of three conditions (politeness: control vs. less polite vs. more polite). Participants were asked to review an advertisement for a fictitious apparel brand called CJ. In the more polite condition, the tag line was the same as in the control condition followed by the word sir, and in the less polite condition, was followed by the word dude. Participants were then randomly presented with one of two press reports. They were that CJ was recently in the news and that a press report stated either: CJ purchases clothes from manufacturers that do not use child labor; however the manufacturers do not provide health care benefits to their employees (pretested M = 3.93, SD = 1.34) or that CJ uses low impact dyes, but the colors fade in clothing and are not durable (pretested M = 4.25; SD = 1.54). These two statements were not significantly different on ethical rating (p = .38).

Procedures and Measures
Participants were asked to indicate how much they agreed with the statement, “I feel that CJ did something morally wrong,” (anchored: 1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree; adapted from Cheng, Ottati, and Price, 2013). Then they were asked to, “Rate the degree of punishment for such behavior,” (anchored: 1 = lenient; 7 = severe; adapted from Cheng, Ottati, and Price 2013). Participants then completed the sixteen-item measure of BJW scale (and Peplau 1973).

Results
An ANCOVA was conducted with politeness in the advertisement and the composite score of BJW (α = .90) as predictors of punishment. There was a significant effect of politeness in advertising on severity of punishment (F(2, 118) = 3.42, p < .05, η² = .055). There was also a significant effect of BJW on severity of punishment (F(1, 118) = 6.05, p < .05, η² = .049). There was a significant interaction between politeness in the advertisement and the BJW (F(2, 118) = 3.09, p < .05, η² = .05). A spotlight analysis revealed that when BJW was high, the punishment judgments did not vary significantly among the three advertisement conditions (p = .67). The control (M = 3.60, SD = 1.34) did not vary from the high politeness condition (M = 3.00, SD = 2.55, p = .65), which in turn did not vary from the low politeness condition (M = 4.00, SD = 1.73). It was only when the BJW was low that participants reduced the severity of punishment for the control (M = 1.40, SD = .54) and in comparison to the more polite condition (M = 3.63, SD = 2.20; F(1, 118) = 4.80, p < .05). The
punishment was low even for the less polite condition as well ($M = 1.67$, $SD = 1.21$) in comparison to the more polite condition ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 2.20$; $F(1, 118) = 3.83$, $p < .05$). This result was despite the fact that the interaction of BJW and politeness in the advertisement on morality judgments was not significant ($p = .22$).

Discussion
Those low in BJW indicated higher punishment for the brand which used more polite language over the brand with less polite language and the control. Thus, our hypothesis that the consumers will penalize brands differently based on the politeness of the language used in an advertisement was supported.

Study 2
The objective of Study 2 was to evaluate whether the penalty imposed on different brands would manifest in the fine amounts.

Design and Participants
Participants ($N = 167$; 56.9% female; $M_{age} = 34.08$) were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (levels of politeness in advertising: more polite vs. less polite). Participants were asked to review an advertisement of the fictitious coffee brand called Jaunt. The tag line used in the advertisement varied on two levels of politeness. In the more polite condition, participants read *Are you going to have a cup of coffee?* In the less polite condition, participants read *Gonna have a cup of coffee?* Participants were then told: *Recently, Jaunt was in the press. The press report noted that: Jaunt collaborates with local farmers in Peru, but they do not contribute to infrastructure improvement in Peru* (pretested $M = 3.64$; $SD = 1.51$). Participants were then asked to quantify the punishment levied against the brand.

Procedures and Measures
Participants were asked *If the Peru government had to levy a fine on Jaunt what would it be?* Participants were asked to indicate the fine for the company on a $0 to $250,000.00 sliding scale (modified from previous research where consumers levied fines for company misconduct [e.g. Ashton-James and Tracy 2012; Rosenblatt et al. 1989]). Following this, participants were asked the BJW scale as used in Study 1.

Results
Hypothesis Testing. An ANCOVA was conducted with politeness in the advertisement and the composite score of BJW ($\alpha = .89$) as predictors of fines levied by participants. There was a significant effect of politeness in advertising the fine levied ($F(1, 163) = 5.34$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .032$). There was also a significant effect of BJW on severity of punishment ($F(1, 163) = 3.75$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .023$). There was a significant interaction between politeness in the advertisement and BJW ($F(1, 164) = 3.92$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .025$). A spotlight analysis revealed that when BJW was high, the fine did not vary significantly among the two levels of politeness ($p = .96$). Specifically, the fine levied in the more polite condition ($M = $10,626.63, $SD = 29,806.24$) did not vary from the less polite condition ($M = $10,138.91, $SD = 28869.13$). It was only when BJW was low that the fine levied was low for the less polite condition ($M = $23,614.33, $SD = 38,476$) in comparison to the more polite condition ($M = $240,904.92, $SD = 433,574.67$; $F(1, 163) = 7.75$, $p < .01$). This result was even though the interaction of BJW and politeness in the advertisement on morality judgments was not significant ($p = .34$).

Discussion
Those high in BJW showed no significant difference in the fine as a measure of punishment between two advertisements with varied politeness levels in the language. Those low in BJW, however, indicated a higher fine for the brand which used more polite language. It seems plausible that when individuals believe that people get what they deserve, the effectiveness of punishment would be diminished. By the same token those low in BJW, would probably view the advertising strategy of adopting politeness as an attempt at misleading consumers.

Study 3
The objective of this study was to evaluate the role of both brand trust in a brand and the consumer cynicism in the observed condemnation by consumers. To evaluate this, we adopted ethical statements that were judged to be either low or high on ethical ratings in the pretest.

Design and Participants
Participants ($N = 162$; 56.2% female; $M_{age} = 37.7$) were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (ethical rating: high vs. low). A known brand (GEICO) was selected for this study. Participants were told that GEICO was recently in the press. In the low ethical condition, participants read: *A press report noted that GEICO hires women who work in cooperatives, however, these women are sometimes criminals who don’t pay their taxes* (pretested $M = 2.77$, $SD = 1.17$). Participants in the high ethical condition read: *A press report noted that GEICO helps disadvantaged communities, but the help is only through volunteer service and not monetary in nature* (pretested $M = 5.16$, $SD = 1.41$). These two statements were significantly different on ethical rating (t(58.01) = 7.22, $p < .001$).

Procedures and Measures
After reviewing the advertisement and the press statement, participants were asked to indicate the degree to which GEICO did something morally wrong on the same scale as used in Study 1. Participants then rated the degree of punishment of GEICO. Participants were also asked to provide ratings to capture cynicism on a two-item scale: *I feel cynical about GEICO*; *I feel skeptical about GEICO’s business practices* (anchored: 1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). Then brand trust was captured using three items: *I trust GEICO; GEICO is an honest brand; GEICO is a safe brand* (anchored: 1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree; adapted from Chaudhuri and Holbrook 2001).

Results
Morbidity and Punishment. An analysis of the effect of ethical practice on perception that GEICO did something morally wrong was higher when presented with a less ethical practice ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.53$) in comparison to the more ethical practice ($M = 2.54$, $SD = 1.50$; t(159.94) = 6.34, $p < .001$). An analysis of the effect of ethical practice on severity of punishment yielded a significant difference with participants wanting more punishment for the less ethical practice ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 1.33$) in comparison to the more ethical practice ($M = 2.07$, $SD = 1.50$; t(160) = 8.06; $p < .001$).

Mediation Analysis. To determine whether cynicism or trust accounted for participants’ perception of GEICO, we conducted a mediation analysis (Hayes 2012, Model 4; bootstrapped with 5,000 draws). The analysis revealed that although the ethical practice influenced both cynicism and trust, only cynicism mediated the relationship between how ethical GEICO’s practice was and participants’ perception of how moral GEICO was (95% CI = [−.42, −.04]) but trust did not mediate the relationship between how ethical GEICO’s practice was and participant’s perception of how moral GEICO was (95% CI = [−.02, .22]). On the other hand, when the same mediation analysis (Hayes 2012, Model 4; bootstrapped with 5,000 draws) was conducted, both cynicism (95% CI = [−.50, −.06]) and trust (95% CI = [.01, .31]) mediated the effect of ethical practice on level of punishment.
Discussion. The participants of Study 3 indicated that GEICO did more morally wrong when the brand was presented with the less ethical practice than with the more ethical practice. They punished GEICO more for their less ethical practice compared to the more ethical practice. The result indicated that the participants felt more cynical when they were exposed to GEICO performing a less ethical practice in comparison to the more ethical practice. Individuals trusted GEICO more when presented with a more ethical practice than a less ethical practice. Mediation analyses showed that cynicism was the only mediator of the relationship between the ethical practice and moral perception. Both trust and cynicism were found to be significant mediators of the relationship between ethical practice of the brand and punishment.

General Discussion
We add on work by Eyal et al. (2008) by showing that politeness increases social distance and increased social distance leads to greater judgements of wrongdoing. Based on past research on BJW, our findings show that the language used in a brand’s advertising can potentially harm the brand when it is undergoing a brand crisis (i.e., an ambiguously unethical business practice reported by the media). Individuals in our studies consistently showed that they would more likely punish a brand which used more polite language in their advertising compared to the brand which used less polite language. Our results showed that the influence of the politeness of the language used in advertising was only significant for the individuals with low BJW. These results correspond to past findings that those low in BJW believe people often exploit others to their advantage, particularly those of higher power and status (Lipkus 1992). Thus, a possible explanation would be that those low in BJW were more cautious of the actions of the brand and thus reacted to its unethical business practice differently.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In some contexts, individuals eat while maintaining a seated posture (e.g., at restaurants, in-home dining). However, in other contexts individuals eat while maintaining a standing posture (e.g., at cocktail parties, grocery store sampling stations). Would eating the same food while sitting (vs. standing) influence taste evaluations? That is, how does posture influence taste?

Given that restaurants are beginning to experiment with the standing only concept that has long been popular outside of the United States (Fujita 2013), this finding has important practical implications. In addition, while prior research has examined how the effects of body orientation on consumer decision making much of this work has been done through the lens of embodied cognition (Labroo and Nielsen 2010; Strack, Martin and Stepper 1988). We know of no research that has examined the effects of posture on taste.

We build on literature that shows that standing leads to greater physiological stress than sitting (Abalan et al. 1992) and link it with work that shows that stress decreases the reward value (i.e., liking) of hedonic stimuli (Pizzagalli et al. 2007). We predict that because standing increases physiological stress and stress decreases reward value of hedonic stimuli, consumers will rate the same food as better tasting when they eat it while sitting (Msitting vs. standing) posture. We test this hypothesis and the mediating effect of stress in a series of four experimental studies.

Study 1 examined the basic effect of posture on taste using a single factor between subjects design (posture: sitting vs. standing). Participants (Mage = 24.39; 50% females) sampled a cookie and rated the taste (Elder and Krishna 2010). Participants also rated their physiological stress/tension and hunger levels. We measured hunger because hunger influences food evaluations (Lozano, Crites and Aikman 1999). The results of an ANCOVA with hunger as a covariate showed that individuals who ate the cookie while seated perceived it as better tasting than individuals who ate the cookie while standing (Mposture = 5.70 vs. Mstanding = 4.22; F(1, 81) = 5.44, p < .05). Tests for mediation using Preacher and Hayes’ (2008) 5,000 bootstrap samples showed that the indirect effects of posture on taste evaluations through the mediator perceived stress/tension (with hunger included as a covariate) yielded a confidence interval that did not include zero (B = .1497, SE = .099, 90% CI: .008, .4193) suggesting that stress/tension mediates the effect of posture on taste.

Then, Study 2 replicated the basic effects of posture on taste and also provided physiological evidence that standing postures were associated with greater stress by measuring participants’ heart rate. Study 2 had a one-factor between subjects design and was conducted in two phases because prior research shows that consuming indulgent foods increase heart rate (Brown et al. 2008). The first phase involved individuals sampling a cookie while standing (vs. sitting) and then rating the taste. The second phase, which occurred approximately 3 weeks later involved capturing individuals pulse while they were maintaining the same posture they had in the first phase of the study. Eighty undergraduate students participated in this study however two students did not complete both phases leaving a final sample of seventy-eight (Mage = 24.01, 47.4% females). An ANCOVA with hunger as a covariate showed that participants perceived the cookie as better tasting when they ate it while sitting (Mposture = 5.70 vs. Mstanding = 4.35, p < .01). There was also a significant effect of posture on heart rate with heart rate being higher for standing (vs. sitting) postures (Mposture = 72.13 vs. Mstanding = 83.28; F(1, 76) = 13.13, p < .01).

If standing is influencing taste by increasing stress then this effect should persist in the absence of a stress prime, but should be attenuated when stress is primed due to decreases in perceived taste when individuals are stressed and seated. Study 3 tested this prediction with a 2 (posture: sitting vs. standing) x 2 (stress: present vs. absent) between subjects design. One hundred and twenty undergraduate students participated in this study (Mage = 22.62; 40.9% females); however, four individuals did not complete the key dependent measures leaving a final sample of one hundred sixteen. To manipulate stress individuals completed a timed word jumble task (Zellner et al. 2006). Subsequently, individuals sampled a cookie sitting or standing. The results a 2 (posture) x 2 (stress) ANCOVA with hunger as the covariate revealed a significant interaction (F(1, 111) = 12.16, p = .001). In the absence of a stress prime, participants who ate the cookie when sitting perceived it as better tasting (Mposture = 5.79 vs. Mstanding = 4.60; F(1, 112) = 12.63, p < .01). However, when stress was primed there was no difference in taste based on whether participants sampled while sitting (vs. standing) (Mposture = 4.74 vs. Mstanding = 4.86; F(1, 112) = .112, p = .738).

Finally, in Study 4 we wanted to show that relaxation can relieve the stress associated with standing and attenuate the effects of posture on taste by increasing taste evaluations when individuals are standing. Study 4 had a 2 (posture: sitting vs. standing) x 2 (relaxation: present vs. absent) between subjects design. Posture was manipulated through the presence or absence of chairs. Relaxation was manipulated through the presence of different types of ambient music (Pham, Hung and Gorn 2011). Participants (N = 111; Mage = 21.86; 64.9% females) sampled and evaluated a cream-filled wafer cookie. The results showed that, in the absence of relaxation participants perceived the cookie as better tasting when they were sitting (Mposture = 5.70 vs. Mstanding = 4.79; F(1, 107) = 6.22, p < .05). However, when relaxation was primed taste evaluations when standing increased and there was no significant difference in taste based on posture (Mposture = 5.48 vs. Mstanding = 5.67; F(1, 107) = .266, p = .607).

Collectively, the results of four studies show that posture systematically effects taste evaluations by increasing physiological stress.

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When Less is More: Not Showing the Product’s Picture in an Advertisement Can Increase Ad and Brand Evaluations

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Advertisers often include both the focal product’s picture and a context picture that illustrates the brand’s benefits in a print advertisement. In some cases, a product’s visual appearance is an important information to the viewers (Lazarus 1982, 1991; Yeung and Wyer 2004). In other cases, however, presenting the focal product’s picture does not provide much additional information, especially when the product mainly provides non-visual benefits (e.g., service), or when consumers are already familiar with the product’s appearance (e.g., coffee, tea). Then, when presenting the product’s picture does not provide additional value to the ad viewers, how will the absence (vs. presence) of a product’s picture affect consumers’ evaluations of the ad and the band being advertised? The present research bears on this question.

Previous literature has suggested that people respond to pictures in a holistic manner (Spoehr and Lehmkuleh 1982), which facilitates the appreciation of the picture’s aesthetics and feelings (Holbrook and Moore 1981). Although responses to pictures are typically holistic, a visually prominent feature or an a priori motive to inspect a specific element can induce a shift from a globalized to a localized processing manner (Spoehr and Lehmkuleh 1982; Hochstein and Ahissar 2002). Based on this logic, consumers are assumed to approach an ad in a global manner. However, since consumers are normally aware of the promotional intent of an advertisement, their subsequent attention is likely to be quickly directed to the focal product’s picture (if any). As a result, consumers are likely to quickly shift from processing the holistic features of the ad to attending to the product’s picture, facilitating a local processing manner. Furthermore, since the appreciation of the context picture that conveys feelings often requires holistic processing (Escalas 2014; Green and Brock 2000), a local processing manner will reduce consumers’ appreciation of the affect-laden benefits. Thus, we propose that when the product’s appearance cannot contribute much to an appraisal of its quality, the omission of a picture of the product in an advertisement can increase consumers’ affective responses to the ad, and in turn can increase ad and brand evaluations as well as purchase intentions.

Using four different sets of stimuli, the first set of experiments examined the positive effect of the omission of a product’s picture. Experiment 1a employed a 2 (product presence: absent vs. present) x 2 (ad stimulus: Lay’s potato chips vs. Turkish Airlines) between-subjects design. The Lay’s chips ad depicted a scene of a girl enjoying eating. The product’s picture, a bag of potato chips was either printed on the lower left-hand side of the ad or not. The Turkish Airlines ad showed the silhouette of a girl standing on the beach, looking up into the sky. The product’s picture, an airplane, was either presented in the sky or absent from the ad. As expected, regardless of the ad stimulus, compared to the presence of a product’s picture, the absence of the picture increased brand evaluation (6.35 vs. 7.02; F(1, 114) = 4.76, p < .05), ad evaluation (5.02 vs. 5.51; F(1, 114) = 4.42, p < .05), and affective reaction (4.46 vs. 5.09; F(1, 114) = 6.64, p < .05). Besides, bootstrapping analyses showed that affective reaction mediates the effects of product presence on brand and ad evaluations. Experiment 1b and 1c replicated these findings using an ad of foot massage and an ad of tea ware, respectively.

Experiment 2 tested three alternative explanations. First, consumers might perceive the absence of the product’s picture as a mystery, enhancing favourableness. Second, consumers might try to imagine the appearance of the product when it is absent (Sengupta and Gorn 2002), and the self-generated product’s image might be more attractive. Third, the product’s picture might be unattractive and thus lead to negative impressions. To rule out these explanations, Experiment 2 manipulated whether the product’s picture was revealed after participants had browsed an ad for tea but before they made evaluations. If the positive product omission effect was driven by any of the above explanations, this effect should be eliminated after the product revelation. Results showed that ad evaluation was higher when product’s picture was not shown than when it was (4.64 vs. 3.82; F(1, 115) = 9.37, p < .01), independent of product revelation (Fs < 1).

Experiment 3 and 4 tested an important moderator. We assume that appreciation of the context picture requires holistic processing. However, if the context picture is highly relevant to the viewers’ current life experiences, they are likely to integrate his or her relevant personal experiences into the simulation of the content, which involves a detailed and concrete processing strategy (Zhao, Dahl and Hoeffler 2014). As a result, the global processing manner triggered by the absence of a product’s picture will impair this self-relevant imagery and decrease the affective reactions evoked by the simulated experience. Consequently, omitting the product’s picture will have negative effects.

To test this proposition, participants in Experiment 3 browsed an ad for a bridal cake. The context picture depicted a hugging couple. Participants indicated their current romantic relationship status. If they were in a relationship, their simulation was likely to involve their personal experiences, resulting in a negative product omission effect. If participants were not, however, a positive product omission effect should occur. A significant interaction of product’s picture and relationship status (F(1, 117) = 6.47, p < .05) confirmed this prediction. Participants who were not in relationship evaluated the brand more favorably when the product’s picture was absent than when it was present (6.76 vs. 6.22; F(1, 117) = 3.71, p = .06). In contrast, participants who were in a relationship rated the brand less favorably in the former condition than in the latter condition (6.29 vs. 5.74; F(1, 117) = 2.88, p = .09). Experiment 4 replicated these findings using an ad of coffee and manipulating the content of the ad as either a study or a business scenario, which was either relevant to the student participants or not.

In summary, four experiments demonstrated that leaving out (vs. presenting) the product’s picture in an ad can lead to a positive effect on evaluations of the ad and the brand. These findings provide practical implications to advertisement design.

REFERENCE


**Extended Abstract**

The current research utilizes and extends attribution theory (Heider 1958; Kelley 1967) to develop a model of “parental surrogate consumption,” or, purchasing products or services that one’s child will subsequently consume. Most broadly, we argue that parental surrogate consumption represents a moral consumption behavior, as such consumption stands to directly impact the health and well-being of another individual (i.e., the child) who does not possess regular or complete control over the goods or services he or she consumes (Vitell 2003). From this framework, we demonstrate that perceptions of parents’ morality are influenced by the consumption choices they make for their children, and show that the strength of such moral attributions is dependent on perceptions of behavioral consistency and control.

**Conceptual Background**

**Parental Surrogate Consumption**

Parents represent a sizeable market; in the United States alone 53 percent of consumers aged 18 to 40 report having at least one child (Newport and Wilke 2013). In the European Union, nearly 30 percent of all households contain at least one child (Eurostat 2016). These parents as a group spend billions annually on products and services for their children, from toys and sports leagues to food, clothing, and medical care (Lino 2014). Yet to date consumer researchers have not examined the impact that routinely making such interdependent choices has on parental consumers. Rather, the bulk of extant research on parent-child consumption has focused on consumer socialization (e.g., John 1999) or children’s perceptions of products or advertising (e.g., Zhang and Sood 2002). Given the powerful role parents play in children’s consumption behavior, it is important for consumer researchers to examine how routinely making these interdependent choices—hereeto named “parental surrogate consumption”—impacts parental consumers. Importantly, the non-elective and power imbalanced nature of parental surrogate consumption distinguishes it from previously examined forms of marketplace surrogacy (Solomon 1986). Though parental surrogate consumption can take many forms, in the current research we examine the consumption of food products, and hypothesize the following:

**Hypothesis 1:** Consumers view parental surrogate consumption as a moral issue, and rate parents who choose healthy products for their children as more moral than parents who choose unhealthy products for their children.

**Attribution Theory**

When consumers make consumption decisions, they are conveying information about themselves to onlookers (Belk 1988). Attribution theory (Heider 1958; Jones and Davis 1965) examines how people utilize choice and behavioral information to form impressions of others’ character traits (i.e., form “internal” attributions; Weiner 1985).

**Consistency.** According to attribution theory, character attributions are formed when behaviors are perceived as being consistent with an individual’s typical pattern of behavior (Jones and Davis 1965). One particularly salient cue that consumers utilize to infer behavioral consistency with respect to food consumption is body weight; consumers typically infer that individuals who are overweight must consistently consume calorie-laden foods (Brownell 1991). In the current research we examine moral attributions formed based on single, one-time parental surrogate consumption behaviors, and manipulate perceptions of consistency using children’s physical characteristics.

**Hypothesis 2:** Consumers utilize children’s physical characteristics as a proxy for consistency information, and adjust their moral attributions accordingly.

**Control.** The second key determinant for forming character attributions is perceptions of control. According to attribution theory, character attributions are formed only when individuals are perceived to be making a volitional, intentional choice (Jones and Davis 1965). There exists a rich body of work examining how people form attributions of consumers based on their own consumption decisions (e.g., Vartanian, Herman, and Polivy 2007; Williams and Steffel 2014). Yet, to our knowledge, researchers have not yet examined whether attributions are similarly formed based on the products consumers select for others. Attribution theory would suggest that in such instances character attributions will be formed for the individual in control of the consumption decision (the parent), but will not be extended to the eventual consumer (the child). Furthermore, parents should be relieved of blame for any unhealthy consumption behaviors made by their children outside of their supervision.

**Hypothesis 3a:** Consumers do not form moral attributions of children based on parental surrogate consumption information, as they are not perceived as being in control of their consumption choices.

**Hypothesis 3b:** Consumers only form moral attributions of parents based on parental surrogate consumption information to the degree that parents are perceived as being in control.

**Experiment 1: Establishing Parental Surrogate Consumption as a Moral Consumption Behavior**

Experiment 1 aims to establish parental surrogate consumption as a moral consumption behavior by demonstrating that consumers form moral attributions of parents based on the food products they select for their children.

**Method**

Participants were 397 Amazon Mechanical Turk workers. Two healthy and two unhealthy food items were selected from a pool of ten pre-tested snacks: apples with peanut butter, yogurt and fruit, a slice of cake, and a donut. All participants were randomly assigned to view one of these snack choices, then asked to rate its unhealthiness using two 6-point bipolar scales: healthy/unhealthy and wholesome/unwholesome (α = .92).
After viewing each snack, participants were next presented with a hypothetical scenario stating the following: “8-year-old David has just gotten home from school, and it’s time for his after-school snack. David’s mother gives him…” followed by their assigned snack. Participants then were asked to make ratings of David’s mother’s morality, using four 6-point bipolar scales adapted from Steim and Nemeroff (1995): ethical/unethical, moral/immmoral, kind-hearted/cruel, and caring/uncaring (α = .90), interspersed with four distractor scales.

Results and Discussion

Results of a one-way ANOVA confirmed a significant difference in morality ratings between conditions (F(3, 393) = 64.90, p < .001, η² = .33). Mothers who fed “David” apple slices (M = 5.23) and yogurt and fruit (M = 5.21) were rated as the most moral; mothers who fed “David” a donut (M = 3.98) and a slice of cake (M = 4.02) were rated as less moral. Across conditions, participants’ perceptions of parents’ morality were negatively correlated with their perceptions of snack unhealthiness (r(395) = -.60, p < .001), providing support for H1.

Experiment 2: The Moderating Role of Children’s Appearance

Experiment 2 examined whether the strength of moral attributions, formed via parental surrogate consumption information, is moderated by children’s physical appearance.

Method

Participants were 314 Amazon Mechanical Turk workers. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in a 2 (child weight) x 2 (snack type) design. All participants in all conditions were presented with an image of “8-year-old David.” In one condition David appeared to be of a healthy weight; in the second condition David was overweight. All participants read the same scenario presented in experiment 1, with either a donut or fruit with yogurt as the snack. After reading this scenario, participants were asked to make moral judgments of David’s mother (α = .92).

Results and Discussion

The joint impact of child weight and snack choice on perceptions of David’s mother was tested using a 2 x 2 ANOVA. Results revealed a significant main effect of child weight, such that participants perceived David’s mother to be less moral when her child was overweight (F(1, 310) = 58.09, p < .001, η² = .16). The main effect of food choice was also significant (F(1, 310) = 155.37, p < .001, η² = .33), with David’s mother being perceived as more moral when she chose a healthy snack, once again confirming H1. The interaction of food choice and child weight was significant (F(1, 310) = 12.57, p < .001, η² = .04), providing initial support for H2. Mothers who selected an unhealthy product for their child were punished more severely when that child was overweight.

Experiment 3: The Mediating Role of Consistency

This moderating role of child weight, as established in experiment 2, may be explained via the consistency dimension of attribution theory. When a mother selects an unhealthy product for her overweight child, consumers likely assume that such a choice is reflective of a consistent pattern of behavior. In experiment 3 we test this mechanism directly.

Method

Participants in experiment 3 were 405 adult Amazon Mechanical Turk workers. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions using the same 2 (child weight) x 2 (snack type) design and scenarios employed in experiment 2. After viewing “David” with his snack, participants were asked to rate the consistency with which they believed David’s mother selects that snack using five items (e.g., “David’s mother usually selects snacks like this for David to eat”; α = .94). Participants then provided moral judgments of David’s mother (α = .93).

Results and Discussion

Results were analyzed via moderated mediation analysis (Hayes 2013; PROCESS Model 58). The first model regressed child weight, snack choice, and the interaction between these two on perceptions of behavioral consistency, our mediator. The second model regressed child weight, perceptions of behavioral consistency, snack choice, and the interaction between snack choice and consistency on moral judgments. For full results and variable codings. Importantly, the conditional indirect effect of child weight on morality was significant for both the yogurt condition (B = -.54, 95% CI = -.81 to -.31) and the donut condition (B = -.80, 95% CI = -.10 to -.52). Together, these results confirm H2 by identifying perceptions of behavioral consistency as the mediating mechanism between child weight and moral perceptions, for both healthy and unhealthy products.

Experiment 4: The Role of Perceived Control

In experiment 4 we incorporate perceived control into our model of parental surrogate consumption, by testing whether the choices that parents make impact the moral judgments formed of the children who are subjected to such choices.

Method

Participants in experiment 4 were 315 adult Amazon Mechanical Turk workers. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in a 2 (child weight) x 2 (snack type) design, nearly identical to that utilized in experiment 2. In contrast to prior experiments, participants were asked to make moral judgments of David himself (α = .90).

Results and Discussion

The joint impact of child weight and food choice on perceptions of David was tested using a 2 x 2 ANOVA. Results revealed a significant main effect of child weight, such that participants perceived overweight David to be less moral (M = 4.12) than healthy weight David (M = 4.52; F(1, 311) = 16.15, p < .001, η² = .05). Importantly, the main effect of food choice failed to reach significance (F(1, 311) = 2.68, p = .10, η² = .01), confirming H3a. The interaction of food choice and child weight also failed to reach significance (F(1, 311) = .59, p = .44, η² = .00). As David was not in control of his snack choice, consumers did not form character judgments of him based on his mother’s choices.

Experiment 5: The Joint Impact of Control and Consistency

In experiment 5 we investigate the joint impact of perceptions of control and consistency in forming moral attributions by manipulating control in our scenarios.

Method

Participants in experiment 5 were 468 adult Amazon Mechanical Turk workers. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions using a 2 (child weight) x 2 (locus of control) design. Participants were first shown overweight or healthy weight “David.” They were then presented with one of two scenarios, both of which resulted in David consuming a donut as his snack. In the “mother control condition,” the scenario was identical to that utilized in previous experiments.
In the “David control condition,” participants read the following: “David just got home from school and it’s time for his after school snack. David’s mother left him yogurt with fruit in the refrigerator to eat as a snack. David instead grabs a donut out of his backpack that he got from the school cafeteria, and eats that as his snack.” This scenario was selected from a pool of six scenarios, pre-tested for perceptions of control. Participants in all conditions rated the consistency with which they believed David to consume donuts (α = .92). Finally, all participants were asked to make moral judgments of David’s mother (α = .89).

Results and Discussion
We tested our hypotheses using a moderated mediation analysis (Hayes 2013; PROCESS Model 14). The first model regressed child weight on perceptions of behavioral consistency, our mediator. The second model regressed child weight, perceptions of behavioral consistency, locus of control, and the interaction between locus of control and consistency on moral judgments. For full results and variable codings, see Table 1.

The conditional indirect effect of child weight on judgments of mothers’ morality was significant for the mother control condition (B = -.24, 95% CI = -.38 to -.12), but not for the child control condition (B = .06, 95% CI = -.10 to .21). These results support H3b by demonstrating that though a child’s weight provides observers with information regarding the consistency with which he consumes unhealthy products, the indirect effect of weight on moral judgments is only significant for mothers who possess control.

General Discussion
The current research extends attribution theory in establishing a model of parental surrogate consumption. Across five experiments, we: 1) define and characterize parental surrogate consumption as a moral consumption behavior, 2) demonstrate that just as moral attributions are formed based on personal consumption information, so too are they formed based on parental surrogate consumption information, and 3) demonstrate that the occurrence and strength of moral attributions is dictated by perceptions of behavioral consistency and control.

Theoretical Implications
This research contributes to the consumer behavior literature in a number of ways. First, we extend attribution theory beyond judgments made based on the choices consumers make for themselves (e.g., Olson et al. 2016; Williams and Steffel 2014). In this work, we demonstrate that such attributions also can be formed based on the choices consumers make for others (specifically, their children). Second, we direct attention to an overlooked yet highly impactful consumption context: consumption on the behalf of children. Though considerable research has been conducted on child-relevant phenomena such as consumer socialization (e.g., John 1999), the moral implications of the parental surrogate consumption process remain largely unexplored. Third, we answer the call to “broaden the scope” of consumer marketplace morality by introducing parental surrogate consumption as a moral marketplace behavior (Komarova Loureiro et al. 2016).

Limitations and Future Research
Though the current research is the first of its kind, it is not without limitations. Though we define parental surrogate consumption as pertaining to any number of products, herein we only investigate food choices. Future research should investigate non-food products such as screen time, educational products, and medical care, among others. Additionally, though we define parental surrogate consumption as pertaining to the parent-child relationship specifically, there exist many other under-studied surrogate consumption contexts characterized by an unequal distribution of power or control (e.g., consumption on the behalf of the elderly or disabled). Future research should examine these contexts in the interest of expanding our knowledge of surrogate consumption, as well as in the interest of addressing these under-served consumer populations (Pechmann et al. 2011).

REFERENCES


The Implications of a Planned Development on Consumption Practices: A Case Study of an Orang Asli Community in Malaysia

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on one of the Mah Meri’s community, an Orang Asli community (Indigenous) in Peninsula Malaysia. The Orang Asli communities in Malaysia are dispersed in many localities all over Malaysia, and they are non-homogenous. The Mah Meri community in this case study occupied 36,000 acres of land during their ancestral time (Endicott, 2015). The government intends to upgrade the living quality of the community and in place, implemented a planned development on their land (their land was “exchanged” with a local agent who had altered the land into a plantation estate with the hope to provide employment and increased economic conditions of the community. With the intervention, the community has been relocated to places that are different from their original habitat, of which the community needs to adapt to new conditions and environment.

Though the planned development by the government (to reduce poverty eradication and to create a balanced society) have their own merits and benefits, these initiatives could be controversial for the Mah Meri community, whose spaces and natural environment are intruded. The planned development has modified the Mah Meri way of life and brought forth different consumption practices. The aim of this study is to analyze the consumption changes that the Mah Meri have had to adapt to due to the pressure of planned development— from practices of self-sustenance and minimal market transactions to a higher reliance on market transactions and material consumption.

For the Orang Asli, nature is the foundation of their subsistence and culture (Munoz, Mladenoff, Schroeder, and Williams, 2014); whereas for the contemporary world, the meaning of nature is connected mainly to development plans. During inception, the Mah Meri community believe that the local agent (who are tasked to implement the developments) will increase their welfare and economic conditions. But in reality, the development has created a different scenario to the community. The community is in conditions of the extreme marginal situation, which creates a low power defend for them.

The alterations that have been brought by planned development have impacted and changed the lifestyle of the Mah Meri. Initially, the Mah Meri has insisted that they would utilize their ancestral land, but the government believes that a planned development would provide far-reaching benefits on the community. With the land ownership changed to the local agent, the majority of the community has rejected the work opportunities provided on the plantation. With the rise of the plantation estate and settlement (a small township has been established) and the loss of the natural spaces, the self-sustenance concept dwindles. For most of the Mah Meri who suffered the loss of territories, they have to incorporate new ways of working and living.

This study used a phenomenology design to explore the Mah Meri community. The researchers had collected data from the head of the Mah Meri community and 10 villagers in two different interview sessions that lasted for nine hours. The semi-structured probing questions were: Tell us about the life of an indigenous community (before and after the development); how the developmental changes are impacting the community and how the community is adapting to the changes. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving comparing transcripts for similarities and differences, and searching for the major structural relationships that were related. The themes were then interpreted and compared against each other, following the stages recommended by Charmaz and Belgrave (2012)— analysis and initial coding, analysis, and interpretation (focused coding), and lastly, the interpretation of the overarching themes were developed from the focused codes.

The themes that were derived from the analyses were materialistic involvement, losing connection to nature, living sources, taboo beliefs, a daily habit, political system, new subsistence and beliefs and future living. These themes were associated with the altered consumption practices that are mainly focusing on these broadly defined consumption themes: from a necessity consumption (basic, self-sustenance, subsistence, productive); and cultural consumption (self-referential, culture, reality) towards a higher order consumption practices of materialistic consumption (functional, aesthetic, reflective, sensuous); playful consumption (performance, pleasure, entertainment, imaginary); intellectualized consumption (cognitive, signs, experience); trend consumption (fashion, statement, design) and contingency consumption (incidental, emergency).

There is a gradual evolution of consumption practices from self-sustenance consumption to a more materialistic-type consumption practices (Spronk, 2014) with the introduction of the plantation estate and small town. The presuppose consumers, still with minimal purchasing power, have contracted the habit of buying and liking practical, functional products and consumer objects which provide them with some form of consumption statement. This consumption pattern expresses a materialistic aspiration and ambition with the change in the social structure (Warde, 2017). There is also a certain reification of the mentality in the formation of consumption practices and how the boundaries of consumption are further upgraded (Wahlen and Laamanen, 2015)—breaking away from the necessity consumption purposes to a higher order consumption practices. The monetarization of small town life becomes more prevalent. It becomes evident that money quantifies qualitative differences, reduces them to the monotony of more or less and the dialectic between the poor and the rich is more visible and differentiated.

In the case of Mah Meri community, they had tried to blend in their lifestyle by adapting to the new conditions. The government’s development plan has caused a trajectory in the lives of the Mah Meri and their connection to their natural spaces and cosmos. The development has opened a new perspective and dimensions in their daily lives. Achieving higher wealth and competitiveness are certainly worthy pursuits in addressing the economic challenges (Hayes, Caldwell, Licona, and Meyer, 2015). However, the condition set forth by the planned development has changed the lifestyle of the Mah Meri community. The findings showed supports that the community’s views about living had been detached from the original view. The community has changed their consumption patterns from a situation of need and necessity to a relatively more aesthetic habitus practices when there are elements of development (Alba and Williams, 2013; Pilar and Emonispoel, 2015; Ulver and Ostberg (2014).

REFERENCES


Countdown or Countup: Effect of Direction of Time-keeping on Resource Deficiency and Related Downstream Preferences
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Time is a scarce resource (Caroll 2008) and individuals need to accomplish tasks in a fixed time (deadlines, grocery shopping, exercise). Time-keeping can happen in two directions: countups, where time is counted upwards (time-elapsed); or countdowns, where time is counted downwards (time-left). While time-keeping is an important and commonplace phenomenon, there is little research in this domain. This research aims to study the impact of direction of time-keeping on food choices, risk preferences, and helping intentions; and explain the effects through theoretical perspective of resource deficiency. Through four studies, we infer that downward (upward) time-keeping leads to more (less) resource deficiency, as manifested in higher (lower) preference for calorie-rich food, more (less) risk-aversion and lower (higher) helping intentions.

Time is considered a resource in many decision making scenarios (Becker 1965; Leclerc, Schmitt, and Dube 1995; Festjens and Janiszewski 2015). This is supported by casual observation about individuals complaining about perpetual time shortage. The key premise of this research is that the direction in which the consumption of time is monitored influences the resource deficiency perception, leading to downstream effects. We argue that downward (upward) time-keeping leads to higher (lower) resource deficiency perception, because decreasing (increasing) sequences are implicitly associated with reducing (increasing) quantities, value or resources (Pelham, Sumarta, and Myaskovsky 1994; Pandelaere, Briers, and Lembregts 2011). There is general association of decreasing sequences with scarcity and reduction (reduction in stock prices, bank balance, calorie consumption etc.). Therefore, a decreasing sequence (especially for resource like time) signals resource reduction more strongly than an increasing sequence. Accordingly, we argue that downward (upward) time-keeping (60,59,…vs…59,60) is more (less) likely to induce resource deficiency perception. Further, such resource deficiency has been found to be associated with higher self-focused behaviors (Levontin, Ein-Gar and Lee 2014), consumption of calorie-rich foods (Briers and Laporte 2013) and risk-aversion (March and Shapira 1992; Haushofer and Fehr 2014). Hence downward (upward) time-keeping should lead to more (less) resource deficiency, as manifested in higher (lower) preference for calorie rich food, more (less) risk-aversion and lower (higher) willingness to help.

In Study 1, participants (N=95) were randomly assigned to 2(Downward/Upward time-keeping)x2(Evaluation of: Calorie-rich/Calorie-lean food) between-subjects conditions. They worked on a task (crossing e’s) timed either in upward (0-60 seconds) or downward (60-0 seconds) direction. Next, they evaluated either a calorie-rich (chocolate cake) or a calorie-lean (fruit salad) food item on purchase likelihood (Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal 1993). Two way ANOVA revealed a significant interaction between time-keeping direction and food category (F(1,89)=7.195, p=.009). Planned contrasts revealed a significant difference in preference for calorie-rich food between upward and downward time-keeping conditions (M_{upward-time-keeping}=6.97, M_{downward-time-keeping}=6.02,t(44)=2.65, p=.005) but non-significant difference for calorie-lean food item. The results are consistent with the possibility that downward (upward) time-keeping leads to higher (lower) resource deficiency, as manifested in higher (lower) preference for calorie-rich food.

However, an alternative explanation is possible. Literature suggests that downward (upward) counting leads to higher (lower) arousal, resulting in higher (lower) preferences for hedonic foods like chocolate cake (Rook and Gardner 1993; Di Muro and Murray 2012; Edith and Morwitz 2013). Study 2 tests this alternate explanation, by exploring the effect of time-keeping direction on risk preferences. While arousal leads to risk seeking (Hurvich, and Zuckerman 1993; Mano 1994), resource deficiency can lead to risk-aversion (March and Shapira 1992; Haushofer and Fehr 2014). Accordingly, if downward time-keeping results in resource deficiency perception (arousal), participants should exhibit risk-aversion (risk seeking behaviour). Participants (N=75) were randomly assigned to: upward/downward time-keeping (similar to Study 1) with risk preference (pre-tested polar scale with 1=50% chance of winning 200 units of local currency, and 11=sure amount of 90 units; lesser value means higher risk preference) as dependent measure. As expected, participants in downward time-keeping had lower preference for risk (M_{upward-time-keeping}=5.37, M_{downward-time-keeping}=6.88, t(69)=1.86, p=.032). These results support our earlier theorization that downward time-keeping leads to higher resource deficiency perception, and effects are not driven by arousal.

While Study 2 rules out the alternate explanation of arousal, it is still possible that the effects of downward time-keeping are due to presence of zero as hard stop. Zero symbolizes completion and exhaustion (of resources). It is possible that resource deficiency perception is induced by presence of zero as the end-point in downward time-keeping, not because of the decreasing sequence. Study 3 investigates this alternate explanation. If the phenomenon is due to presence of zero as hard stop, the effects found in earlier studies should not be observed in downward time-keeping with non-zero ending, but if it is due to decreasing sequence, this effects should be replicated. Participants (N=60) were randomly assigned to: upward (5-64 sec) or downward (64-5 sec) time-keeping (rest of the design was identical to Study 2). It was found that participants in downward time-keeping had lower preference for risk (M_{upward-time-keeping}=6.68, M_{downward-time-keeping}=8.09,t(46)=1.84, p=.035) than in upward time-keeping. The results suggest that it is not the end point (zero or non-zero) but the decreasing or increasing sequence of time-keeping that induces resource deficiency perception and related downstream effects.

Finally, Study 4 tests the mediation of perceived resource deficiency, and attempts to increase the validity of the results with different operationalization of timed task. Participants (N=132) were randomly assigned to: upward/ downward time-keeping with task of finding words in a word-block, while the time was ticking on the side of screen. Next, they provided responses for willingness-to-donate money to and willingness-to-help a charitable organization, followed by response to a 5-item perceived resource deficiency scale adapted from Levontin, Ein-gar and Lee (2014). It was found that participants in downward (upward) time-keeping had less (more) helping intentions (M_{upward-time-keeping}=7.25, M_{downward-time-keeping}=6.73,t(128)=2.27, p=.012). Mediation analysis (Hayes 2013; Model 4) supported mediation of perceived resource deficiency between time-keeping direction and willingness to help (95%CI for indirect effect: 0.0158-0.3089). We also measured affect (PANAS; Watson, Clark, and Tellegen 1988), and found no difference in different time-keeping conditions.
ditions. This helps us rule out mood or stress based explanation of results.

This research is among the first to study the direction of time-keeping and we hope that it provides direction for richer understanding of time perception.

REFERENCES
How Incidental Confidence Influences Self-Interested Behaviors? A Double-Edged Sword
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

When reading the daily news, one finds examples too numerous to count of politicians, sports stars, business executives, students from top schools, and others finding all sorts of ways to profit by behaving unliterally (e.g., Netter 2010). The current research adds to the literature on self-interested behaviors by investigating a hitherto unexplored, yet ubiquitous, determinant—incidental confidence.

People make decisions and take actions based not only on what they like or believe, but also on their confidence in their likes and beliefs. For example, lower confidence can decrease charitable giving (Tsai and McGill 2011), purchases (Greenleaf and Lehmann 1995), price expectations (Mazumdar and Jun 1993; Urbany and Dickson 1991), the amount of money bet on sports games (Tsai, Klayman, and Hastie 2007), and willingness to engage in competition (Camerer and Lovo1999).

However, most studies of consequences of confidence have examined how characteristics of a focal event influence confidence in judgments of the same event and subsequent decisions about the event (Yates, 1990). It is curious whether changes in confidence in one domain can influence behaviors in other unrelated domains. We add to this line of work by investigating such transfer effect of incidental confidence on self-interested behaviors. Self-interested behaviors are considered by many researchers a balancing act between wanting to do good and wanting to profit from doing bad (Eisenberg and Hastie 2007). The present research examines how incidental confidence might tilt the balance and increase selfish or selfless behaviors.

In the absence of a subjective sense of confidence, people often experience a state of psychological aversion that they are motivated to reduce (Kahneman, Slovic, and Tversky 1982; Payne, Bettman, and Johnson 1992). When it is not possible to restore confidence by improving judgments or ability in the same domain, people can restore confidence by gaining status or increasing rankings in unrelated domains (Coon 1994). For example, an individual who writes poorly may regain his/her confidence by excelling in mathematics. In the context of our study, the desire to compensate for lower confidence may cause people to seek status. The status motives, in turn, can increase self-interested behaviors that generate financial gains or encourage selfless behaviors, depending on whether money or altruism, respectively, is a more prominent source of status.

On the one hand, money is a prominent resource and can serve as an important signal of status (Kemper 1991). Money brings about a state of self-sufficiency, provides a feeling of confidence that problems can be solved and needs can be met (Voils, Mead, and Goode 2006), and increases the confidence that one can obtain positive outcomes and avoid negative ones (Johnson and Krueger, 2006). We therefore propose that the motive to compensate for lower confidence can trigger self-interested behaviors that generate financial payoffs.

On the other hand, lower incidental confidence can reduce self-interested behaviors when altruism is a stronger signal of status than money (Roberts, 1998). Although status can be achieved by force, we focus on status that is achieved through prestige, freely conferred deference (Henrich and Gil-White 2001). For example, public displays of self-sacrifice for strangers in the group can increase the self-sacrificer’s status and the likelihood of being selected as a leader in that group (Gurven et al. 2000). Similarly, when shopping in front of others, people primed with status-enhancement motives are more likely to purchase costly green products to signal their willingness and ability to bear the cost of prosocial consumption (Griskevicius et al. 2010). However, this preference reverses in a private shopping context (e.g., online shopping) because prosocial consumption would have little signaling value.

In summary, we propose that lower incidental confidence increases (decreases) self-interested behaviors when money (altruism) is the primary signal of status that helps compensating for confidence. We conducted four experiments to test these hypotheses.

Study 1

Method. Study 1 (N_target = 150; N_actual = 121; 36.60% female; age = 34.21; Amazon Mechanical Turk) tested the hypothesis that lower incidental confidence would increase self-interested behaviors relating to money using a one-shot dictator game, a task commonly used to demonstrate self-interested behaviors involving monetary consequences (Camerer 2003). We had a target sample size of 75 participants per cell and managed to recruit 142 participants. Twenty-one participants failed to pass an attention check and were excluded from the analysis, resulting in 121 valid data points.

Study 1 employed a two-level single-factor (incidental confidence: lower vs. higher) between-subjects design. We first manipulated incidental confidence by asking participants to list five events in which they experienced high or low confidence in their judgments or ability, a procedure adapted from existing research (Pett et al., 2002). Pretesting (N = 46) ruled out power and self-esteem as potential confounds.

Next, participants were endowed with $3.00 and allocated the fund with an unknown recipient in a one-shot anonymous dictator game. Participants kept whatever he or she did not offer; the recipient was an unexplored, yet ubiquitous, determinant—incidental confidence.

Results. As predicted, participants in the lower-confidence condition behaved more selfishly; they kept more money for themselves (M_low-conf = $2.04, SD = .64 vs. M_high-conf = $2.04, SD = .72; t(119) = −2.19, p = .03; d = .40).

Study 2

Method. Study 2 (N_target = 100; N_actual = 80; 56.10% female; age = 19.52; university students) expanded the research to another self-interested behavior: prosocial consumption that involved a tradeoff between money (cost of product) and altruism.

Participants first completed the confidence manipulation task from Study 1. They then viewed an advertisement and indicated their preference (1 = non-green product, 7 = green product). The advertisement featured a cheaper non-green product and a more-expensive green product. All the other product attributes were identical.

To address the potential issue concerning negative affect, we measured mood and anxiety before and after the choice and controlled for them in the analyses. To rule out the possibility that some form of mood regulation might be involved, we measured anticipated happiness, “to what extent do you think having the product of your choice would make you feel happy (7 = extremely).

Results. Consistent with Study 1, lower confidence reduced prosocial consumption (M_low-conf = 4.38, SD = 1.31 vs. M_high-conf = 3.70, SD = 1.04; t(79) = −2.40, p = .02; d = .37).
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= 1.63; t(78) = –2.03, p = .04; d = .46). (Higher number indicated weaker preference for the green product.) Mood, anxiety, and anticipated happiness did not vary across conditions (all p > .30). When we controlled for these variables in separate ANCOVAs, none of them had an effect on product preferences (all p > .33), and the effect of confidence remained significant (all p = .04).

Discussion. The results of Studies 1 and 2 support our hypothesis that lower confidence can increase self-interested behaviors that generate monetary payoffs. These findings show that confidence can have a transfer effect on subsequent self-interested behaviors that are unrelated to the true source of confidence.

In the next two experiments, we investigated the underlying process by manipulating source of status directly—money versus altruism. Our proposed compensatory mechanism implies that lower confidence would decrease prosocial consumption (Study 3) and increase the amount of money kept for self in a dictator game (Study 4) when money serves as the primary means for compensating for lower confidence. However, the results should reverse when altruism can better compensate for lower confidence than money.

Study 3

We expanded the research by manipulating source of status directly and using another procedure to manipulate incidental confidence. The task was an abstract elemental task (Raven’s puzzles) that further ruled out power, self-esteem, and even self-efficacy because solving puzzles is unlikely to alter social relations or control over valued resources (power: Magee and Galinsky, 2008), self-acceptance or worthiness (self-esteem; Wylie, 1979), and general belief in one’s own ability to complete tasks and reach goals (self-efficacy; Bandura, 1997).

Method. The study (N = 120; N – 115; 56.10% female; age = 19.52; university students) employed a 2 (confidence: lower vs. control) x 2 (source of status: money vs. altruism) between-subjects design. We first manipulated incidental confidence by asking participants to complete a set of 12 Ravens puzzles that were either difficult or easy. Pretesting (N = 37) confirmed that the puzzle task altered confidence level as intended (M, low-conf = 4.06 vs. M, hi-conf = 8.80; t(35) = 6.61, p < .01).

Next, participants encountered the manipulation of source of status. Specifically, we told half the participants to consider shopping online by themselves (a private context) or in an actual store (a public context; Griskevicius et al. 2010). Next, participants completed the shopping task from Study 2.

We expected prosocial consumption to be a stronger signal of status than money when people considerer shopping in a public context (e.g., in a brick-and-mortar store). The notion of competitive altruism (Roberts 1998) suggests that people are particularly sensitive to the social and reputational aspects of altruism (Bateson, Nettle, and Roberts 2006). Therefore people are more likely to engage in prosocial consumption when shopping in public than in private.

Results. A two-way ANOVA revealed a significant interaction of confidence and source of status only (F(1, 111) = 9.40, p = .002, η² = .075). Planned contrasts showed that when people considered shopping in private, lower confidence reduced prosocial consumption (M, low-conf = 4.81, SD = 1.82 vs. M, hi-conf = 3.82, SD = 2.14; F(1, 111) = 4.11, p = .04, d = .50), replicating the results of Study 2. However, the effect reversed when people considered shopping in public (M, low-conf = 4.52, SD = 2.02, vs. M, hi-conf = 5.69, SD = 1.46; F(1, 111) = 5.30, p = .02, d = .66).

Discussion. The results showed that individuals primed with lower confidence appeared to be more or less prosocial in product choices, depending on whether the ownership of a green product or the savings incurred from purchasing a non-green product was considered more effective in compensating for lower confidence. These results were consistent with the proposed compensatory mechanism. The results further ruled out negative affect, perceived fairness, and effort as alternative explanations because these alternative explanations implied a main effect of confidence regardless of the source of status. Instead, we found that the effect of confidence on product preference was not significant (F < 1, p = .59), but the two-way interaction of confidence and source of status was.

Study 4

In Study 4, we further tested the compensatory mechanism using the same one-shot dictator game from Study 1 and another procedure to manipulate source of status. Specifically, we varied the strength of group affiliation (Brilely and Wyer 2002). Prior research shows that sharing similar experiences can cause people to identify with the reference group (Aronson, Wilson, and Akert 2010).

We therefore predicted that group affiliation would be strengthened when participants thought their recipients took the same study.

As mentioned earlier, the display of altruism could compensate for lower confidence because selfless behaviors could help one gain status. Moreover, prior studies on competitive altruism and costly signaling (Barclay and Willer 2007; Roberts 1998; Van Vugt et al. 2007) suggested that altruism was more likely to help one gain status in a community with strong group affiliation than one with weak group affiliation. Thus, altruism should be perceived as the better means for restoring confidence when group affiliation was strengthened and thus lower confidence should decrease the amount of money that people kept for themselves, causing them to appear more altruistic. Under the condition of weak group affiliation, money would be the better means for restoring confidence. Thus, lower confidence would increase the amount that people kept for themselves, causing them to appear more selfish.

Method. The study (N = 120; N = 103 university students) employed a 2 (confidence: lower vs. control) x 2 (source of status: money vs. altruism) between-subjects design. Participants received $5 each for participation and 12 quarters at the beginning of the study. Participants first completed a puzzle task that primed incidental confidence as Study 3.

Next, participants proceeded to the one-shot dictator game from Study 1 and encountered the manipulation of source of status. Specifically, we told participants that their recipients either completed the same puzzle study as they did (strong affiliation) or did a different study (weak affiliation). They then divided their three-dollar endowment with their recipients.

Pretesting (N = 42 students) confirmed that lower confidence increased the motives for obtaining status-enhancing monetary resources and that our confidence manipulation task did not induce negative affect or change perceived fairness of the study. The results showed that participants in the low-confidence condition were more inclined to attribute their desire for the monetary prize to status-enhancement reasons (M = 3.43, SD = 1.57) than did participants in the high-confidence condition (M = 2.39, SD = 1.39; t(42) = 2.32, p = .02). Positive mood, anxiety, and fairness did not differ across conditions (all p > .20).

Results and Discussion. A two-way ANOVA revealed a significant interaction of confidence and source of status only (F(1, 99) = 6.15, p = .005, η² = .076). Planned contrasts showed that when participants thought that their recipients had taken a different study (weak affiliation, money as the source of status), lower confidence increased the amount of money that they kept (M, low-conf = $2.42, SD = .64 vs. M, hi-conf = $2.01, SD = .72; F(1, 99) = 4.29, p = .04, d =
However, the effect reversed when participants thought their recipients had taken the same study (strong affiliation, altruism as the source of status; $M_{low-conf} = 1.86, SD = 1.07$ vs. $M_{high-conf} = 2.37, SD = .72$; $F(1, 99) = 3.60, p = .04, d = .56$). These results further supported our proposed compensatory mechanism.

**General Discussion**

It is imperative to better understand the psychology of self-interested behaviors because they are often consequent and incur high cost to the society. Our findings contribute to the confidence literature by documenting a transfer effect of incidental confidence on self-interested behaviors. Our work provides a clearer picture for how confidence influences self-interested behavior. In a series of four experiments, we found that people in a lower confidence state may appear more selfish or selfless depending on the means for restoring confidence. Further, we tested our proposed compensatory mechanism in two studies by manipulating source of status in two different ways—shopping context (Study 3) and group affiliation (Study 4). Finally, data ruled out alternative explanations including affect, fairness, effort, self-efficacy, power, and self-esteem.

This research has important implications for the general area of studies on ethical decision making. For unethical behaviors involving monetary payoffs (e.g., theft, fraud), incidental confidence may produce similar effects to those observed in the current research. In fact, we found in a post-test ($N = 36$ university students) that lower confidence increased theft, a real transgression.

It would be fruitful to further investigate the interplay between confidence and ethical decision making. Other promising avenues for future research include examining how the numerous variables affecting confidence (e.g., processing fluency; Tsai and Thomas 2011) and source of status (e.g., expertise, respect from others; French and Raven, 1959) interact to influence self-interested behaviors.

**REFERENCES**


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The current trend of marketers trying desperately to connect with consumers emotionally, the so-called “sadvertising” (Fera 2014) makes Aristotle’s (1354/1954) question new again: do people follow their hearts or heads? In this research, we aim to advance understanding on this important consumer decision.

Persuasive information can be put into two categories: affective information (i.e. information appealing to the heart such as feelings and emotions) and cognitive information (i.e. information appealing to the head such as attributes and beliefs of the object) (See, Petty and Fabrigar, 2008). To answer the call for more information processing research focusing on the global consumer and richer classifications of cultural differences (Johar, Maheswaran, and Peracchio, 2006), we identify Power Distance Belief (PDB hereafter) – the extent to which individuals expect and accept hierarchy and inequality in society -- as a new factor that impacts the reliance of affective and cognitive information. More specifically, we hypothesize that consumers with low PDB rely more on affective information and prefer affective ads whereas consumers with high PDB rely more on cognitive information and prefer cognitive ads. We further postulate that this PDB effect is mediated by consumption motive with low PDB inducing consummatory motive whereas high PDB inducing instrumental motive. Given the acceptance of one’s position in a hierarchy as the core of PDB, high PDB requires individuals to accommodate to socially conferred positions in a hierarchy. The external regulation of social judgments induces an external perceived locus of causality (Heider, 1958; Botti and McGill, 2011) and promotes instrumental motive for high PDB consumers’ behaviors (Ryan and Deci, 2000). The instrumental motive then induces a preference for products presented with cognitive information (Dhar and Wertherbroch, 2000). In contrast, low PDB releases individuals from external regulation of social judgments and promotes a more internal perceived locus of causality, which consequently induces consummatory motive for consumption behaviors (Deci and Ryan, 1985). The consummatory motive drives a preference for products presented with affective information (Dhar and Wertherbroch, 2000).

We propose external monitoring as a moderator for the PDB effect based on the classic motivation research findings that external regulation undermines consummatory motive and enhances instrumental motive (Deci, Koestner, and Ryan, 1999; Fishbach and Choi, 2012; Maimaran and Fishbach, 2014). More specifically, we predict that salient external monitoring tends to regulate low PDB individuals’ behavior by enhancing their instrumental motive. In contrast, because high PDB individuals’ baseline tendency to regulate their behaviors with external regulation is already high (Friesen et al., 2014), salient external monitoring should have little effect on high PDB individuals’ motive.

Across one content analysis and five experimental studies, we test the central proposition of the impact of PDB on consumers’ preference for affective versus cognitive information.

The pilot study analyzes print ads from US (PDB =40) and Japan (PDB =54), providing ecological support for the hypothesized PDB impact.

Study 1a and 1b demonstrate the main proposition by manipulating both PDB (Zhang et al. 2010, study 1c) and information type (i.e. affective vs. cognitive) across different product categories, thus supporting the internal validity of the main proposition.

Study 2, 3 and 4 provide convergent evidence for the proposed mechanism of consumption motive underlying the PDB effect. The bootstrapping analysis in study 2 supports the proposed mediation of consumption motive statistically. Mediation analysis was tested separately for affective and cognitive ads with Hayes (2013) Model 4 (with IV= PDB, Mediator = consumption motive, DV = Product Evaluation). The confidence intervals of the indirect effect of PDB on product evaluation through consumption motive didn’t include zero for both affective and cognitive ads (affective ad: indirect effect = -.12, Boot SE = .08, CI’s: -.33, -.01; cognitive ad: indirect effect = .12, Boot SE = .07, CI’s: .02,.29), indicating consumption motive mediates the effect of PDB on product evaluation for both the affective and cognitive ads. By manipulating consumption motive, study 3 further confirms the causal path between the proposed mediator and the dependent variable. Study 4 examines a boundary condition of the PDB effect by manipulating external monitoring. As expected, the PDB effect manifests when external monitoring is non-salient and attenuates when external monitoring is salient. With actual and fictitious ads, across different product categories including products and services, and with both student and non-student participants, the converging results demonstrate the robustness of the PDB effect on the persuasiveness of affective and cognitive information and support the proposed process. Moreover, study 1a, 1b, and study 2 repeatedly show that the PDB prime doesn’t impact situational self-construal. Study 2 demonstrates that the PDB effect is not mediated through self-construal. The experimental findings are consistent with recent PDB research (Gao et al., 2016; Lalwani and Forcum, 2016) that PDB and self-construal are orthogonal theoretical constructs and exert impacts on consumer behavior via different mechanisms.

Our research makes several significant contributions. First, our research enriches the growing body of evidence on consumers’ motivated reasoning during information processing by identifying PDB as a new factor that influences consumers’ selective preference for cognitive versus affective information. Second, this research broadens the cross-cultural persuasion research beyond the heavy reliance on the INDCOLL framework (i.e. individualism-collectivism at the cultural level and independent-interdependent self-construal at the individual level). By including PDB, this research greatly enhances the predictive accuracy of cultural orientation on persuasive effectiveness. Third, this research contributes to the PDB literature (Gao, Winterich, and Zhang, 2016; Lalwani and Forcum, 2016; Winterich and Zhang, 2014; Zhang et al., 2010) by uncovering a novel link between PDB and consumers’ processing of affective versus cognitive information and identify the underlying mechanism and a boundary condition.

REFERENCES


**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Spectator sports are an emotional intergroup setting in which animosity tends to become overheated and crowds quickly shift from peaceful to violence. Incidents of spectator aggression mainly occur around clashes of rival teams, a problem that is prevalent across different sports and countries. While professional sport teams generally promote rivalries to generate interest and boost attendance, they are afraid to add further fuel to the fire as hostilities tend to escalate quickly between rival spectator groups. Countermeasures include public statements that remind spectators of appropriate and inappropriate behavior at sports venues. A widespread approach is the attempt to play down the importance of rivalry games, with officials stating that the game is “no war” or “only for three points.” Although the attempt to downplay the importance of the game appears intuitively useful, the effects of such statements on spectator aggression are unclear. Drawing on the intergroup conflict literature, this research identifies so-called dual identity statements and argues that such statements are more effective in reducing aggression between rival spectator groups than the managerial practice to downplay. The present research also examines the mechanisms that underlie the effects of dual identity statements and assesses the source of the statement as a potential boundary condition.

A strength of the dual identity approach is that it refers directly to consumers’ identity, which is the basis of the conflict. A public dual identity statement must include two important aspects to decrease the hostility toward the rival spectator group: 1) it acknowledges the rival spectators’ subgroup identities, including their respective distinct features (e.g., team colors, rituals) and 2) it reframes group boundaries by defining and promoting a common superordinate identity, which is accepted and valued by both spectator groups.

The dual identity approach explicitly promotes a superordinate identity that includes the rival spectators. When spectators are encouraged to reconsider previous group boundaries, the context in which social comparisons take place will contain a sense of shared existence and common identity (e.g., similarity in geography, tradition).

Holding both the subgroup identity and the superordinate identity reduces intergroup bias by creating a sense of commonality (Hornsey and Hogg 2000). This should reduce the initial ingroup-favoring bias and makes the opposing group less of a target of aggressiveness.

We also expect the strength of the superordinate identity to mediate the effects of the type of message on spectator aggression.

Three famous rivalries in the German soccer league Bundesliga served as the empirical setting to test our hypotheses in experimental field studies. Study 1 used a pen-and-paper survey among supporters of Dortmund (N = 419; M_age = 27.32 (±11.23), 66% male), while studies 2 and 3 used online surveys among supporters of Brunswick (N = 949; M_age = 42 (±14.03), 89.5% male) and Nuremberg (N = 625; M_age = 33.30 (±13.06), 89% male), respectively. In the dual identity condition, the statement in the press article promoted a superordinate identity by alluding to a shared love of the rival spectator groups for their region and tradition. In the downplay condition, the statement deemphasized the importance of the game.

To capture the dependent variable, we measured both aggressive affect (“When thinking about [rival] supporters, I feel hate / anger / disgust”, Kteily, Hodson and Bruneau 2016) and aggressive behavioral tendencies (“I feel the desire to hurt / inflict pain on fans of [rival]”, Mackie, Devos, and Smith 2000) and collapsed these measures into an index of aggressiveness. Reactance was added as a mediator in studies 2 and 3. Team identification and trait aggression serve as controls.

The results show that sport spectator aggressiveness in rival competitions can be reduced by dual identity statements compared to both downplay statements and remaining silent. The superiority of dual identity statements over the no-statement control condition indicates that the use of public statements can help sports teams to reduce spectator aggressiveness surrounding rivalry games. The managerial practice to deemphasize the importance of rivalry games produced even higher levels of spectator aggressiveness than the no-statement condition. This finding suggests that the widespread use of downplay statements is not only ineffective but may even be counterproductive.

We contribute to the literature by unravelling the theoretical mechanisms underlying the effects of the different types of statements. Consistent with our theorizing, the superiority of dual identity statements can be explained by their ability to strengthen a superordinate identity that spectators share with rival spectators. Theoretically, rival spectators move from outgroup to ingroup to some extent and, therefore, become less of a target of aggressiveness.

Studies 2 and 3 confirm that increased levels of psychological reactance are partially responsible for the counter-intuitive finding that downplay statements increase aggressiveness compared to saying nothing. Spectators’ get upset when teams deemphasize the importance of rivalry because the conflict with the rival spectators marks a crucial part of their identity. Disentangling these causal mechanisms adds to our understanding of how team sport consumers respond to public statements from professional sport teams and spells a basis to design effective statements.

Interestingly, the source of the statement (ingroup, outgroup or both groups together) did not have an influence in our studies. Previous research provides a potential explanation for this unexpected finding. Gomez et al. (2008) show that the endorsement of a superordinate identity from the outgroup is acceptable if people know that fellow ingroup members also accept the superordinate connection. Our study participants may have assumed that fellow spectators accepted the superordinate identity and, therefore, the dual identity statement was perceived favorably even when it came from the rival team’s players.

A caveat of our field experimental approach is a higher degree of noise, limited control over the procedures and a higher number of inattentive participants compared to laboratory settings.

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Optionally Green: The Role of Green Attribute Optionality in Influencing Performance Evaluations
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

As firms seek to develop green products, they may find that consumers are unwilling to alter their consumption behavior due to a perceived performance reduction. However, past literature has often viewed green products homogeneously, whereby a product is either green or non-green. In contrast, we state that a product can feature a green attribute, but that it is not required for the base product to function (termed green attribute optionality), potentially overcoming the negative green product performance stigma.

Building on the innovation locus literature that recognizes the distinction between core and peripheral innovations (e.g., Gatignon, et al. 2002), we extend the concept of peripheral to include optionality. When optional the attribute may enhance a product’s green benefits, but is not required for it to function. Thus, we posit that performance risk is not transferred from the attribute to the base product, enhancing performance evaluations.

In addition, we state that optionality includes two default policies. Based on choice architecture and default literature, a product may possess a green attribute that is default, but may be deactivated (opt-out). Alternatively, the green attribute may be deactivated, allowing the user to activate it when needed (opt-in). As defaults act as a carrier of meaning (Brown and Krishna, 2004), we posit that when the green attribute is the default option (opt-out), performance evaluations will be reduced.

Additionally, we explore the moderating role of cognitive style and the mediating variable of green product typicality. In the former, we posit that holistic thinkers will view product attributes as interconnected, focusing on the degree to which differing attributes are connected and form an entity. In contrast, analytical thinkers may be able to detach the attribute from the product, viewing each attribute as separate (Nisbett, et al., 2001). Based on this, we posit that the impact of green attribute optionality on performance evaluations will be negated when an analytical mindset is activated. In the latter, we predict that an opt-out strategy, whereby the green attribute is default, will lead to an increase in the extent to which the product is viewed as typical of similar green products, thus degrading performance evaluations.

Three experiments were conducted to examine the effect of green attribute optionality on performance evaluations. In Study 1a, we explore both the optional and non-optional conditions. In Study 1b, we introduce the default policies, investigating opt-in, opt-out and non-optional strategies. In Study 2, we examine the moderating variable of cognitive style. Finally, in Study 3, we present the mediating mechanism of green product typicality.

In Study 1a, we performed a one-factor (green attribute optionality: non-optional vs. optional) between subjects’ experiment with 75 respondents. Green attribute optionality was manipulated by presenting respondents with an advertisement for a washing machine along with a heading that outlined the product’s eco-friendly mode. Located at the bottom of the advertisement, a statement indicated that the eco-mode was user-activated. In the non-optional condition, no statement was presented. Finally, we measured performance evaluations. An ANOVA revealed that when the environmental attribute was optional respondents rated the product as higher in performance ability than if it was non-optional (F (1, 73) = 5.796, p < .05).

Study 1b introduced choice architecture and the two default optionality policies. One hundred and twenty-five respondents were recruited to test a one-factor (green attribute optionality: non-optional vs. opt-in policy vs. opt-out policy) between-subjects experiment. All respondents were given a press release for a washing machine, like Study 1a. In the opt-in condition, participants read that the user “can activate the EcoX technology” compared to the opt-out condition that read that users “can deactivate the EcoX technology”. There was no optionality information in the non-optional condition. Next, we measured performance evaluations, green evaluations and environmental consciousness. An ANCOVA, including environmental consciousness as a control variable, revealed a significant main effect (F (1, 121) = 4.364, p < .05), whereby opt-in was significantly higher than both the opt-out and the non-optional. Moreover, there was no significant difference between the non-optional and the opt-out conditions. Finally, no significant effect was found on green evaluations (p = .128).

Study 2 introduces the moderating variable of cognitive style. We recruited 245 respondents to examine a 3 x 2 between-subjects experiment. The manipulations for optionality were the same as in Study 1b, while cognitive style was manipulated by asking respondents to write about a meaningful event that took place in their lives alone (analytical) or with friends and/or family (holistic). A significant main effect was found (F (1, 238) = 9.887, p < .05), whereby opt-in enhanced performance evaluations. In addition, a significant interaction was found (F (1, 238) = 4.363, p < .05), where the analytical condition negated the effect of choice architecture. Finally, there was no main effect for green evaluations (p = .764).

Finally, in Study 3, we test a 2 x 2 between subjects’ experiment with 149 respondents to examine the mediating variable of green product typicality, which was measured along with performance and green evaluations and environmental consciousness. In this study, the non-optional condition was removed. Cognitive style was manipulated as in Study 2, while optionality was manipulated via an advertisement for a kettle, in which the green was described similarity to Study 2. A two-way ANCOVA revealed a significant interaction between green attribute optionality policy and cognitive style (F (1, 144) = 4.690, p = < .05). Furthermore, a significant direct effect was found (F (1, 144) = 5.014, p < .05). Finally using Process Model 7 (Preacher and Hayes, 2008), we found a significant moderated mediation with a 95% confidence interval excluding zero (CI = -.3895 to - .0029).

Taken together, we show that optionality enhances performance evaluations. Specifically, the optionality policy of opt-in. In addition, this perceived performance enhancement does not come at the expense of perceived greenness. Additionally, we find support for the moderating variable of cognitive style and the mediating role of green product typicality. Our results provide both theoretical implications, as well as practical contributions for green product development.
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The Role of Women, Sexualization and Objectification in LGBTQ Advertising

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In advertising, the sexualization of women is taking place in the LGBTQ target market segment. Whilst LGBTQ advertisements continue to target males using humor as the dominant appeal; for women, the most dominant appeal is sexual. When the main character in the advertisement is portrayed in terms of LGBTQ connotation, a positive and negative connotation is fairly evenly distributed for male characters, however; for female characters, the positive LGBTQ connotation is dominant. If the main character is female, she is more likely to be portrayed as a protagonist.

Marketers and organizations alike, balance a fine line between appealing to both LGBTQ and mainstream clients without ostracizing one or the other, specifically their mainstream clients, as they are a larger portion of the population (Flounders & Mabry-Flynn, 2016). Heterosexuals desire lesbian imagery over gay male imagery, therefore, advertisers targeting the gay market will use lesbian imagery because not only does it reach homosexual consumers, but also reduces the chance of heterosexuals identifying the advertisement as LGBTQ (Hootens et al., 2009). The heterosexual audience has a positive attitude towards lesbian ads, and these results are compounded when the level of intimacy displayed in the advertisements are amplified (Oakenfull & Greenlee, 2005). It is significant to note that lesbians are often depicted as highly sexualized in mainstream media (Flounders & Mabry-Flynn, 2016).

This exploratory research examines the portrayal of women when either the main character and/or voiceover (gender, sexuality, antagonist, protagonist) in LGBTQ TV advertisements. In the first instance, the aim was to determine the dominant appeals (emotional, fear, humor, rational, sexual) and LGBTQ connotations (positive, negative) that are associated with women in advertisements to the LGBTQ community.

The diversity of the LGBTQ community has meant there isn’t one, single ‘LGBTQ’ identity. Oakenfull (2007) found clear distinctions between gay and lesbian consumers and argued that marketers had to use lesbian imagery and not just gay imagery in advertisements to be effective in the two communities. Um (2014) found heterosexual consumers to respond less favorably to gay themed advertising, including a differential in heterosexual males more negatively evaluating gay-themed advertising and the brand advertised than did heterosexual females. Oakenfull & Greenlee (2004) cautioned marketers to consider both the gender of their target gay or lesbian audience and the gender of the heterosexual audience likely to view the advertising when creating their advertisements.

Hypothesis 1: Women are featured less prominently in LGBTQ TV advertising campaigns

Using sex as a method of selling supports the influence of silencing a woman’s appeal by exhibiting women in an objectified manner for male pleasure and utilization. This common portrayal accentuates physical attractiveness, prominent displays of the body, and sexual mannerisms of women. Then, marketers used more explicit messages, though this was imagery that was unique and recognizable to the LGBTQ community, these methods were used to mask the underlying LGBTQ message from the non-LGBTQ population (Peñaloza, 1996).

Hypothesis 2: For female characters in LGBTQ TV advertising campaigns, the most dominant appeal is sexual

The study examined the characteristics of LGBTQ TV advertisements (n = 300) that ranged from the years 1952 to 2016. It examined the portrayal of the main character and voiceover (gender, sexuality, antagonist, protagonist), dominant appeal (emotional, fear, humor, rational, sexual) and LGBTQ connotations (positive, negative).

When comparing the Western world (US, EU, Oceania) and less developed countries (Asia, Africa, South America), LGBTQ advertisements continue to target males (χ² = 4.74, df = 1, p < .05). The broader focus remains on the Western world (135 ads, 46.7% male; 50 ads, 17.3% female), whilst similar in less developed countries (63 ads, 21.8% male; 41 ads, 14.2% female), the gap between genders is much smaller.

If the main character is male, then the voiceover is traditionally male as well (87%), hence it is congruent (χ² = 18.59, df = 1, p < .001). For females, the voiceover gender is more evenly distributed (54.3% male, 45.7% female). However only very few cases occur where advertisements have a female voiceover (33 ads, 19.9%). In terms of how the main character of the advertisement is portrayed with regards to LGBTQ connotation, a positive and negative connotation is fairly evenly distributed for male characters, however, for female characters (36 ads, 62.1%), the positive LGBTQ connotation is dominant (χ² = 12.92, df = 2, p < .01). Lastly, if the main character is female (46 ads, 79.3%), she is more likely to be portrayed as a protagonist (χ² = 6.32, df = 1, p < .05).

The sexualization of women also takes place in the LGBTQ community (χ² = 12.94, df = 4, p < .01). For male characters, the most dominant appeal is humor (80 ads, 36.5%), followed by sexual appeals (56 ads, 25.6%). For female characters, the most dominant appeal is sexual (24 ads, 41.4%), with all other appeals evenly distributed. If the character is male (175 ads, 63.2%), the target audience is more likely to be straight rather than identify as LGBTQ (χ² = 7.57, df = 1, p < .01).

The dominant appeals in LGBTQ advertisements are humor, eroticism, and leisure. Reichert & Ramirez (2000) discovered four predominant traits of sexual advertisements including: physical appearance of models, behavior or movement, intimacy between models, and contextual features. Gill (2009) argues that the proliferation of sexually explicit imagery within both contemporary and LGBTQ advertising indicates that sexualization is neither a homogenous or singular process. Individuals within the LGBTQ community are sexualized in specific ways and in a visual culture, lesbian, bisexual, and queer women are often easily recognizable ‘figures’ in LGBTQ advertising, yet sexualization doesn’t necessarily maneuver outside of class, gender and/or radicalization due to the fact that it remains overwhelmingly ageist and heteronormative (Evans, Riley & Shan- kar, 2010). In this respect, findings from the current research are possibly the first evidence that women are underrepresented in LGBTQ advertising and female characters are often portrayed with a positive
LGBTQ connotation. The perspectives of the sexualization of women in LGBTQ advertising highlights two key areas for consideration (1) the portrayal of women compromising the relationship they have with their own and other women’s bodies, and (2) LGBTQ advertising sensibility, underwrites the discussion around the sexualization of women, including the prospects of empowering female sexuality rather than demonizing it (Randazzo, Farmer & Lamb, 2015).

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**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

A growing stream of research examines how individuals cope with the common experience of reduced personal control (e.g., Chen, Lee, and Yap 2016; Cutright 2012; Cutright and Samper 2014). Compensatory control theory (CCT; Kay and Eibach 2013) proposes that behavior following a loss of control is driven by two basic motivations: bolstering a sense of agency, and affirming structured and predictable relationships in the world. In turn, four strategies serve these two motivations (Landau, Kay, and Whitson 2015). The present research builds on the two strategies for bolstering agency, which are (1) affirming beliefs about personal agency or ability, and (2) affiliating with external entities that can act on the self’s behalf. Specifically, we build on prior work showing that control-deprived consumers evaluate products more favorably when those products have characteristics fitting the motivation to affirm personal agency (i.e., “strategy 1”). For example, products requiring effort are evaluated more favorably because using them is empowering (Cutright and Samper 2014), and utilitarian products are evaluated more favorably because they are associated with problem-solving (Chen et al. 2014).

Extant research has not examined the possibility that products can serve as external sources of control (i.e., “strategy 2”); research in this strategy focuses on cultural sources of control (e.g., religion and governments; Kay and Eibach 2013). However, because “efficacious products” (e.g., performance-enhancers, detergents, and pharmaceuticals) can be seen as external entities that act on a user’s behalf in order to bring about a desired outcome (e.g., successful performance, a clean home, and relief from ailments, respectively), it may be possible for control-deprived consumers to rely on such products as external sources of control.

In line with CCT, we thus propose that consumers experiencing low control seek external aids that can help them achieve their goals and reaffirm their ability to bring about desired outcomes. As efficacious products can help users reach desired outcomes, we hypothesize that low (vs. high) personal control increases perceived product efficacy. Moreover, because this is driven by control-deprived consumers’ motivation to use the product in order to reach a desired outcome, this effect combines “strategy 2” and “strategy 1” (Landau et al. 2015) in the sense that reduced control leads consumers to give more credit to the external source (by perceiving greater efficacy) because this helps consumers accomplish desired outcomes through their own actions. This implies that the effect of personal control on perceived product efficacy should be moderated by the personal relevance of a product for achieving desired outcomes.

We tested these predictions in two studies and find support for our proposed process. Study 1 provides initial evidence through a 2 (personal control: low vs. high) x 2 (self-affirmation: neutral vs. affirmation) between-subjects design in which 98 Mturk respondents participated. As self-affirmation reduces the need to compensate for low personal control (Whitson and Galinsky 2008), we hypothesized that participants feeling low (vs. high) personal control would perceive a product as more effective, but this effect would be attenuated by an opportunity to self-affirm. To test this, participants were led to believe that they would utilize a performance-enhancing treatment (listening to music by Mozart) to assist their performance on a task, and we measured participants’ expectations for the effectiveness of the music at improving performance. As expected, we found a significant 2-way interaction ($p<.05$) such that low (vs. high) personal control increased perceived efficacy in the neutral affirmation condition ($p<.05$) but not the self-affirmation condition ($F<1$).

Study 2 built on these findings by manipulating the personal relevance of the product under consideration, such that half the participants believed the product under consideration would be used for an upcoming task, whereas the other half merely reported efficacy perceptions without expecting to consume the product or perform the task. Thus, 209 undergraduates were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in a 2 (personal control: low vs. high) x 2 (expectation of consumption and performance: absent vs. present) between-subjects design. Participants in the expectations-present condition were led to believe that they would consume an energy drink (“Neuro SONIC”) before completing a performance task, while those in the expectations-absent condition were simply informed that we were interested in their perception of the energy drink. We measured perceptions of product efficacy, as well as participants’ motivation to derive efficacy from the product in order to accomplish desired outcomes. We hypothesized that low (vs. high) personal control would increase perceived efficacy in the expectations-present condition only, and that motivation to derive product efficacy would mediate this effect.

Results confirmed our predictions. We found significant two-way interactions on both efficacy perceptions ($p<.05$) and motivation ($p<.05$), such that participants in the expectations-present condition perceived significantly greater efficacy, and were also significantly more motivated to derive efficacy, under low vs. high personal control ($p<.05$). Mediation analysis (Hayes 2013; Model 8) demonstrated that motivation mediated the effect of personal control on efficacy perceptions (95% CIs for both the two-way interaction and simple effects did not cross zero, and the direct effect of the two-way interaction on efficacy became nonsignificant when accounting for motivation).

Our research contributes to the personal control and product efficacy literatures. First, extant marketing research on products as sources of personal control has studied only evaluations of products, showing that products possessing characteristics associated with regaining agency are evaluated more favorably (Chen et al. 2016; Cutright and Samper 2014). We build on this work by showing that perceptions, not only evaluations, of products are impacted by personal control. Moreover, this effect is due to a combination of the strategies used to regain control: Control-deprived consumers perceive greater product efficacy because they are motivated to utilize external sources of control (“strategy 2”) in order to accomplish personally-relevant desired outcomes (“strategy 1”; Landau et al. 2015). In contrast, previous research has only shown that product evaluations are impacted by personal control due to “strategy 1.” Finally, we also contribute to the product efficacy literature by showing that personal control—a factor relating to consumers, rather than the product—impacts perceptions of product efficacy.

**REFERENCES**


How Process Explanations Impact Assessments of Predictions of Uncertain Events

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

When making predictions, experts can choose how much explanation to provide—either very little or a lot—about the process used to make inferences. While literature on consumer research suggests that providing more information generally improves evaluations (Calder, Insko, and Yandell 1974; Chaiken 1980; Stiff 1986), we show that consumers report preferences for more explanation in choices among predictions, but, in the context of single probability prediction evaluations, we demonstrate that providing process information can lower evaluations. This occurs because explanation sometimes leads to the inference that the prediction-making process is less complicated, and, therefore, the expert’s analysis was not as in-depth, affecting inferences about both the prediction (accuracy) and the expert (trustworthiness). Thus, consumers may believe a prediction to be less accurate and trust the expert less when they offer more explanation.

We draw from the area of inference-making to develop our theory. This research stream suggests that when little information is present (e.g., other than the overall prediction), consumers use prior knowledge to make inferences. Because an expert provided this estimate, they infer that the process of arriving at the overall prediction was complicated. However, when an explanation is presented, consumers can generate new information from this content. Hence, when a brief explanation is presented, it is likely to lack details and look superficial, leading to inferences that the expert did not do an in-depth analysis, which should be less likely to occur with detailed explanations.

In study 1, participants (N=121) from Amazon’s Mechanical Turk participated in this study for monetary compensation. Participants were asked to choose one of two analysts’ predictions to share with others. They were told that the analysts had made predictions about job prospects in various fields, one of which related to finding administrative jobs in the hoteling and tourism (HT) industry. Participants chose between an expert who did not provide any explanation (Analyst A) and one who did (Analyst B). In the brief explanation condition, Analyst B said he looked at two factors, the chances of finding an administrative job and finding a job in the HT industry, and combined them. In the detailed explanation condition, Analyst B described four steps used to arrive at the same two factors and in the fifth step combined them.

Participants overwhelmingly (87%) chose the analyst that provided an explanation, regardless of the level of detail provided by the explanation. Study 2 investigates what happens in a single evaluation context.

In study 2, participants (N=243) from Amazon’s MTurk participated in this study for monetary compensation. The scenario was similar to that of study 1. In the choice conditions, participants chose between experts. In the evaluation conditions, participants evaluated a prediction with either no, a brief, or a detailed explanation.

Participants in the choice conditions then chose an analyst’s prediction they would use, followed by evaluations of their relative trust in the analysts and the accuracy of the predictions. Instead of choosing an analyst, participants in the evaluation conditions completed measures of trust and accuracy. The choice results mirrored those of study 1. In the evaluation conditions, separate ANOVAs with trust and accuracy as dependent variables revealed a significant effect of level of detail on accuracy and a marginal effect on trust. The patterns of the effects were similar. For both accuracy and trust, compared to providing no explanation, providing a brief explanation reduced accuracy and trust, whereas providing a detailed one did not.

Thus, providing a brief explanation resulted in reduced accuracy and trust. Study 3 replicates these effects in a stock price context, demonstrating the effect on two more downstream variables, and examines the mediating role of perceived depth of analysis.

In study 3, participants (N=259) from Amazon’s MTurk participated in this study for monetary compensation. The analyst had predicted the chance that a particular company’s stock price would increase by $10 per share in the next year.

Two of the choice conditions were the same as previous studies. We also added a third choice condition in which Analyst A offered a brief explanation, and Analyst B offered a detailed explanation. In the evaluation conditions, participants evaluated a prediction with either no, a brief, or a detailed explanation.

Participants in the choice conditions then chose an analyst’s prediction they would use. Then they stated which analyst they would be more likely to recommend and responded to the same trust and accuracy measures as in study 2, plus a new depth of analysis item. In the evaluation conditions, except for choosing the analyst, participants rated the same questions, adapted accordingly, and also indicated how likely they would be to purchase the stock.

The results mirrored those of the previous studies—there was a preference for explanation in choice, but brief explanations were punished in evaluations. Depth of analysis mediated the effect of brief explanation on the four evaluation variables.

Across three studies, using job and stock prediction contexts, we demonstrate the role that explanation plays in affecting choices and evaluations. We provide insights into the role of information in information products, with the counterintuitive finding that experts may be better off leaving their predictions unexplained.

REFERENCES

Extreme Marketplace Exclusion in Subsistence Marketplaces: A Study in a Refugee Settlement in Nakivale, Uganda

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Largely excluded from marketing literature are individuals in subsistence marketplaces. This term refers to an approach that begins at the micro-level and is bottom-up, encompassing a range of low-income consumers and entrepreneurs (Viswanathan 2013). Indeed, these marketplaces are often characterized by exclusion. But marketplace exclusion reaches even starker levels in subsistence contexts borne out of violence, flight, and abject conditions for survival, such as in refugee settlements. Understanding such exclusion is especially critical as a refugee’s average length of stay in exile is approximately 20 years (Betts et al. 2014).

We aim to understand how refugees are excluded from the marketplace. These experiences are so drastic as to stretch extant conceptualizations to cover extreme marketplace exclusion. The fundamental contribution of this paper is therefore to delineate extreme marketplace exclusion via refugee contexts. We explain such exclusion by integrating current research and providing empirical support for our conceptualization. Our synthesis of extant literature identifies elements of extreme marketplace exclusion and their interplay. We then describe our methods and present findings about the nature of extreme marketplace exclusion in our research context. We conclude with a discussion covering theoretical and practical implications.

Elements of Extreme Marketplace Exclusion

Literature on exclusion has primarily focused on ‘social’ exclusion (Sen 2000), examining it as a vicious cycle with multiple, reciprocal, cause-and-effect elements which intensify exclusion (Levitas 1996). Marketplace exclusion may have varying degrees, with ‘deep exclusion’ characterizing exclusion across multiple dimensions (Levitas et al. 2007). Similar to deep exclusion, extreme marketplace exclusion involves multiple forces. Unlike deep exclusion, however, we study exclusion in a subsistence marketplace context intensified by violence, psychological stress, economic strain, and social instability. Specific to a refugee context, our research focuses on how elements relate to form extreme marketplace exclusion, locating it vis-a-vis deep exclusion. Importantly, the marketplace does not only involve economic transactions, but melds social, cultural, political and economic realities (Granovetter 1990). Research remains to offer a theoretical model to account for these multiple elements of marketplace exclusion. We now identify and delineate four elements of this type of marketplace exclusion: geographic isolation, social ostracism, abject poverty and loss of marketplace literacy.

Studies in rural subsistence marketplaces (e.g., China: Wang and Tian 2013) in refugee settlements (Rose 2009) show geographic isolation as a key contributor to marketplace exclusion. Many settlements lack sufficient infrastructure, geographically isolated from public facilities including schools, hospitals, and markets (De Montclos and Kagwanj 2000). Even more drastic, refugees’ geographic isolation may stem from legal restrictions enforcing segregation from the local community (Taylor 1996).

Refugees in their host countries often face the most severe form of social ostracism, as they bear the stigma of fleeing their home country, and are perceived as unwanted exploiters of the host country’s resources (Sartorius et al. 2013). Refugees must endure the turmoil of resettlement, separation from family and culture (Schweitzer, Greenslade, and Kagee 2007), and exclusion due to cultural/language barriers (Taylor and Stanovic 2004). Refugees are therefore often unable to understand cultural aspects of marketplaces (Taylor and Stanovic 2014).

Abject poverty, arising from loss of income and assets, and displacement, make markets inaccessible and products unaffordable, severely inhibiting consumption capability (Deaton 1972). Poverty is rampant among refugees who have lost their livelihoods in their home countries (Sartorius et al. 2013). Refugees mostly survive on government or international aid with limited alternative means to their survival. The social and psychological conditions refugees face make it extremely difficult for them to start a new livelihood. This is coupled with the lack of economic opportunities made available to them until their legal status is settled, which can take many years (White 2007).

Loss of marketplace literacy due to relocation makes it difficult to engage in marketplace interactions (Viswanathan et al. 2009). Loss of such literacy can lead to poor consumption decisions, sometimes making individuals vulnerable to deception at the hands of sellers. Whereas in most subsistence contexts, consumers cope with the lack of basic literacy by developing marketplace literacy via interpersonal relations (Viswanathan et al. 2009), refugees face a new, unfamiliar and extremely harsh setting, where social relations are strained (Werker 2007). The loss of marketplace literacy is accentuated for those with low literacy and income, whose functional literacy in the marketplace domain is socially embedded. For those with higher literacy, there is still an effect due to situational loss of marketplace literacy (Viswanathan et al. 2010). The psychological stresses of leaving home countries and resettlement may further impair refugees’ cognition, characteristic of low-income consumers living in scarcity conditions (Shah, Mullainathan, and Shafir 2012). Given the link between marketplace literacy and self-confidence (Viswanathan et al. 2009), we consider emotions and cognitions. Emotions are drastic in refugee contexts, even more so than other subsistence marketplaces and a violent past (and sometimes present) combined with deep fear of the future fixes individuals in the immediate present, accentuating cognitive elements.

Context and Methods

Context. We conducted our study in Nakivale, a refugee settlement in rural Uganda housing over 84,000 refugees managed by the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR). Upon arrival, refugees are given construction materials to build shelter. Residences are allocated based on ethnicity due to potential conflict among refugees of different nations. Between the time of arrival and time spent building, they sleep under a large tent. The UNHCR distributes a limited supply of food each month, but it is gradually reduced after six months with the expectation that refugees find work. Employment is often difficult to obtain, however. Mbarrara, a medium-sized town approximately 45 minutes away from Nakivale by car, offers employment opportunities, but no formal transportation to the town exists. We also note these refugees vary widely in their educational achievements, different from traditional subsistence marketplaces where low literacy and low income often co-occur (Hodes and Goldberg 2002). Images depicting the severe circumstances of the marketplace can be found in the Appendix.

Methods. We employed qualitative techniques including observations, depth interviews, and marketplace-learning interventions. Pertaining to field observations, two immersions took place in person (one in June 2015 and again in July 2016), and virtually from January
to May, 2015 via Skype meetings. The UNHCR and non-profit organiza-
tions on the ground facilitated access. In particular, we worked
with a group of entrepreneurial refugees mentored and developed
into a team by one of our partner organizations. These refugees acted
as both participants and facilitators. We observed settlement facili-
ties, various local marketplaces, the land, and a nearby town. In-
terviews ranged from 30 to over 90 minutes and tape recorded for
coding purposes. The first part of each semi-structured interview was
phenomenological (Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989), and the
second transitioned into a structured discussion of informants’ mar-
terface experiences. Refugee participants and translators received
3,000 shillings for participation, the equivalent to one U.S. dollar.

Findings
We examine four elements of extreme marketplace exclusion: abject
poverty (economic), geographic isolation (physical), social
ostacism (social), and loss of marketplace literacy (cognitive-emotional).
Importantly, extreme marketplace exclusion impacts both
consumption and employment.

Elements of Extreme Marketplace Exclusion
Abject poverty. In terms of economic conditions, refugees face
extreme poverty. Finding food of some quality and clean water is
challenging. Kevin, a middle-aged refugee employed at an UNHCR
facility, states that the “Sometimes [the] water has color, sometimes
it smells, and good water doesn’t have all those elements.” Lacking
even basic necessities leaves refugees with few spending options. A
young man describes his experience of abject poverty and how he
spends in the local marketplace.

David: We have nowhere to borrow from.
Interviewer: Do you buy things in the market?
David: … not much. We get soap and cooking oil.

Our informant explains how he has no accessible credit institu-
tions to borrow funds. Due to his scarce financial resources, he buys
only necessities for the immediate present. Unlike traditional sub-
sistence contexts, any earned/inherited family assets are completely
lost upon migration.

Geographic Isolation. Although refugees can travel to towns
nearby, the lack of resources and mobility barriers are often insur-
mountable. Daniel, a 24-year old man who fled Congo and lived in
the settlement since 2010, explains how this particular element im-
pacts his work as an artist.

Daniel: …as an artist, I want to buy [tools] I [need]…. [but]
there’s no place they sell [the art materials]…. once I sent some-
one to buy [the materials in Kampala]…. [but] he doesn’t know
the quality that I need…. he may just buy what [sellers] tell him.

Due to long distances and high transportation costs, he cannot
even travel to the preferred marketplace in Kampala (260 kilometers
away) to purchase materials either. He also cannot send others to buy
on his behalf since they do not know how to purchase quality materi-
als at reasonable prices.

Social Ostracism. Another element in understanding extreme
marketplace exclusion is social ostracism. Social ostracism is asso-
ciated with extreme marketplace exclusion as consumers, entrepre-
nears, and employees. Individuals who fled their country can endure
a much more extreme form of ostracism than those in traditional
substrance contexts. This element of extreme marketplace exclu-
sion arises from cultural factors, and interestingly, are not confined
to national/ethnic differences. Many respondents explain how sellers
from the home country or of different origin often exclude refugees
via discrimination. One informant illustrates this:

Daniel: … clearly I can speak English and those sellers can
speak English, but when in Mbarara, they know I’m not Ugandan
– and they can change and instead they don’t speak Eng-
lish…. just to make a complication. Here, I used a different lan-
guage, I do not negotiate and sometimes they increase price.

Daniel explains how social ostracism manifests in the market-
place. The exclusion he experiences cannot be neatly categorized into
being indirectly ignored or directly rejected (Lee and Shrum 2012). The
shopkeepers clearly acknowledge him (he is not ignored), and
they do not explicitly refuse his shopping ability (he is not directly
rejected). Instead, shopkeepers acknowledge him in an attempt to co-
erce a ‘penalty price’ for not being Ugandan. Consequently, the sell-
ers exclude the refugees from fully participating in the marketplace.

Loss of Marketplace Literacy. Another element leading to
extreme marketplace exclusion is the loss of marketplace literacy,
defined as encompassing skills, self-confidence, and awareness of
rights and capturing know-why, know-how, and know-what as con-
sumers and entrepreneurs (Viswanathan et al. 2009). We note that
refugees may range in income and literacy levels in their home coun-
try, with the refugee status drastically lowering the former while
maintaining the latter for relatively higher incomes and education
levels. We focus on cognitive and emotional dimensions.

Concrete thinking in the here and now arising from difficulty
with abstractions is likely to be accentuated with geographic iso-
lation, abject poverty, and social ostracism. Similarly, pictographic
thinking and a rudimentary dependence on senses is also particular-
ized in the immediate. Veronica, a 20-year-old woman, illustrates her
present-state orientation explaining, “I don’t have savings…” and
when discussing leisure activities, “Never I have the time to think of
that.” Mary, a 43-year-old woman, explains how difficult it is to fall
asleep. She elaborates, “I don’t get sleep thinking how will I push
the next day and make living for my children.” Cognitively, fathoming
a future is difficult for these women. Emotionally, Veronica describes
how she cannot engage in leisure activities. Ray even explains how
he attempts to actively repress his emotions just to function saying
“Such [bad feelings] you cannot permit. You know we are human
beings, yeah? When something is very bad, you [will] have some
emotions, but maybe [they] can cause you trauma…” The cognitive
predilections of being in the here and now arising from low literacy
and the immediacy of basic needs are further accentuated by severe
emotional trauma.

Interplay between Elements of Extreme Marketplace
Exclusion
The economic, geographic, social and cognitive-emotional
realms of life described all amplify and reinforce extreme market-
place exclusion. In a context of abject poverty, geographic isolation
precludes opportunities outside the settlement, narrowing refugees
to the abject poverty there and extreme marketplace exclusion. So-
ocical ostracism combines with geographic isolation to reinforce such
exclusion. And the individual level cognitive and emotional aspects
associated with marketplace literacy further narrow individuals to
the immediate present, and reinforce the inability to overcome ex-
marketplace exclusion. In a sense, these are the levers of mar-
ketplace exclusion. We offer Figure 1 as a theoretical framework to
illustrate how these elements relate to each other.
Discussion

Our findings offer contributions to the areas of exclusion, marketplace exclusion, and subsistence contexts. First, we study marketplace exclusion in a refugee context where these subsistence consumers face the most severe challenges, demonstrating extreme marketplace exclusion as a novel phenomenon. Second, we describe how this phenomenon operates in this context, delineating its elements informed by prior research. Third, we illustrate how the elements of extreme marketplace exclusion are interlinked and reinforce each other, creating a vicious cycle of exclusion from the marketplace. In doing so, we integrate aspects of exclusion from previous studies in refugee contexts and explain it from the marketplace perspective.

Implications

Theoretically, we study a qualitatively different level of marketplace exclusion and the elements associated with it. Specifically, abject poverty, geographic isolation, social ostracism, and loss of marketplace literacy are elements leading to extreme marketplace exclusion. Even compared with studies of deep exclusion, the severe nature of extreme marketplace exclusion is distinctly unique. Despite potentially having valued skills and education, refugees are often excluded from the marketplace's workforce due to the elements we outline. Our work also highlights how individual cognitive and emotional aspects associated with marketplace literacy accentuate marketplace exclusion. These individual elements combine with elements rooted in the external environment to lead to the complex phenomenon of extreme marketplace exclusion. Future research should focus on extreme marketplace exclusion in a variety of contexts to better understand how the elements of such exclusion manifest in the harshest of human conditions, ranging from areas devastated by natural disasters to war. Moreover, future work should examine the coping strategies consumers employ in such drastic exclusion circumstances. For example, even when faced with extreme exclusion, our participants still navigate their realities to pursue and attain belongingness and acceptance. The specific tactics these consumers leverage to achieve belonging experiences have yet to be closely examined but hold important implications for studying consumers’ agency and resilience.

In term of practical implications, we highlight the importance of providing refugees with capacity-building learning experiences that address skills, self-confidence, and awareness of rights. In this regard, the role of marketplace literacy education is particularly relevant to extreme marketplace exclusion. Rather than focus on access or financial resources, marketplace literacy education is related to capacity-building that begins with a deeper understanding of the marketplace (know-why) as a basis for know-how and know-what. Moreover, such education also addresses issues of self-confidence and identity, critically important in these settings. In conclusion, our study of what we term extreme marketplace exclusion provides a foundation to study consumers and employees in the harshest of subsistence contexts, with important theoretical and practical implications.

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Large Steps Toward Small Donations: Reputational Benefits of Nominal Corporate Generosity
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

One prevalent and increasingly lucrative prosocial practice is for brands to donate some portion of sales or profits to designated charitable causes via “cause marketing” campaigns (e.g., Krishna, 2011; Small & Cryder, 2016). Descriptions of such campaigns often highlight two attributes: the percent-of-profits (or percent-of-revenues) from each purchase that the brand will donate, and the maximum amount of money the brand will donate. For example, a 2014 campaign by Chipotle locations in Minnesota pledged that “50% of [its] proceeds up to $35,000 will benefit Como Park Zoo and Conservatory.”

We examine how these numerical attributes of cause marketing campaigns influence perceptions of brands’ generosity. We anticipate that the percent-of-proceeds donated from each purchase will be a stronger predictor of generosity perceptions than maximum donations. Our rationale builds on research by Hsee and colleagues on attribute evaluability. Hsee and Zhang (2010) proposed that sensitivity to variation in the value of an attribute (i.e., the attribute’s evaluability) is partly a function of knowledge of the attribute’s distribution (e.g., its range or mean). In the cause marketing context, consumers are unlikely to recall typical values of the percent-of-proceeds and maximum donation attributes. Nevertheless, consumers are likely to be more sensitive to variation in the percent-of-proceeds attribute than variation in maximum donations, because the former attribute has a clear upper bound (100%), but the latter attribute does not.

A novel implication of our reasoning is that cause marketing campaigns may allow brands to appear highly generous without actually being highly generous (by donating a high percent of proceeds and a low maximum donation). In what follows, we investigate that implication and more broadly examine whether the percent-of-proceeds attribute is in fact more predictive of generosity perceptions than the maximum donation attribute. We explore whether this effect holds over a range of percentages. To test our evaluability account, we manipulate the number of different cause marketing campaigns participants encounter (and thus the evaluability of the campaigns’ numerical attributes). In addition, we attempt to rule out several alternative accounts (e.g., that the percent-of-proceeds attribute is more influential because it is the first attribute presented or because it is especially memorable).

Experiment 1

Our first experiment aimed to document initial evidence of consumers’ greater sensitivity to the percent-of-proceeds attribute of cause marketing campaigns than to the maximum donation attribute. We also investigated whether this effect is an artifact of the order in which the two attributes are presented. Typically, the percent-of-proceeds attribute appears first (e.g., when companies pledge to donate X% up to $Y). If people are indeed more sensitive to variation in the percent-of-proceeds attribute, it could be because they simply paid greater attention to the first numerical information they encountered. We therefore counterbalanced which attribute appeared first.

Participants and Procedure

We recruited 600 adults (49% female; mean age: 33) via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) to participate in exchange for a small payment. We told participants that we were interested in how consumers form impressions of companies based on limited information. In all conditions, we described a clothing retailer with annual profits of $10 million that had conducted a donation campaign over the past year to help raise money for local charities.

We either described the retailer as donating 1% of its profits from each purchase, up to a maximum amount of $26,000 (Lower%/Higher$ condition) or donating 30% of its profits from each purchase, up to a maximum amount of $25,000 (Higher%/Lower$ condition). Because we noted that the retailer has annual profits of $10 million, it should be clear to participants that the retailer would ultimately donate the maximum amount. We emphasized this fact by noting that the retailer “ultimately donated that maximum amount.” Thus, normatively, the retailer should be viewed as (slightly) more generous when they donate $26,000 than when they donate $25,000.

We also counterbalanced the order in which the campaign attributes were presented. Half of the participants were randomly assigned to view the percent-of-proceeds attribute first (e.g., in the Lower%/Higher$ condition, the retailer pledged to “donate 1% of its profits from each purchase, up to a maximum amount of $26,000”). The other half of participants were randomly assigned to view the maximum donation attribute first (e.g., in the Lower%/Higher$ condition, the retailer “pledged to donate up to a maximum amount of $26,000, based on 1% of its profits from each purchase”).

We then asked participants to indicate on 0-10 scales (where 0 = not at all and 10 = very) the extent to which they felt the retailer to be generous. Next, we asked participants two open-ended recall questions: “What percentage of profits from each purchase did the company donate?” and “What was the total amount of money the company ultimately donated?” Finally, participants provided demographic information.

Results and Discussion

We first conducted a factorial ANOVA treating generosity ratings as the dependent variable and numerical campaign attributes (Lower%/Higher$ vs. Higher%/Lower$) and attribute presentation order as independent variables. We found a significant main effect of numerical campaign attributes (F(1,596) = 12.30, p < .001). As predicted, perceived generosity was significantly greater when the company donated a higher percentage of profits and lower maximum amount than when the company donated a lower percentage of profits and higher maximum amount (M = 6.69, SD = 2.57 vs. M = 5.93, SD = 2.73; t(598) = 3.49, p < .001, d = .29). We observed this difference despite the fact that participants were assured that the retailers would ultimately donate their maximum amount. Normatively, we would expect the Lower%/Higher$ campaign to be viewed at least as generous as the Higher%/Lower$ campaign, if not slightly more generous.

There was no main effect of attribute presentation order (F(1,596) = .12, p = .73), and no interaction between numerical campaign attributes and attribute presentation order (F(1,596) = 1.65, p = .20). This suggests that greater sensitivity to the percent-of-proceeds attribute is not an artifact of attribute presentation order.

We also examined whether the percent-of-proceeds attribute was more memorable than the maximum donation attribute. Participants were not significantly more likely to correctly recall the percent-of-proceeds donated from each purchase than the maximum
donation amount (90% vs. 87%; \( p = .10 \), Fisher’s Exact Test). If we focus only on the 486 participants who correctly recalled both attributes, perceived generosity was still greater when the retailer donated a higher percentage of profits and lower maximum amount than when the retailer donated a lower percentage of profits and higher maximum amount (\( M = 6.76, SD = 2.57 \) vs. \( M = 6.04, SD = 2.71 \); \( t(484) = 3.05, p < .01, d = .27 \)).

Experiment 1 provides initial evidence that, when presented with a description of a cause marketing campaign, consumers’ perceptions of the brand’s generosity are more sensitive to the percent-of-proceeds to be donated than to the maximum donation amount. As a result, in this experiment, the brand was viewed as significantly less generous when it was objectively more generous. We found that this was not driven by the order in which the two key attributes were described or differences in the memorability of the two attributes.

**Experiment 2**

Our explanation for the greater perceived generosity of the Higher%/Lower$ brand is that the percent-of-proceeds attribute is easier to evaluate and thus more influential. However, it is possible that the effect may have been driven by reactions to the 1% figure in particular, rather the greater evaluability of (all) percentages. That is, the 1% of profits donated in the Lower%/Higher$ condition may have appeared to be an insultingly trivial gesture. Experiment 2 therefore examined whether generosity perceptions are more sensitive to the percent-of-proceeds attribute even when that percentage is not trivially low.

**Participants and Procedure**

We recruited 600 adults (52% female; mean age: 34) via MTurk to participate in exchange for a small payment. People who had already participated in Experiment 1 were not eligible to participate in this experiment. As in Experiment 1, we told participants that we were interested in how consumers form impressions of companies based on limited information. In all conditions, we described a clothing retailer with annual profits of $10 million that plans to conduct a donation campaign during the current fiscal year to help raise money for local charities.

We randomly assigned participants to one of four conditions. Half of participants were randomly assigned to either a Lower%/Higher$ condition (retailer donates 1% of profits from each purchase, up to a maximum amount of $26,000) or a Higher%/Lower$ condition (retailer donates 25% of profits from each purchase, up to a maximum amount of $25,000). We increased these percentages by 20% for the other half of participants. That is, the other half of participants were randomly assigned to a Lower%/+20 condition (retailer donates 21% of profits from each purchase, up to a maximum amount of $26,000) or a Higher%/+20 condition (retailer donates 45% of profits from each purchase, up to a maximum amount of $25,000).

Next, we asked participants to rate the extent to which they viewed the retailer as generous on a 0-10 scale, where 0 = not at all generous and 10 = very generous. We also asked participants to recall the percent-of-proceeds and maximum donation values from the campaign they had read about (open-ended questions). As in Experiment 1, participants were not significantly more likely to correctly recall the percent-of-proceeds value than the maximum donation value (90% vs. 87%; \( p = .11 \), Fisher’s Exact Test). Finally, participants provided demographic information.

**Results and Discussion**

Consistent with Experiment 1, generosity ratings were significantly greater in the Higher%/Lower$ condition than in Lower%/Higher$ condition (\( M = 6.53, SD = 2.65 \) vs. \( M = 5.13, SD = 2.57 \); \( t(302) = 4.66, p < .001, d = .54 \)). Generosity ratings were also significantly greater in the Higher%/+20 condition than in the Lower%/+20 condition (\( M = 6.72, SD = 2.70 \) vs. \( M = 5.97, SD = 2.70 \); \( t(294) = 2.37, p = .019, d = .28 \)).

These patterns suggest our results were not merely driven by aversive reactions to a somewhat trivial donation of 1% of profits. Instead, these results suggest that generosity perceptions are generally more sensitive to the percent-of-proceeds attribute, even when that percentage is not trivially low.

**Experiment 3**

One implication of our conceptual framework is that providing information about other cause marketing campaigns should increase the evaluability of both the percent-of-proceeds attribute and the maximum donation attribute; it should especially increase the evaluability of the maximum donation attribute (cf. Hsee, 1996). When maximum donations become more evaluable, the objectively less generous campaign should no longer be viewed as more generous.

**Participants and Procedure**

We recruited 297 adults (49% female, mean age: 33) via MTurk to participate in exchange for a small payment. People who had already participated in prior experiments were not eligible to participate in this experiment. As in previous experiments, we told participants that we were interested in how consumers form impressions of companies based on limited information. In all conditions, we described a clothing retailer with annual profits of $10 million that plans to conduct a donation campaign during the current fiscal year to help raise money for local charities.

We randomly assigned participants to one of three conditions. In two separate evaluation conditions, participants either learned of a cause marketing campaign that donates 1% of its profits from each purchase, up to a maximum amount of $40,000 (SE:Lower%/Higher$) or donates 20% of its profits from each purchase, up to a maximum amount of $10,000 (SE:Higher%/Lower$). In a third joint evaluation condition (JE), participants viewed both campaigns. The two campaigns were presented as the efforts of two different clothing retailers.

In all three conditions, participants read that all donations would be made at the end of the fiscal year. We included this information to rule out the potential interpretation that the Higher%/Lower$ campaign could reach its target amount faster and donate faster than the Lower%/Higher$ campaign. In other words, we did not want the assumed speed of donation to be confounded with the numerical attributes of the campaign.

We then asked participants to indicate the extent to which they found the company to be generous on a 0-10 scale, where 0 = not at all generous and 10 = very generous. Next, we asked participants to recall the percent-of-proceeds and maximum donation values from the donation campaign(s) they had read about (open-ended questions). As before, the percent-of-proceeds and maximum donation attributes were about equally likely to be recalled accurately, in both the separate evaluation and joint evaluation conditions (\( ps > .45 \)).

**Results and Discussion**

Figure 1 displays perceived generosity by condition. Consistent with previous experiments, in the separate evaluation conditions, perceived generosity was significantly greater in the SE:Higher%/Lower$ condition than in the SE:Lower%/Higher$ condition (\( M = 5.99, SD = 2.82 \) vs. \( M = 5.21, SD = 2.59 \); \( t(197) = 2.03, p = .044, d = .29 \)). However, in the joint evaluation condition, where participants could see both campaigns, the numerical attributes of the cam-
campaign did not significantly influence perceived generosity (Higher%/Lower$ M = 6.17, SD = 2.38 vs. M = 6.44, SD = 2.52, t(97) = 1.02, p = .31). Using the analysis outlined in Hsee (1996, footnote 2), we found that this was a significant Separate Evaluation/Joint Evaluation interaction (t(296) = 2.29, p = .023). Thus, as predicted, we found the percent-of-proceeds attribute was more influential only when a single cause marketing campaign was evaluated in isolation (which is likely how consumers encounter cause marketing campaigns in the real world – i.e., one at a time). The percent-of-proceeds attribute is less influential when consumers have some comparison information that makes the maximum donation attribute more evaluable.

**General Discussion**

A recent report by Engage for Good (a popular cause marketing forum; Chansky, 2015) expressed concern that, in cause marketing campaigns, a “generous-sounding percentage” of proceeds can be “misleading” (cf. Olsen, Pracejus, & Brown, 2003) and “naturally, what matters, is the actual amount donated.” Our work suggests that this concern is well-placed. In three experiments, we found that brands were viewed as significantly more generous when donating a higher percent-of-proceeds and a lower maximum amount than when donating a lower percent-of-proceeds and a higher maximum amount. This occurred despite descriptions that made it clear that the brand would always make its maximum donation. The effect is not driven by the greater memorability of percentages (Experiment 1) and is not limited to cases in which the percent donated is obviously low (Experiment 2). The presence of comparative context especially helps people evaluate the maximum donation attribute and reduces the undue influence of the percent-of-proceeds attribute (Experiment 3).

Several open questions remain. The extent to which brands and retailers intentionally capitalize on the effect documented here is unclear. Some companies have likely benefitted from the effect documented here, whether intentionally or not (e.g., Chipotle’s offer to donate 50% of sales, up to $35,000). In addition, in many cause marketing campaigns, there will be some uncertainty about whether the brand will reach its maximum donation amount. It would be interesting to examine how consumers form expectations about how close brands will get to their maximum. Questions like these seem worthy of future research.

**REFERENCES**


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Health has become a global challenge, with health problems increasing across the world. Worldwide obesity rate, for example, has doubled (NCD-RisC 2016). Flu viruses have become stronger over the years (Savage 2008). Many health problems can be avoided through simple preventive actions. Exercising, for example, could help prevent obesity. Thus, policy makers are focused on understanding how preventive behaviors could be encouraged. A significant part of this focus is on making preventive health messages more effective (Gerend & Shepherd, 2007). Preventive messages commonly inform the readers of different health risks associated with a health condition. An anti-obesity message, for example, might inform readers of obesity-related health risks, such as high blood pressure and diabetes. Current research explores whether the number of health risks a preventive message communicates could affect preventive decision making. To illustrate, an anti-obesity message could communicate both high blood pressure and diabetes as obesity-related risks or it could communicate one of these two equally threatening and likely health risks. Which of these two strategies would be more effective in encouraging preventive behavior adoption?

Normatively speaking, a reader should find the health condition more dangerous and thus be more likely to adopt the target preventive action when the message communicates multiple equally threatening and likely health risks (e.g., high blood pressure and diabetes), compared with when it communicates only one of the two risks. Consistently, to encourage adoption of preventive behaviors, policy makers and health experts typically communicate all major risks associated with the health condition.

In contrast to the normative view, we propose that presenting multiple equally threatening health risks is a less effective strategy than presenting only one of these risks—a proposition drawn upon research on imagery. Research in this domain suggests that one’s capacity to simulate mental images is limited (Baddeley & Andrade, 2000). Drawing upon this research on imagery, current research is the first to argue that due to mental imagery capacity limitations, health risks should be less vividly imagined when one has to mentally simulate multiple health risks simultaneously, compared with when one has to simulate only one health risk.

Vivid imagery has been shown to be an important determinant of people’s behaviors, such that a message that evokes more vivid mental images is likely to be more effective in persuading behaviors (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). Drawing upon a synthesis of these findings, we propose that a health message communicating multiple equally threatening health risks would lead to less vivid imagery and, therefore, be less effective in encouraging adoption of preventive behaviors, compared with a message that communicates only one of the two health risks.

Research suggests that when people use affective processing, vivid imagery is an important determinant of their behaviors (Keller & McGill, 1994). However, when people use a deliberative mode of processing, they tend to rely on logical, calculation-based reactions (Hsee & Rottenstreich, 2004). Therefore, we further propose that when a deliberative mindset is induced, people should be more sensitive to the number of health risks. Thus, when people are in a deliberative mindset, communicating multiple health risks in the message should be a more effective in encouraging adoption of preventive behaviors than presenting only one of these risks.

Four experiments, including two field experiments, examined these hypotheses. To provide a strong test of our hypotheses, we compare effectiveness of a message communicating two equally threatening risks with that of a message communicating only one of these two risks. Studies were conducted in Turkey and all health messages were communicated in Turkish. There were no exclusions unless otherwise reported.

Experiment 1

Experiment 1, conducted at a health center, examined the primary hypothesis in the context of obesity—people exposed to two obesity-related risks are less likely to engage in the target preventive action (exercise) and less likely to join an obesity prevention program as opposed to those exposed to only one of the two risks.

During regular check-ups, as is required, the general physician handed over pamphlets describing obesity-related risks to incoming patients (N = 240) with a BMI of 25 or over. These pamphlets included affect-laden pictures of a family on the front page and a description of obesity risk(s) on the second page. One version of the pamphlet communicated two risks of obesity—high blood pressure and Type 2 diabetes—pretested to be equally threatening and likely (see figure-1 for the sample message). The visual position of the two risks was counterbalanced across participants in all experiments. The other version communicated one of these two risks—high blood pressure or diabetes. The message encouraged patients to walk regularly to prevent obesity, an advice typically given by the physician. Patients were also asked by the physician to join the obesity prevention program run by the health ministry at the center.

One week after each patient’s visit, a nurse contacted the patient and measured the frequency as well as the duration of the patient’s walks during the week. This nurse also recorded whether the patient had joined the obesity clinic—this information was checked against the clinic records.

Results and Discussion

We used a two-part model to examine the impact of the number of risks on walking duration. The two-part model analysis revealed that those in the two-risk condition were less likely to walk (30.83%) than those in the one-risk condition (47.5%; z = -2.63, p = .009, B = -0.707, CI [-1.23, -.180]). Amongst those who walked, those in the two-risks condition (M = 33.15 minutes; SD: 17.13) walked less than those in the one-risk condition (M = 44.49 minutes; SD: 27.55; z = -2.24; p = .025; CI [-21.275, -1.396]; d = .49).

Finally, a binary logistic regression revealed that patients were less likely to join the obesity program when informed of two risks (33.3%) compared with when exposed to one risk (10.83%; Wald χ² = 4.599; p = .032; B = -1.259, Odds Ratio = .284; CI [.090, .897]).

This study provides support for our primary hypothesis: Communicating multiple health risks in a preventive message reduced the likelihood of engaging in preventive behaviors than presenting only one of the multiple risks.

Experiment 2

Experiment 2, conducted at a pharmaceutical store, sought to replicate the effect found in previous study in the context of flu.

Customers (N = 432) at the store were informed of flu-related risks using posters, which were posted at the entrance and at the check-out counter. These posters communicated either two equal-
ly threatening and likely flu-related risks—muscle aches and sore throat, or only one of these two risks—and encouraged customers to keep their hands clean to prevent flu. Additionally, the posters referred to Flu as Grip-Nezle, an affective term used by lay people to refer to flu in Turkey. In order to examine whether presenting two risks would be as good as sharing a generic health message, in a third condition, a neutral poster communicating a generic health message was posted. Hand-sanitizing wipes packets were available for sale at the check-out counter; sale of wipes was our main dependent variable.

Results and Discussion

We ran a logistic regression with two contrasts. The first contrast showed that there was no difference in the likelihood to purchase hand-sanitizing wipes between those exposed to two-risks (6.16%) and those exposed to neutral health message (5.59%; p=.837). The second contrast showed that in line with the findings of the previous study, those exposed to a single risk were more likely to buy the hand-sanitizing wipes (13.29%) than those exposed to two risks or neutral message (5.88%; Wald χ² = 6.541; p=.011; B=908; Odds Ratio=2.478; CI[1.236, 4.968]). Findings of Experiment 2 replicated the effect found in the previous study in the context of flu.

Given the previous experiments employed affective pictures or affective terms, we assume that participants relied on their affective reactions while making the decision. However, the previous experiments do not explicitly test this assumption. The next two experiments take care of this limitation.

Experiment 3

Experiment 3 examines the moderating role of affective versus deliberative processing. We argue that when cued to rely on affective reactions, we should replicate the effect found in previous studies. When cued to rely on more deliberative reactions, the effect should be reversed such that participants should be more likely to engage in the preventive action when exposed to multiple risks as opposed to only one risk.

Participants (N=273) first engaged in a task, which cued them to focus on either their affective or deliberative reactions. Drawing upon past research (Hsee & Rottenstreich, 2004), those in the affective-cue condition responded to questions that required them to examine and report their feelings toward different affect-laden words. Participants in the deliberative-cue condition solved simple math problems. Subsequently, participants viewed one of the two versions of an anti-obesity message encouraging them to eat health. As in Experiments 1 and 3, one version communicated two risks of obesity—high blood pressure and diabetes. The other versions communicated only one of these two risks—high blood pressure or diabetes. Participants then chose a free snack between an apple and a brownie.

A logistic regression revealed a significant type of cue by number of risks interaction (z=-4.413; p<.0001; CI[1.3490, 3.5043]). In the affective-cue condition, participants were less likely to choose an apple when informed of two risks (28.89%), compared with when informed of one of the two risks (60%; z=-3.3236; p=.0009; B=-1.3063; CI[-2.0766, -5.5359]; Odds Ratio=2.708). In contrast, in the deliberative-cue condition, participants were more likely to choose an apple when informed of two risks (68.89%), compared with when informed of only one risk (41.93%; z=2.9137; p=.0036; B=1.1204; CI[1.3667, 1.874]; Odds Ratio=3.066).

Providing support for the underlying conceptualization, the current study shows that increasing the number of health risks communicated in the message can negatively (positively) impact the likelihood of adopting the target preventive action when one is cued to rely on affective (deliberative) reactions.

Experiment 4

In the last experiment, we further examined our underlying conceptualization by examining the mediating role of vivid imagery. We predicted that when relying on affective reactions, preventive message should evoke less vivid images when it communicates two health risks as opposed to one of the two health risks. However, when participants are cued to focus on their deliberative reactions, number of health risks should not impact vivid imagery. Moreover, we expected vivid imagery to mediate the impact of number of health risks on preventive action in the affective-cue condition, but not in the deliberative-cue condition.

To examine the aforementioned hypotheses, during flu season, participants (N=146) were exposed to a preventive message encouraging them to keep their hands clean to prevent flu. This message communicated either two equally threatening and likely flu-related risks—muscle aches and sore throat, or only one of these two risks.

Drawing upon research (Sinaeur, Heath & Cole, 2005), which shows that using an affective (vs. scientific) frame to refer to a disease can induce affective (vs. deliberative) processing mode, we varied the frame (affective versus scientific) used to refer to flu. One set of messages used in the current study referred to flu as Grip-Nezle, an affective term used for flu by laypeople in Turkey (affective frame). Another set of messages (scientific-frame) referred to flu as A Tipi Enflüanza (Influenza-Type A), a term used by doctors in Turkey. These terms were chosen based on a pretest.

After evaluating the message, participants chose a gift between two items—a pen and a hand-sanitizing wipes pack, which served as the dependent measure. Participants then responded to a final survey, which asked them to evaluate the viewed message on six nine-point scale items (Keller & Block 1997) measuring how vividly they could imagine the message. Four participants did not take this survey, leaving us with a sample of 142 participants for these measures.

Results and Discussion

A logistic regression revealed a significant interaction between the frame-type and number of risks (z=3.9615; p=.0001; CI[1.4346, 4.2442]). In the affective-frame condition, fewer participants chose hand-sanitizing wipes when informed of two risks (36.11%) compared with when informed of one of the two risks (75.75%; z=-3.2008; p=.0014; B=-1.71; CI[-2.757, -0.663]; Odds Ratio=1.808). In the scientific-frame condition, participants were more likely to choose hand-sanitizing wipes when two flu-related risks were communicated (58%) than when one risk was communicated (30%; z=2.363; p=.018; B=1.129; CI[1.93, 2.066] Exp(B)=3.092).

An ANOVA conducted on the vivid imagery measure revealed a significant interaction between number of risks and frame-type factors (F(1,138)=29.63, p<.001). In the affective-frame condition, images elicited by the message were less vivid when the message communicated two risks (M=3.143; SD=1.379) than when it communicated one risk (M=4.887; SD=1.163; F(1,138)=35.15, p<.001; CI[-2.326, -1.163]; d=1.36). No such corresponding difference was found in the scientific-frame condition (F(1,138)=2.62, p=.1; CI[-0.989, 984]). We further conducted a moderated mediation using PROCESS model 7 (Hayes, 2013), which revealed that vivid imagery mediated the impact of number of risks on likelihood to choose hand-sanitizing wet wipes in the affective-frame condition (B=1.3034, CI=[2.1902, -.6375]) but not in the scientific-frame condition (B=0.3310, CI=[-0.0398, 0.8615]).

This experiment provides further support for our conceptualization related to vivid imagery. In the affective frame condition, presenting two health risks elicited weaker images of the message, which mediated the impact of the number of risks on the likelihood of adopting preventive behavior. However, there was no such cor-
responding difference in vivid imagery in the scientific frame condition.

**General Discussion**

Current research is the first to reveal that people’s likelihood of adopting a preventive action non-normatively decreases when the health message communicates two health risks associated with the condition as opposed to one of the risks. Our findings further show that when nudged to rely on deliberative reactions, people focus on the number of health risks, thus increasing the likelihood to adopt a preventive action when the message communicates multiple risks as opposed to only one risk.

These findings make important theoretical contributions—First, our findings contribute to the affective decision making research. This is the first research to show that in the context of negative outcomes, people are less likely to adopt a preventive action when it can potentially prevent multiple equally threatening health risks as opposed to a single health risk. Second, our findings contribute to research on vivid imagery. Our findings show that increasing the number of negative outcomes communicated in a message can reduce the vividness with which one can imagine the risks, but only when relying on affective reactions, not when one is cued to rely on deliberative reactions.

We believe our findings have important policy making implications. Public health campaigns often tend to communicate all primary risks associated with a health condition. Given a significant amount of decision making is driven by people’s intuitive, affective reactions (Larrick 1993), current research findings suggest that communicating multiple risks is a strategy which can unintentionally reduce the likelihood of adopting preventive behaviors. Our findings further suggest that for experts, who tend to rely on deliberative cues, presenting multiple health risks is likely to be a more effective strategy than presenting a single health risk. In essence, our findings present insights into how health communication could be made more effective depending on the audience.

**REFERENCES**


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Prevention is better than cure—this adage has shaped the US healthcare spending, with about 75% of healthcare expenditure spent on preventive care (Begley 2013). Many health problems can be avoided through simple preventive actions. Policy makers are, therefore, keen on understanding how preventive health messages can be made more persuasive (Gerend and Shepherd 2007). To make messages more persuasive, preventive health messages often incorporate numerical cues, such as the probability with which a preventive action can reduce a health risk (Reyna et al. 2009). The current research makes a novel prediction that incorporating numerical cues that appear round (e.g., 15.00%) versus precise (e.g., 15.23%) can increase people’s likelihood of adopting preventive behaviors.

Research shows that round numbers are more easily processed than precise numbers, in part because people are more frequently exposed to round numbers in everyday language (Kettle and Häubl 2009; Wadhwa and Zhang 2015). Moreover, research on affective decision-making suggests that exposure to fluent stimuli is likely to engage the default affective system, leading people to rely on their intuitive, affective reactions while making decisions (Alter et al. 2007). Drawing upon this logic, we propose that exposure to round numbers should lead people to rely on their more intuitive, affective reactions, compared with exposure to precise numbers.

Following from the idea that stronger affective reactions can motivate preventive health behaviors (Loewenstein et al. 2001; Sinaceur, Heath, and Cole 2005), we further hypothesize that when numerical cues in preventive messages are presented in a round (e.g., 15.00%) versus a precise (e.g., 15.23%) format, people are more likely to adopt preventive behaviors. We examine this hypothesis across five studies.

Study 1A

Study 1A examines our primary hypothesis—round numerical cues should increase preventive behavioral intention, compared to precise numerical cues.

This study was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, 200 US participants were presented with a health message featuring an obese person. The only difference between conditions being the probability numbers (see below):

30.00% (vs. 31.57%) of the US population suffer from obesity today.
15.00% (vs. 15.29%) of deaths in the US were caused by obesity.

Eat Healthy!

Twenty-four hours after being exposed to the message, participants were emailed the second survey. 156 participants (48.1% women, M_women=31.7) completed the second survey. In this second survey, participants first reported the number of unhealthy, as well as healthy food items they had consumed in the past 24 hours. Participants then listed all the items with approximate portion size they had consumed in the last 24 hours. Our main dependent variable was the amount of unhealthy eating participants had engaged in 24 hours, subsequent to the preventive health message exposure.

Results and Discussion

We measured the amount of unhealthy eating in the following two ways. First, a linear regression analysis conducted on the number of unhealthy food items participants reportedly ate revealed that those exposed to round numbers consumed significantly less unhealthy food items (M=1.90) than those exposed to precise numbers (M=2.65; (154)=-2.91, p=.004). While, these participants also reported consuming a slightly higher number of healthy food items (M=4.65), than those in the precise number condition (M=4.08), this difference was not significant (t(154)=1.30, p=.20).

Second, to further examine if round versus precise numbers impacted unhealthy eating behaviors, we recruited 202 independent coders from the same population to rate the food items. Each coder was assigned to rate the food items listed by 15 to 16 participants on an 8-point scale (1=very unhealthy, 8=very healthy). We computed an unhealthy eating score (reverse-coded) by averaging the ratings of all the food items each participant had consumed. ANOVA conducted on this score revealed that those exposed to round numbers had a lower unhealthy eating score (M=3.97) than those exposed to precise numbers (M=4.28; (154)=-2.29, p=.02). Study 1A shows that presenting obesity-related risks using round versus precise numbers in a health message reduced participants’ unhealthy food consumption.

Study 1B

This study, conducted in two stages, sought to conceptually replicate study 1A in the context of water consumption. In the first stage, 260 US participants were presented with a health message featuring a man and a woman suffering from flu. The only difference between conditions being the probability numbers:

20.00% (vs. 20.37%) of the US population suffered from flu last year.

The number of people being hospitalized due to flu complication has increased by 40.00% (vs. 40.21%).

Drinking water frequently can reduce the risk of getting flu.

Drink More Water!

Twenty-four hours later, participants were emailed the second survey. Out of the 260 participants recruited in the first stage, 184 (45.1% women, M_women=33.9) completed the second survey. In this second survey, participants reported the number of glasses of water and the number of times they had consumed water in the last 24 hours on a 21-point scale (ranging from 1 to 20+; 20+ was coded as 21). Finally, participants indicated how many glasses of water and how many times they generally consume water in one day (excluding the last 24 hours) using the same 21-point scale items (ranging from 1 to 20+). Our main dependent variable was the change in water consumption from the regular water consumption, in 24-hours subsequent to message exposure.

Results and Discussion

We first computed the change in the number of glasses of water participants drank by subtracting the number of glasses of water they
usually consumed from the number of glasses they drank subsequent to being exposed to the preventive message. A linear regression revealed that those exposed to round numbers showed a significant
increase in the number of glasses of water they drank (M=0.55), compared with those exposed to precise numbers (M=-0.01; t(182)=2.23, p=0.03). Further, one-sample t-tests confirmed that the increase (0.55) in number of glasses of water consumed in the round number condition was significantly different from zero (p=0.002), whereas the change (-0.01) in the precise number condition was not (p=0.95).

Similarly, a linear regression revealed that participants in the round number condition showed a significant increase in the number of times they drank water (M=0.68) than those in the precise number condition (M = -0.29; t(182)=2.73, p=0.007). One-sample t-test confirmed that the increase (0.68) of number of times water was consumed in the round number condition was significantly different from zero (p=0.007), whereas the change (-0.29) in the precise number condition was not (p=0.26). Study 1B provides further support for the round number hypothesis in the context of flu.

Study 2

We measured actual behavior in the current study. Participants were exposed to a dental hygiene message, which encouraged them to floss to avoid gum diseases. We measured the time participants spent on flossing. 202 participants recruited from a major university in Singapore (62.4% women, M age =21.3) were randomly assigned to either the round or the precise number condition. Participants were shown a message related to gum diseases. This message, which incorporated a gender-neutral picture of an individual suffering from bleeding gum, indicated gum disease related risk estimates as either precise or round numbers:

60.00% (vs. 60.41%) of people in Singapore suffer from gum diseases leading to swollen and painful gums.

Gum diseases could increase the risk of losing teeth by 40.00% (vs. 40.37%).

Flossing Helps Prevent Gum Diseases.

Subsequently, participants were given an opportunity to floss their teeth. Participants were asked to pick up envelopes carrying individual floss sticks, a paper glass and napkins. Unbeknownst to the participants, we recorded the time participants took for flossing. Two participants reported not being able to floss due to their braces. Another ten participants did not pick up the flossing materials and missed this part of the task. Data from these 12 participants could not be used, leaving us with a total sample of 190 participants.

Results and Discussion

Due to the large variation in the flossing time measure, we first examined the data for outliers. Based on the three SD above or below the mean criterion (McClelland 2000), we identified and removed an outlier (>3.5 SD above the mean) prior to further analyses. A linear regression revealed that participants spent longer time flossing their teeth after reading the gum disease message with round numbers (M=58.38 seconds), compared with those who read the gum disease message with precise numbers (M=46.58 seconds; t(187)=2.02, p=0.045). This study replicated the round number effect using actual behavioral measures.

Study 3

The degree to which affective reactions can drive behaviors depends on whether people trust their feelings would direct them in the right direction (Lee, Amir, and Ariely 2009). Affective reactions are more likely to drive behaviors when people believe trusting their affective reactions would help them make the right decision. In this study, therefore, we explicitly manipulated participants’ situational trust in their feelings. We predicted that when participants’ trust in feelings is high, exposure to round numbers in a preventive message should increase the likelihood to engage in preventive behaviors. In contrast, when participants’ trust in feelings is low, impact of round numbers on preventive behavioral intentions should get attenuated. The study followed a 2 (number: round vs. precise) × 2 (trust in feelings: high vs. low) between-subjects design. 345 US participants (47.0% women, M age =34.8) completed the study. One participant reported being below age 18 and thus data from this participant was removed prior to any analyses. Another participant who took approximately 24 hours to complete the experiment was removed from further analyses. A post-hoc check revealed that including these two participants’ data do not change our results.

Participants were informed that the first part of the experiment sought to understand how people use feelings when making a decision. In this task, participants were asked to recall and describe either a situation in which they followed their feelings and it was the right thing to do (low-trust in feelings) or a situation in which they followed their feelings and it was the wrong thing to do (low-trust in feelings; adapted from Lee et al. 2009). Fifty-seven participants did not indicate any experience, and thus data from these participants could not be used for analyses. Additionally, five other participants responded to the question in non-English languages and thus were removed prior to any analyses. Removing these participants left us with a total sample of 286 participants.

Subsequently, in a purportedly unrelated study, participants read the following scenario (adapted from Sinaeur et al. 2005) with the only difference across conditions being the probability number:

You have just finished eating your dinner. While watching the evening news on TV, you find out that eating chicken may expose you to the human variant of Bird Flu. According to the recent report, one type of vaccination was recently launched in the US, which can reduce the chance of getting this disease by 60.00% (vs. 60.41%).

Participants were asked to indicate their intention to take the vaccination on a nine-point scale (1=very unlikely, 9=very likely).

Results and Discussion

An ANOVA revealed a significant two-way interaction between the number exposure and the trust in feelings (F(1, 282)=5.44, p=0.02; see Figure 1) factors. Follow up analyses reveal that in the high-trust in feelings condition, participants indicated a higher intention to take the vaccination when the numerical cues presented in the message were round (M=5.56), than when those cues were precise (M=4.68; t(282)=2.15, p=0.03). However, in the low-trust in feelings condition, this effect of number on the intention to take the vaccination was eliminated (M round =4.90 vs. M precise =5.38; t(282)= -1.33, p=.25).

Study 4

This study examines the reliance on affective reactions conceptualization in two ways: 1) We argue that if round versus precise numbers lead people to focus on their affective reactions, then incidental exposure to round versus precise numbers in an unrelated task could also subsequently increase people’s affective behavioral intention and 2) we examine the role of reliance on affective reactions in moderating this effect.

In this study, 483 US participants (60.2% women, M age =35.3) were randomly assigned to one of the two number conditions. Participants engaged in eight consecutive trials of a number sorting task, which asked them to sort four different images of numbers in an as-
cending order of the physical size of the images. Participants sorted either round number images (e.g., 10.00, 60.00) or precise number images (e.g., 10.32, 63.74). The time participants spent on the task did not differ between conditions ($F<1$, $p=.38$). A pretest with 42 participants indicated that the image sorting task was perceived to be equally difficult ($M_{\text{round}}=2.17$ vs. $M_{\text{precise}}=1.85$, $F<1$, $p=.37$) and effortful ($M_{\text{round}}=4.32$ vs. $M_{\text{precise}}=4.43$, $F<1$, $p=.84$) between the two conditions.

Subsequently, participants read a purportedly unrelated preventive message featuring a picture of an obese person, accompanied by the following message: “Increasing numbers of the US adults suffer from obesity today. Eat Healthy!”

Participants then indicated their likelihood of avoiding eating anything unhealthy for dinner that day (1=very unlikely, 9=very likely). We then measured negative affective reactions by asking participants two questions: “How worried do you feel about becoming overweight or obese?” (1=not at all worried, 9=very worried) and “How concerned do you feel about becoming overweight or obese?” (1=not at all concerned, 9=very concerned; $\alpha=.96$).

**Results and Discussion**

First, a linear regression analysis revealed that participants were more likely to avoid eating unhealthy after being exposed to round ($M=5.89$) versus precise ($M=5.43$; $t(481)=2.24$, $p=.026$) numbers.

Next, we examined if number condition impacted the degree to which affective reactions predicted intention to avoid unhealthy eating. In order to do so, we computed an interaction term between number factor and affective reactions. Our analysis (process model 1; Hayes 2013) revealed a significant two-way interaction between the number exposure manipulation and affective reaction ($b=.21$, $t(479)=2.51$, $p=.01$). In the round number condition, negative affective reactions significantly predicted intention to avoid unhealthy eating ($b=.26$, $t(479)=4.45$, $p<.0001$). However, in the precise number condition, negative affective reactions did not predict intention to avoid unhealthy eating ($b=.05$, $t(479)=.86$, $p=.39$).

**General Discussion**

Simple preventive actions, such as getting immunized, avoiding unhealthy eating etc., could prevent many health problems and their associated costs. Across different settings using both intentional and behavioral measures, this research shows that exposure to round versus precise numbers can lead people to respond more affectively and thereby increase people’s likelihood to adopt preventive behaviors. These findings contribute both to literature on numerical cognition and affective decision making.

Access to health-related information has never been easier. Whether it is understanding more about effectiveness of different medical treatments or the risks associated with getting a disease, people can now easily access information through online and offline sources. Much of this information is presented numerically. Our findings show that a simple strategy of expressing such numerical information using round (vs. precise) numbers can increase adoption of preventive behaviors, thereby reducing health risks and ultimately saving lives.
EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Goal-setting is a crucial determinant of performance and well-being. But how should goals be set? The prevailing answer focuses on the specificity and difficulty of a goal’s objective (Locke and Latham 1990, 2002). Specific, challenging goals generally improve performance relative to non-specific “do-your-best” goals, and “moderately vague” goals like range goals (e.g., lose 10-15 pounds) fall in between. Specific goals are thus widely considered the “gold standard” of effective goal-setting.

We propose an alternative approach to understanding range goals. Drawing on the theory of goals-as-reference points (Heath, Larrick, and Wu 1999), we construe range goals as offering two possible reference points (vs. the single reference point of specific goals; Scott and Nowlis 2013), and posit that these dual reference points can be leveraged to improve performance. Extending prior work treating range goals as less precise (and thus less motivating) than specific goals (Locke and Latham 1990; Wright and Kacmar 1994), we demonstrate that range goals can sometimes be more motivating than specific goals.

When pursuing a range goal, people can adopt one of three reference-point strategies: focusing on just the lower endpoint, just the upper endpoint, or switching between the lower and upper endpoints. The lower endpoint of the range defines the outcome that avoids failure, so intuitively, some people may adopt it as their (sole) reference point. The upper endpoint, in contrast, demarcates a high level of performance, so more motivated individuals may adopt it as their (sole) reference point (treating it like a high specific goal). Alternatively, some people may use both range endpoints as reference points by, for example, initially focusing on the lower endpoint (e.g., lose 10 pounds) then switching to the upper endpoint (e.g., lose 15 pounds) after accumulating goal progress.

We propose that treating the dual endpoints of a range goal as sequential targets and switching from the lower to the upper endpoint produces the highest level of performance—even compared to a specific goal set at the top of the range. A key tenet of goals-as-reference-points theory is that motivation increases with proximity to a salient reference point (Heath et al. 1999; Kivetz, Urmsinsky, and Zheng 2006). Relative to focusing on one endpoint or setting an equivalent specific goal, switching from the lower to the upper endpoint should keep goal pursuers closer to their salient reference point for more of the goal pursuit process, improving motivation and performance. Thus while high specific goals may be the gold standard in the aggregate, range goals can match (“select upper”) or even exceed (“switching”) the performance of specific goals, depending on the reference-point strategy used.

Three experiments test these predictions in the context of an effortful proofreading task, identifying what strategies consumers naturally adopt when pursuing range goals (“find 8-12 errors”) and how those strategies affect performance. Study 1 identifies reference-point strategy using a funneled debrief and Study 2 measures reference point focus (lower or upper endpoint) repeatedly over the course of the task. In both cases, results show that the proposed ‘switching’ strategy (31% of participants in Study 1, 45% in Study 2) and the ‘select upper’ strategy (32% in Study 1, 26% in Study 2) are most common. Furthermore, as predicted, range goal pursuers who use the ‘select upper’ strategy perform no worse than those with a high specific goal (“find 12 errors”) and those who use the ‘switching’ strategy perform significantly better. Thus the lower aggregate performance of range (vs. specific) goal pursuers, as observed in our data and in prior research, is driven by a relatively small number of individuals who adopt an ineffective strategy for pursuing their range goal (i.e., ‘select lower,’ 18% in each study).

To test the causal effect of reference-point strategy on performance, Study 3 manipulates strategies using instructions to encourage either a ‘select upper’ or a ‘switching’ strategy. Range goal pursuers who received the ‘switching’ instructions performed significantly better than those who received the ‘select upper’ instructions. This demonstrates the causal effect of the proposed ‘switching’ strategy as a way to enhance motivation by leveraging both range endpoints as reference points. Furthermore, it indicates the possibility of improving range goal performance through simple instructions to encourage the adoption of more effective strategies.

From earning a promotion to losing weight to saving for retirement, effective goal-setting is crucial to obtaining desired outcomes. While the notion that specific goals improve performance is widely accepted, the current research shows that when the dual endpoints of a range goal are treated as sequential reference points, range goals can outperform specific goals set at the top of the range. This insight can help consumers succeed at a variety of personal goals, and can also help to enhance motivation and improve outcomes in group goal pursuits (e.g., charitable fundraising), marketing initiatives (e.g., loyalty reward programs), and organizational or educational settings.

Our findings contribute to understanding how multiple reference points influence judgment and decision-making. Although several disciplines have studied the effects of goals-as-reference points (Abeler, Falk, Goette, and Huffman 2011; Allen, Dechow, Pope, and Wu 2016; Dai, Milkman, and Riis 2014, 2015; Heath et al. 1999; Pope and Simonsohn 2011), how people choose (or switch) between multiple available reference points is less well understood. A few investigations have included both a specific goal and a baseline or starting point (Bonezzi, Brendl, and De Angelis 2011; Koo and Fishbach 2008; March and Shapira 1992), but none consider the dual endpoints of a range goal. By identifying strategies people adopt for range goals (and consequences for performance), the present investigation furthers understanding of this important question.

Why do some people focus on just one endpoint of the range rather than switch? Properties of the task (e.g., difficulty, enjoyment) or the range goal itself (e.g., width, incentives, being self-set vs. assigned) might influence what reference-point strategy people adopt, but this merits further investigation. Examining these and other factors that shape range goal pursuers’ strategies can allow for further refinement of the present findings, which offer valuable insights for effectively setting and pursuing range goals.

REFERENCES


Counterfeits Can Benefit Original Brands When People are Caught Using Counterfeits: The Role of Face Restoration

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Counterfeits are typically inferior-quality imitations of genuine products, especially ones that carry a high brand value (Lai and Zaichkowsky 1999), usually sold at a much lower price to be affordable for everyday consumers. As for the impact of counterfeit on the genuine products, previous research revealed mixed findings. On the one hand, counterfeits can reduce consumers’ demand for genuine products, particularly luxury ones (Wilcox et al. 2009). However, Nia and Zaichkowsky (2000) found that over 70% of survey respondents indicated that the availability of counterfeits does not decrease their faith in and purchase intention for genuine (luxury) brands. Thus, there are different views regarding whether counterfeit products benefit or harm the image and equity of genuine products. This incongruity illustrates the complexity of understanding counterfeit consumption, as well as the need for further study to understand its impact for both consumers and marketers.

In the current investigation, we add to this literature by examining how a specific phenomenon, namely being caught with counterfeits, would increase consumers’ preference for the genuine products. We propose an interactive effect between consumers’ self-construal (interdependent vs. independent) and product type (symbolic vs. functional). Specifically, we hypothesize that consumers with an interdependent self-construal who are caught using symbolic (vs. functional) products increase their preference for genuine products because they are embarrassed and wish to restore face – and one (but not the only) way to do so is by consuming the genuine version of the counterfeit product that they use or wear. We also predict no effect on preference for genuine products among consumers with an independent self-construal because they are not embarrassed when caught using such products. We test and confirm our hypotheses in a series of four experimental studies.

Theoretical Background

Caught Using Counterfeit Products

Research on counterfeit consumption has predominantly explored its pre-purchase antecedents, such as how and why consumers procure counterfeit products. For example, Wilcox et al. (2009) argued that consumers buy counterfeit products when the genuine product, especially in the case of luxuries, provides a social-adjustive function. Other studies have focused on other factors such as the product attributes and cultural norms that determine consumers’ decisions to purchase counterfeit products (Eisend and Schuchert-Güler 2006). Interestingly, only a few studies have examined the post-purchase phases. Nia and Zaichkowsky (2000) and Amaral and Loken (2016) investigated how the owners of genuine products feel and value their authentic merchandise when they see that other consumers are sporting counterfeit products. However, it is not known how consumers who buy, use, and/or wear counterfeit products themselves subsequently change their preference for genuine products. This motivated our present inquiry in which we focus specifically on consumers who are caught using counterfeit products.

Consumers buy counterfeit products primarily because they typically resemble, superficially at least, genuine or luxury products in terms of the prestige that they convey, but they cost far less than originals (Cordell et al. 1996; Grossman and Shapiro 1988). Purchasing based on a desire to convey prestige to others means that, if they are caught using counterfeits, consumers should feel embarrassed for using a product that only superficially appears prestigious but is actually not. Embarrassment results from a public observation of an action that others consider inappropriate; it threatens the positive public self-image that people convey; and it impairs the effectiveness of social interactions (Dahl, Manchanda, and Argo 2001). The emphasis is on public action, in that embarrassment is distinct from what an individual feels alone (Keltner and Buswell 1997). Behaviorally, embarrassment motivates individuals to take actions that restore their self-image (Feinberg, Willer, and Keltner 2012), also known as restoring face. According to Goffman (1967), face is a positive self-image that is affirmed through interaction with others. It is a social resource that is maintained, enhanced, or lost through interpersonal interactions. In our case, being caught with counterfeits should result in embarrassment and drive consumers to restore their face because they are observed using products that go against socially-approved norms and that elicit social disapproval.

We hypothesize that one (but not the only) way to restore face is, engaging in facework (Jiang and Cova 2012) – is to opt for the genuine version of the counterfeit product that consumers are caught using. Given that consumers caught using counterfeits are embarrassed because their products only convey prestige but are not actually prestigious, this should motivate them to restore their face by acquiring and possessing the product that is actually prestigious – that is, the genuine article.

Interdependent Consumers and Symbolic Products

However, not every consumer who is caught using counterfeit products should demonstrate a greater preference for genuine, and she/he should not show a greater preference for genuine when caught with any product. Rather, the preference for genuine products should be strongest for consumers with interdependent (vs. independent) self-construals who are caught using counterfeit symbolic (vs. functional) products. The distinction in product type is crucial (Penz and Stottinger 2005). Symbolic products allow consumers to express their actual or ideal self-image (Onkvisit and Shaw 1987). Functional products provide consumers with utility or other functional benefits (Yoo, Chung, and Han 2006). It is important to note that the same product can be either symbolic or functional depending on how consumers view and use it. A handbag can be symbolic since it offers feelings of status or professionalism, but it can also be functional because it allows women to carry everyday articles. Thus, given that symbolic products are more important for consumers’ self-image, we firstly expect that consumers who are caught with counterfeit symbolic products should show a greater preference for genuine articles to than those who are caught with counterfeit functional products.

We secondly – and perhaps more importantly – predict that consumers with interdependent self-construals should express a greater preference for genuine articles when caught with a counterfeit symbolic product, compared to those with independent self-construals. Purchase of symbolic products is strongest by consumers high on...
face consciousness (Chen et al. 2014), namely those with interdependent self-construals (Hwang, Francesco, and Kessler 2003). Members of interdependent cultures view the self as part of a collective identity with others, and they view face as a socially-defined aspect. This concern for face makes Asian consumers less tolerant of social failures (Chan, Wan, and Sin 2009). Consumers with interdependent self-construals should be more embarrassed when caught using counterfeit symbolic products because they lose an aspect of the self that they define and convey socially. They are likely to be seen as frugal, vain, or that they intend to impress others without putting in the effort (Communi 2009). This also makes it more likely that interdependent consumers who have been embarrassed when “caught in the act” should express a stronger preference for genuine products, in comparison to independent consumers. Indeed, negative evaluations motivate interdependent consumers to protect their public self-image to maintain their well-being that is largely defined by their social self-worth (Dickerson, Gruenewald, and Kemeny 2004).

In sum, we hypothesize that interdependent (vs. independent) consumers feel embarrassed when they are caught using counterfeit symbolic (vs. functional) products, motivating their preference for the genuine versions as a means to restore face. We test our proposed framework in four studies.

**Study 1**

Study 1 demonstrated our main hypothesis that interdependent (vs. independent) consumers caught with counterfeit symbolic (vs. functional) products express a greater preference for genuine products, compared to a baseline condition in which they sport the counterfeit products but are not caught using them.

**Method.** This study used a 2 (self-construal: interdependent, independent) × 2 (product type: symbolic, functional) × 2 (caught: yes, no) between-participants design. Participants (n = 173) from a large university in China first finished a pronoun circling task which primed them either an interdependent or independent self-construal (Brewer and Gardner 1996). Then they randomly received one of two ad copy conditions for a Longines watch that highlighted either its symbolic or functional benefits, which we adapted from Wilcox et al. (2009). Subsequently, participants were shown an actual counterfeit Longines watch and asked to wear the watch, ostensibly as market research for Longines (the actual company) to understand consumers’ interest in counterfeit versions of its products. Afterwards, participants proceeded to a different room while wearing the counterfeit Longines watch, ostensibly to help another researcher with their study while we were preparing the second part of the Longines watch study. They were either “caught” or “not caught” by a confederate in this unrelated task. We obtained participants’ preference change for a genuine Longines watch by subtracting the purchase intent measured before the counterfeit Longines watch usage task from the intent measured afterwards.

**Results.** We first conducted manipulation check for our manipulations of self-construal as well as product type and got results validating the manipulations. Then we conducted a 2 × 2 × 2 ANOVA and found a main effect of being caught or not with a counterfeit watch, with participants who were caught scoring higher on preference than those not caught ($\beta = 3.92, S.E. = 1.71, t = 2.29, p = .02$). This offers evidence for our fundamental hypothesis that being caught with counterfeits in general can shift preference towards genuine products, relative to not being caught at all. Crucially, the three-way interaction was marginally significant ($F = 3.43, p = .07$). As such, we analyzed the 2 (self-construal) × 2 (product type) interaction within each of the caught and not caught conditions to further decompose the effects. When the participants were caught using counterfeits, the 2 × 2 interaction was significant ($F = 3.89, p = .05$). Subjects with interdependent self-construals indicated a more positive preference change for a genuine Longines watch in the symbolic than functional conditions ($M_{\text{symbolic}} = 1.17$ vs. $M_{\text{functional}} = .17, t = 2.87, p = .005$). In contrast, students with independent self-construals did not show such a preference change for a genuine Longines watch ($M_{\text{symbolic}} = .51$ vs. $M_{\text{functional}} = .47, p = .90$). However, when the students were not caught by others, there was neither a main effect nor a two-way interaction ($p > .55$).

Study 1 provided beginning evidence for our proposition. Since there is no effect in the condition where consumers use counterfeit but are not caught by others, we only focused on the “caught” situation in the following studies.

**Study 2**

Study 2 aims to replicate the results from Study 1 and also demonstrate that being caught with counterfeit symbolic products increases interdependent consumers’ embarrassment, which then mediates their preference for genuine products.

**Method.** This study used a 2 (product type: symbolic, functional) × 2 (self-construal: interdependent, independent) between-participants design. 135 undergraduate students from a large university in Australia participated in this study. We first primed self-construal using the Sumerian warrior story task (Trafimow, Triandis, and Goto 1991). The manipulation of product type was the same as in Study 1 except using a different brand Tissot. Then participants imagined being caught with a counterfeit Tissot watch at a friend’s party. Upon completion, participants completed willingness to pay for genuine Tissot watch that we adapted from Rucker and Galinsky (2008). Participants also indicated on separate 9-point scales (1 = “Not at all” to 9 = “Very much”) the extent they felt the following emotions at the current instant: ashamed, embarrassed, insecure, and vulnerable.

**Results.** As predicted, a 2 × 2 ANOVA on students’ willingness to pay (WTP) for a genuine Tissot watch revealed only an interaction between the two factors ($F = 10.10, p < .002$). Participants primed with interdependence expressed a higher WTP for genuine Tissot watches when they imagined being caught with counterfeit symbolic products rather than with counterfeit functionals ($M_{\text{symbolic}} = 6.26$ vs. $M_{\text{functional}} = 4.30, t = 3.32, p < .001$). No such effect emerged for participants with independent self-construal ($M_{\text{symbolic}} = 4.83$ vs. $M_{\text{functional}} = 5.64, p = .21$). A moderated mediation analysis with embarrassment as mediator was significant (95% CI: -1.51, -0.07), supporting our hypothesis.

**Study 3**

In Study 3, we aim to demonstrate that being caught with counterfeit symbolic products also increases their motivation to restore face, which then also mediates their preference for genuine articles.

**Method.** This study used a 2 (self-construal: interdependent, independent) × 2 (product type: symbolic, functional) between-participants design, in which self-construal was measured and product type was manipulated. Participants (n = 129) completed a similar manipulation of product type of iPhone 5S and the self-construal measurement (Singelis 1994). We also assessed participants’ motivation to restore face by asking them to indicate their agreement with the following statement on a single 7-point scale (1 = “Strongly disagree” to 7 = “Strongly agree”): “After being caught wearing a counterfeit iPhone 5S, I can restore face by purchasing and using a genuine iPhone”.

**Results.** As predicted, the product type × self-construal interaction was significant ($\beta = .70, S.E. = .29, t = 2.43, p = .02$). Specifically, students with an interdependent self-construal (+1 S.D.) indicated a more positive preference for a genuine iPhone after getting caught using counterfeit symbolic products than counterfeit functionals ($\beta = 1.04$, $p = .002$).
Counterfeits Can Benefit Original Brands When People are Caught Using Counterfeits: The Role of Face Restoration

S.E. = .42, t = 2.78, p = .01). But for participants with an independent self-construal (-1 S.D.), there was no such difference (p = .31). A moderated mediation analysis with face restoration as mediator was significant (95% CI: .03, .49).

Study 4

In Study 4, we present a boundary condition for the effect. Interdependent consumers no longer prefer genuine symbolic products even when they are caught with them when they do not expect to see again the other individuals who caught them.

Method. The study used a 2 (expected re-encounter: yes, no) × 2 (product type: symbolic, functional) × 2 (self-construal: interdependent, independent) between-participants design (n = 284). We manipulated self-construal and product type using the same tasks as in Study 2. In the scenarios in which participants imagined being caught while wearing a counterfeited Tissot watch at a party, half of them specifically imagined that they expected to attend another party the week after with the same party attendees, while the other half did not have such an expectation.

Results. A 2 × 2 × 2 ANOVA revealed that the three-way interaction of product type, self-construal, and expected re-encounter was significant (F = 3.73, p = .05). When participants expected to see the same party attendees again, the 2 × 2 interaction was significant (F = 5.44, p = .02). Participants primed with interdependence expressed a greater preference for genuine Tissot watches when they imagined being caught with counterfeit symbolic products rather than with counterfeit functional products (Msymbolic = 5.88 vs. Mfunctional = 4.60, t = 2.43 p = .016). In contrast, participants primed with independence expressed a similar preference whether they imagined being caught with counterfeit symbolic or with counterfeit functional products (Msymbolic = 5.34 vs. Mfunctional = 5.46, p = .69). But when participants did not expect to see the same party attendees again, there was no two-way interaction between self-construal and product type (c).

In conclusion, this research focus on being caught with counterfeit feits, thus adding a component to this domain of study that is largely missing in the literature. Our findings offer contributions for academic scholars, policy makers, and marketing practitioners.

REFERENCES


Design an Experience Bundle: The Role of Experience Structure
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Imagine planning a spring vacation and coming across an ad that features a six-day voluntour trip. The ad suggests an itinerary where half of the trip involves volunteering in jungle restoration in the Amazon and the other half sightseeing in Peru. This is an example of an experience bundle, a bundle that is composed of two or more experiences (e.g., volunteering and sightseeing) that are usually consumed independently of one another. To maximize desire for this bundle, an important decision must be made by marketers: how should the experiences in the bundle be structured? Should the trip be structured such that consumers will complete sightseeing in the first three days before jungle restoration (i.e., sequential structure), or should the trip be structured to include sightseeing experiences and jungle restoration (i.e., alternating structure) during each day?

With three studies involving a variety of experience bundles, we find that alternately (vs. sequentially) structured experience bundles are more preferred. This is because an alternating structure allows consumers to infer greater value with an experience bundle, which leads to higher complementarity perception. For example, when the voluntour trip is structured sequentially, consumers may infer that the jungle restoration experience will be spiritually rewarding and that the touring experience will be fun. In other words, the multisensory elements, events, and benefits of each experience are processed mainly independently of one another. In contrast, consumers may infer additional benefits when the jungle restoration and sightseeing experiences are alternated throughout the trip. Not only will consumers identify that the jungle restoration will be spiritually rewarding and the sightseeing will be fun, but they may also infer that boating along the Amazon River (touring event) will be relaxing after finishing a half-day of tree-planting (volunteer event). Further, appreciation of the river-maintenance activity (volunteer event) on the following day may also be enhanced. It is these inferred values that enhances complementarity perception and high evaluations for alternately structured experience bundles.

In study 1, participants (N=110) evaluated a French Festival event in a between-subjects design. The festival was composed of three films (different genres) and three acrobatic shows (different themes), and was structured either alternately or sequentially. Supporting our expectations, the alternately (vs. sequentially) structured French festival was perceived more favorably to consumers. Notably, a follow-up study with 80 participants found no differences in variety perceptions (Kahn and Wansink 2004) between the alternately and sequentially structured bundles, ruling out this perception as an alternative explanation to our hypothesized effect.

In study 2, participants (N=97; between-subjects design) were asked to evaluate a full-day Toronto trip and indicate how complementary the trip seemed to be (Koukova, Kannan, and Kirmani 2012). This trip was a bundle of two historic and two modern tours and was structured alternately or sequentially. We also included an inference-impairment condition, where subjects again evaluated an alternating trip, but the individual tour descriptions were displayed on four separate pages. The descriptions, however, appeared on one page in the alternating condition. In this condition, we expected that complementarity perceptions would be reduced if participants had to flip back and forth between descriptions to identify meaningful connections among the tours. Consequently, we expected the alternating trip would also be perceived less favourably. Support for the expectation that an alternating structure would be more preferred was also found in this study. In addition, complementarity perception was found to mediate this preference (Hayes 2013). Notably, the fact that the experience bundle was evaluated less favourably in the condition with descriptions on separate pages (vs. alternating) condition suggests that variety perception is not the underlying mechanism.

In study 3, participants (N=175; between-subjects design) were asked to list their thoughts about the sequencing of activities in an educational trip to Singapore and then evaluated the experience. This trip was a bundle of sightseeing and educational engagements, and was structured either alternately or sequentially. Participants’ thoughts were coded for complementarity inferences. Greater number of complementarity inferences implies greater complementarity between bundled experiences. As expected, complementarity perception mediated preference for the educational trip, such that a greater number of complementarity inferences were generated for the alternately structured trip. Further, some participants were provided with complementarity inferences in the sequentially structured experience condition, and their evaluations increased in comparison to when complementarity inferences were not provided.

To the best of our knowledge, we are the first to examine experience bundles, an increasingly popular market offering. Theoretically, we contribute to the bundling literature in several ways. First, we show that complementarity perception, an important determinant in bundle evaluation (Gaeth et al. 1990; Popkowski Leszczyc and Häubl 2010; Stremersch and Tellis 2002), is quite malleable. Prior literature often assumes, implicitly, that complementarity perceptions are stable. We show these perceptions can be influenced by varying the structure of an experience bundle. More importantly, we show that complementarity perception is malleable because consumers engage in an inferential process when learning about experience bundles. This process has not received attention in the bundling literature. Equally important, we offer insights on how to better design and market experience bundles.

REFERENCES
**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Consumers typically covet the meanings associated with the products they use (Belk 1988; Levy 1959). Rolex wearers want to seem classy, gangsta rap fans want to seem tough, and flag wavers want to seem patriotic. But sometimes consumers use a product while trying to dissociate from the tastes, meanings, associations, or ideals that the product typically signifies. That is, they consume the product **ironically**. For example, consumers wear “ugly Christmas sweaters” to holiday parties, emulate infamous cultural figures (e.g., Bill Cosby) on Halloween (DailyMail 2015), and watch TV shows like “The Jersey Shore” and “The Bachelor” that they consider categorically awful (McCoy and Scarborough 2014; Thompson 2000). Similarly, when Donald Trump announced his candidacy, liberal urbanites made Trump’s red hat the “ironic accessory of the summer” (Parker 2015).

Although there is an established literature on sincere symbolic consumption – that is, using products to signal who you are or avoiding products to signal who you are not (Belk, 1988; Berger and Heath 2007; Douglas and Isherwood 1978; Veblen 1899) – far less is known about ironic consumption. We ask three questions in attempt to bridge this gap in the literature: Why do people consume ironically? When do observers detect ironic consumption? And, what impression do ironic consumers make on others?

**Why Consume Ironically?**

The literature suggests several reasons why consumers might use products ironically. Ironic consumption potentially signals status (Brooks 1981). Ironically adopting “kitch” products (e.g., reality TV, soul food), might help distinguish knowledgeable consumers both from lower class consumers, who genuinely like the products, and less knowledgeable upper-class consumers, who don’t know about the product or how to consume it ironically (Bourdieu 1984; Johnston and Baumann 2010). Another possibility is that irony offers consumers an indirect way to criticize social institutions, consumption practices, or people (Wompoole 2012). Klein (2000), for example, suggests that consumers can express dissent for commercialism by ironically consuming mass-marketed goods, like “Baywatch” or Disneyworld (Klein 2000). A third possibility is that people consume ironically to be humorous. People report using verbal irony to be funny (Roberts and Kreuz 1994); they may use products ironically for the same reason.

**Study 1**

The primary purpose of study 1 was to examine consumers’ motivations for consuming ironically. Participants from Mechanical Turk (N = 408) read a definition of ironic consumption, answered whether or not they had “ever used a product or brand to be ironic,” and, if so, explained why they used the product ironically. As a control condition, half of the sample alternatively indicated if they had “ever used a product or brand to be symbolic,” and, if so, explained why. Two coders (89% agreement) indicated whether the responses mentioned one or more of the following motivations: status, criticism, humor, identity signaling, belonging, signaling support, enjoyment, functional benefits.

Reports of ironic consumption were not rare, but only a minority of the sample ironically used a product (23%). Participants Ironically consumed a range of brands (e.g., Hollister, Polly Pocket), products (e.g., trucker hat, Mickey Mouse watch), and styles (e.g., punk, goth, grunge). The most common reason for consuming ironically was to be humorous, a motive mentioned by 45% of ironic consumers but none of the control consumers (χ^2 = 41.89, p < .001. For ironic consumers to successfully be funny, however, the audience needs to both recognize that the consumer is being ironic and perceive the ironic consumption to be humorous. Our subsequent studies thus investigate when observers detect ironic consumption and how they evaluate ironic consumers.

**When is Ironic Consumption Detected?**

Under what conditions will people recognize that another consumer is being ironic? People detect verbal irony when they think that an utterance is the opposite of what the speaker intends (Utsumi 2000), just as they detect situational irony when an occurrence is the opposite of what they would normally expect (Lucariello 1994). We similarly expect that people will detect ironic consumption only when the meaning of a consumption behavior is different than the meaning the consumer (hereafter, an incongruent product). However, a product can be incongruent either because it has an aspirational incongruent meaning or dissociative incongruent meaning (English and Solomon 1995; White and Dahl 2006). Because consumers want to distance themselves from dissociative meanings but not aspirational meanings (Berger and Heath 2007; White and Dahl 2006), irony should be detected more frequently when a consumer uses a product with a dissociative meaning. A popular high school student who dresses like a nerd, for example, might seem ironic because others would recognize that the popular kid is not a nerd, and he probably doesn’t want to be a nerd. On the other hand, people should be less likely to detect irony when a nerd dresses like a popular kid (an aspirational identity), a nerd dresses like other nerds (a congruent identity), or a popular kid dresses like other popular kids (also a congruent identity).

**Study 2**

Study 2 tested the hypothesis that an observer is only likely to detect irony when a consumer uses an incongruent product with a dissociative meaning. Undergraduate students (N = 374) were randomly assigned to a condition in a 2 (consumer: cool, uncool) x 2 (product: congruent, incongruent) x 2 (cool style: grunge, preppy) between-subjects experiment.

Participants read about two high school students, “John” and “Chris,” who are part of different social cliques. One clique was described as being cool upper classmen, the other as uncool freshmen. The incongruent dissociative condition described a cool high school student adopting a style associated with an uncool clique. The incongruent aspirational condition described an uncool high school student adopting a style associated with a cool clique. The congruent conditions described a cool student adopting a style associated with a cool clique and an uncool student adopting a style associated with an uncool clique, respectively. To ensure that the effects did not depend on the type of style adopted, we counterbalanced whether the cool clique was associated with a “grunge” style or a “preppy” style (the results generalized across the two styles).

We measured irony detection in two ways. As a conservative measure, we asked a general, open-ended question: “Based on what you’ve read, why do you think John (Chris) chose to wear this to-
day?” Two coders (100% agreement) assessed whether or not the participant mentioned irony or a synonym. We subsequently asked participants to indicate the extent to which they disagree (1) or agree (7) with the following items: “He is being ironic,” and “He is wearing the clothing ironically.”

Irony detection was low overall, but it was most common when the consumer used an incongruent product linked to a dissociative group (i.e., when the cool kid dressed like uncool kids). In contrast, participants detected less irony when the consumer dressed like an aspirational incongruent group (i.e., the uncool kid dressing like cool kids) or an associative, congruent group (consumer-by-product interaction: \(F(1,366) = 12.16, p < .001\).

What are the Consequences of Consuming Ironically?

Consumers use products ironically in attempt to be humorous, but whether being ironic actually makes a consumer seem more or less humorous (as well as more or less likable) should depend on whether the audience identifies with the product being consumed. Sincerely consuming a product signals that the consumer belongs to the same in-group as others who use the product (Berger and Heath 2007; Douglas and Isherwood 1979). Irony, however, distances the consumer from the product and, by extension, those who use it sincerely. Because people have a more favorable impression of members of an in-group than members of an out-group (Tajfel 1982), people who identify with a product should evaluate consumers more favorably if they think the consumer is using the product sincerely rather than ironically. For example, drivers with a Donald Trump bumper sticker should make a more favorable impression on Trump supporters than on people who do not support Trump, but only if the consumption of the sticker seems sincere rather than ironic.

Study 3

Study 3 attempted to replicate study 2 by showing that an audience is most likely to detect irony when a consumer uses a product with a dissociative meaning. It also attempted to extend study 2 by examining the effects of being ironic on impressions from others.

U.S. citizens on Mechanical Turk (N = 295) completed the study during a presidential primary race that featured democrat Bernie Sanders and republican Donald Trump. Leveraging the fact that most Americans dissociate from people with opposing political views (Murray et al. 2014), we created two dissociative incongruent conditions and two congruent conditions using a 2 (consumer: liberal, conservative) x 2 (product: liberal, conservative) between-subjects design.

Participants viewed an image of an automobile with a political bumper sticker and reported their impression of the driver. In the conservative-congruent condition the driver had a Donald Trump sticker on a Hummer with an NRA logo. In the conservative-incongruent condition, the Hummer instead displayed a Bernie Sanders bumper sticker. In the liberal-congruent condition, the driver displayed a Bernie Sanders sticker on a Toyota Prius with a peace sign. Finally, in the liberal-incongruent condition, the Prius displayed a Donald Trump bumper sticker. A pretest confirmed that a Hummer, the NRA, and Donald Trump were all associated with conservatives whereas a Prius, a peace symbol, and Bernie Sanders were all associated with liberals.

After viewing the car, participants completed the irony detection measures from study 2 and indicated the extent to which they considered the driver humorous (e.g., “He/She seems like a funny person) and likable (e.g., “I have a favorable impression of him/her”). Finally, to assess participants’ identification with the focal product (i.e., the bumper sticker), we asked if they personally identified with the politician in the bumper sticker (either Bernie Sanders or Donald Trump, depending on the condition) on a seven-point scale from “not a lot/1” and “a lot/7.”

Despite relatively low average levels of irony detection, both the open-ended and closed-ended measures revealed that irony was most likely to be detected when the consumer used a product with a dissociative meaning, in this case a sticker of a politician with opposing political views (ps < .01). Importantly, the effect of detecting ironic consumption on the impression of the consumer depended on the participants’ identification with the political bumper sticker. A moderated mediation analysis (Hayes 2013; model 14) confirmed that the participant’s political identification moderated the mediating effect of irony detection on the extent to which the consumer seemed both humorous (Index of moderated mediation = -.076; 95% C.I.: -.13 to -.03) and likable (Index of moderated mediation = -.11; 95% C.I.: -.16 to -.06). Participants were significantly more likely to detect irony when the consumer used an incongruent rather than a congruent product (\(b = .80, t = 7.94, p < .001\)). Moreover, the effect of irony detection on the extent to which the consumer seemed both humorous (\(b = -.09, t = -5.01, p < .001\)) and likable (\(b = -.14, t = 7.86, p < .001\)) depended on the participant’s identification with the consumed product. Participants who scored relatively low on identification with the consumed product rated the target consumer as more humorous and more likable if they thought the consumer was being ironic, whereas participants who scored relatively high on identification rated ironic consumers as being less likable (see figure 1). Thus, detecting irony blunted the positive (and negative) impressions that people typically have of consumers who use products with which they identify (do not identify).

Study 4

The purpose of study 4 was to examine the effects of ironic consumption on impressions by directly manipulating whether a consumer uses a product sincerely or ironically and whether or not the audience identifies with the product being consumed. Participants recruited from Mechanical Turk (N = 238) evaluated a consumer who was wearing a tee-shirt either ironically or sincerely as part of a 2 (consumption: ironic, sincere) x 2 (product identification: high, low) between-subjects experiment.

Depending on the identification condition, participants either listed a musician who they consider a favorite (high identification) or who they dislike (low identification). Participants subsequently imagined encountering a consumer wearing a tee-shirt of this musician and asking him or her about the shirt. In the “sincere consumption” condition, the consumer ostensibly responded: “I’m wearing the shirt because I’m a fan.” In the “ironic consumption” condition, the consumer ostensibly responded: “I’m only wearing the shirt to be ironic.” Participants subsequently indicated how the interaction would influence the extent to which they considered the consumer humorous (e.g., less funny/more funny) and likable (e.g., less likable/more likable).

Consistent with study 3, a 2 (consumption: ironic, sincere) x 2 (product identification: high, low) ANOVA revealed a significant interaction on the extent to which the consumer seemed both humorous (\(F(1,234) = 13.52, p < .001\)) and likable (\(F(1,234) = 31.27, p < .001\)). When participants identified with the musician on the tee-shirt, they saw the consumer as being less humorous (\(F(1,234) = 12.22, p < .001\)) and less likable (\(F(1,234) = 23.03, p < .001\)) when they wore the tee-shirt ironically. In contrast, when participants did not identify with the musician on the tee-shirt, they saw the consumer as being marginally more humorous (\(F(1,234) = 2.75, p < .10\))
and significantly more likable ($F(1,234) = 9.41, p < .01$) when (s)he wore the shirt ironically. Thus, wearing a shirt of a musician that the audience likes (doesn’t like) led to a more (less) favorable impression of the consumer, but not if the consumer was being ironic.

**General Discussion**

Our research addresses a gap in the literature on symbolic consumer behavior by investigating ironic consumption. Not all consumers engage in ironic consumption, but those who do say that they use products ironically to be funny rather than to signal a particular identity or group membership. For example, a music snob might wear a Justin Bieber tee-shirt ironically as a joke. Whether the audience recognizes and appreciates the joke depends on whether they detect the irony, and this is most likely to happen when they recognize that the consumer wants to dissociate from the product’s conventional meaning or identity. For example, people are more likely to think that the music snob is being ironic if they recognize that he disdains Justin Bieber and his “Beliebers” than if they think the music snob is or wants to be a Belieber. Importantly, rather than making a consumer seem funny outright, being ironic appears to blunt both positive and negative impressions from others. People who don’t care for Justin Bieber will think that Bieber shirt-wearers have a poor sense of humor, unless they think they are wearing the shirt ironically. On the other hand, Beliebers will tend to like Bieber shirt-wearers more, unless they think they are wearing the shirt ironically. By blunting the impression that consumers make on others, ironic consumption potentially offers a safer way to consume products with uncertain, contentious, or even undesirable meanings.

**REFERENCES**


The Biographies of Things: Provenance and the Pursuit of Moral Consumption

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Anecdotal evidence suggests that consumers are increasingly concerned with the background of the products they consume. These product biographies relate to the provenance of products: the people, places, resources, and processes involved in creating and distributing products for consumption. In this research, we show that some consumers want to know the biographies of products they buy so they can choose items with backgrounds consistent with their moral values, such as environmental concerns or social justice. Furthermore, we find product biographies can create tensions and dilemmas for consumers as they attempt to balance multiple consumption goals with their moral values.

Kopytoff (1986) introduced the idea of a product biography as a way of conceptualizing meanings relating to a product’s background, proposing that products, like people, have “life histories” that inform and influence the meanings attached to them by consumers. He notes that product biographies would have many facets covering a wide range of culturally-constituted and objective meanings, including where a product is made and by whom, and that biographical meanings can have important moral implications for consumers. Our goal in this research was to explore whether consumers sought biographical information when purchasing and, if so, to understand the types of biographical information that consumers seek. We also sought to understand how these biographies impact consumption decisions as consumers attempt to consume morally.

To explore product biographies and their impact on consumers, we selected the pseudonymous Springs Landing as the site for our research, a neighborhood within a major metropolitan area in the southeastern U.S., where residents agree to live by certain community values, such as “Diversity” and “Sustainability.” Twenty-five residents were interviewed, and follow-up interviews were conducted with 10 of them. The sample included diverse age groups, household types, and professions. Semi-structured (i.e., open-ended and non-directive) interviews were used to allow flexibility to explore novel or unexpected themes. Individual interviews were coded to illuminate themes within each individual discourse. After coding individual transcripts, a thorough analysis of the data set as a whole was conducted. The overall thematic structure emerged via consensus of the research team. As a test of the credibility of the analysis, we performed member checks by meeting with informants after research team consensus was reached (Hirschman, 1986; Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

Informants repeatedly referred to various processes involved in systems of provenance in accounts of their consumption. Process biographies stemmed from all stages of provenance, from the extraction of raw materials to the retailing of finished goods. Respondents frequently used these meanings to distinguish the morality of one product from another. For example, the PlayStation video game system brought to mind negative meanings related to the materials necessary for their construction for Neil. Although it did not prevent him from buying a game system, he clearly feels guilt for consuming something whose provenance might involve human suffering, even though he is not confident in this knowledge.

Informants also demonstrated an awareness of product biographies related to the resources invested in making and marketing products. These resource biographies frequently related to natural resources, particularly the natural resources contained in products or those used or affected by the provenance of products. One example is David’s concern about the natural resources used in building his own housing community. David notes the irony of building or purchasing something new to be more sustainable: the new thing uses up more of the Earth’s scarce resources, which is often contradictory to sustainability.

The third type of provenance biography mentioned by our informants, person biographies, concerns the people involved in provenance. Our informants frequently expressed concern for the workers involved in the production of consumer goods. For example, Dorothy is uncertain about who specifically benefits from Fair Trade certification and how exactly they might benefit, but she still seeks Fair Trade certification with the hope that she might be helping the workers in the supply chain in terms of work conditions and pay. Meanings associated with the geographical background, place biographies, constituted a fourth type of provenance biography mentioned by our informants. In some instances, informants even discussed distant or abstract places they had never visited. Lacey, a working mother with young children, is uncertain exactly where the apple juice she buys at Publix comes from, but infers that the United States is “a pretty good place” for making apple juice and that Indonesia is less desirable.

Our informants noted that product biographies could pose a number of dilemmas in their decision making. Informants frequently encountered a conflict between moral values, such as environmentalism and altruism, and pragmatic goals to conserve time and money. For example, Lacey feels great moral conflict when she shops at Walmart:

Our location makes it hard because there is a Walmart super-store right around the corner. And with a child, sometimes it’s just easier to go to the Walmart superstore, and that place is just full of evilness. (Lacey, 30s, healthcare professional)

Like most consumers, Lacey values convenience and will sometimes prioritize it over competing objectives. In this case, her beliefs about the biographies of the products available at Walmart make her feel guilty about shopping there because she feels she is not being true to her moral consumption identity.

Another conundrum was presented by prices. Several informants noted that the low prices of some consumer goods did not make sense given their provenance biographies. For example, Bill, a retiree living on a fixed income, reported that he primarily shops at a local organic grocer, in part, because he feels that prices at national grocery chain Publix and other mainstream stores do not fairly represent the value of the natural resources required to create the products. For Bill, shopping for groceries brings to mind the production processes involved, a thought that compels him to shop for groceries that are more expensive, despite his fixed income and their less convenient location.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Despite availability of good rental options, many consumers still prefer to haul or ship their own gear for various activities (e.g., skiing). Understanding psychological antecedents for consumer preference for owned (versus rented) gear is pivotal for marketers in the access-based industry. However, such antecedents remain understudied.

Previous research on consumer preference for owned (vs. unowned) items finds that, when a good is more identity-relevant, owners respond more negatively to its loss (Dommer and Swaminathan 2013; Ferraro, Escalas, and Bettman 2011). Relatedly, we propose that when identity (e.g., skier) is more self-central, a consumer will perceive relevant possessions (e.g., skis) as less substitutable due to the classification of such possessions as more self-central (i.e., more “me;” Weiss and Johar 2013). Consequently, the consumer will be less inclined to use rented gear to temporarily substitute a possession even when the rental is better. Thus, the very consumers who could most appreciate using superior gear (e.g., “die-hard” skiers) would be ironically the least likely to do so (due to being the most reluctant to forgo using their own gear). Indeed, such ironic consequences of identity directionally align with the aforementioned prior research.

However, that prior research studied the preference for owned goods only in the context of a possible loss of ownership over the good (e.g., due to sale; Kahneman, Knetsch, and Thaler 1990). In contrast, we uniquely test preference for owned goods in choices that eliminate a possible loss of ownership, specifically in dilemmas of whether to temporarily substitute an owned item.

Consistent with low possession substitutability as the driver for low renting, we predicted that impeding the effect of identity centrality on low possession substitutability will reverse the ironic effect of identity. We theorized that construing the self in terms of an identity that does not depend on gear for engaging in identity activities (e.g., a “chef” requires equipment to cook, but a “foodie” only needs her taste buds to eat) will impede the effect of identity centrality on possession substitutability. In such situations, greater identity centrality may actually predict more (vs. less) usage of superior rentals.

Results from five studies were consistent with our predictions. In study 1, while planning an out-of-state cycling vacation, participants learned that the local shop rents out bikes identical to theirs. The rental cost was either higher or lower than the cost of shipping their bike there. After choosing between shipping and renting (DV), participants reported the extent to which cycling was central to their identity in real-life. Consistent with lower possession substitutability, identity centrality predicted (1) lower renting and (2) smaller positive effect of lower (vs. higher) renting price on renting likelihood.

To rule-out a “renting-aversion” account, whereby identity centrality simply increases dislike of the unfamiliar, study 2 manipulated whether the gear in one’s possession (i.e., the familiar gear) was owned or borrowed. Further, to rule out a “sunk-cost” explanation involving initial investment in gear, any initial investment in the gear was eliminated. Participants in the “[borrowed] / [owned]” condition imagined planning a cycling vacation, deliberating between shipping there the quality bike family friends recently left for them [to use for the year they are away / as a hand-me-down right before going away for a year] (option 1) and renting gear at the local shop (option 2). Consistent with predictions, identity centrality predicted lower renting when the gear in one’s possession was owned, but not when it was borrowed.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumers’ decisions to purchase a product are often driven by different motivations. Personal pleasures (i.e., hedonic motivations) trigger consumption in some cases and functional needs (i.e., utilitarian motivations) drive consumption in others (Botti and McGill 2011; Choi and Fishbach 2011)—even when the product is the same. In the present research, we ask a novel question: do consumers prefer different assortment sizes when choosing a product for a hedonic versus a utilitarian motivated purchase?

We argue that the number of alternatives consumers plan to review for a purchase is influenced by whether their motivation for that purchase is hedonic versus utilitarian. More specifically, we believe that consumers exhibit different perceptions about the uniqueness of their ideal product preferences under hedonic versus utilitarian purchase motivations, which in turn affect the number of products they review. We argue that consumers believe that their product preferences for hedonic purchases are inherently more unique and different from those of other consumers, due to the idiosyncratic nature of hedonic purchase preferences. Consequently, consumers believe they will have a more difficult time finding a product matching their preferences under a hedonic purchase motivation, leading them to consider a larger assortment of product alternatives. In contrast, consumers with utilitarian purchase motivations tend to perceive their product preferences as less unique compared to others and thus anticipate less difficulty in preference matching, resulting in an inclination to choose from smaller assortments.

Across 7 studies, we find that consumers with hedonic purchase motivations prefer larger assortments than those with utilitarian purchase motivations. Our results show that consumers exhibit differences in their perceptions of preference uniqueness and the level of anticipated difficulty in preference matching between the hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations, and these two variables underlie the effect of purchase motivation on preferred assortment size.

Our research contributes to the literature in three important ways. We extend the literature on hedonic and utilitarian purchases by uncovering how these two purchase motivations influence consumers’ preference for assortment size. Second, we add to the literature on the determinants of consumers’ preferences for large and small assortments. Lastly, a major contribution of our research is our finding that hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations have different implications for consumers’ perceptions of uniqueness about their ideal product preferences.

Study 1A serves as an initial test for the effect of purchase motivation on assortment size preference. Similar to Botti and McGill (2011), we manipulate the purchase motivations for the same product, but emphasize the hedonic or utilitarian nature of the end-goal of the purchase. Since hedonic and utilitarian purchases are motivated by a desire to experience affective pleasure and by a desire to fulfill a need or accomplish a task (Dhar and Werttenbroch 2000; Pham 1998; Strahtilevitz and Myers 1998), respectively, we characterize hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations in our scenarios as pleasure-seeking and task-driven. Participants were assigned to either a utilitarian or hedonic purchase motivation condition and asked their preference between a small (6) or large (24) assortment of product alternatives. Participants were told to imagine they taking a class on Classical music; those in the utilitarian motivation condition imagined purchasing a CD to listen to for a class assignment while those in the hedonic condition considered purchasing a CD to listen to for pleasure. 56% of participants in the hedonic motivation condition preferred to choose from a large (versus small) assortment, whereas only 24% of participants in the utilitarian purchase motivation condition preferred the large assortment ($\chi^2(1) = 9.17, p < .01$). Study 1B uses a similar class-based manipulation, design, and assortment size measure for the purchase of a book. 65% of participants purchasing the book to read for pleasure (hedonic) preferred the large assortment, whereas only 27% of participants purchasing the book for a class assignment (utilitarian) felt similarly ($\chi^2(1) = 18.89, p < .01$). Studies 1C and 1D replicate this main effect of purchase motivation on assortment size using computers and paint colors, respectively.

In study 2, participants imagined selecting a song to listen to as part of an online study (utilitarian) or as break between studies (hedonic). Participants the number of songs they would like to choose from (between 2-24), before being presented with a selection of songs matching that size. Participants then selected a song, listened to it, and rated their satisfaction with the song and the song assortment. In addition to replicating our main effect of hedonic versus utilitarian motivation on assortment size ($M_{H} = 8.76, SD = 7.03$ vs. $M_{U} = 5.43, SD = 5.62$; $F(1, 149) = 10.31, p < .01$) using real choice, there were no differences in satisfaction with the song or the assortment. This null effect on satisfaction provides confidence that our pre-choice assortment size scenarios accurately reflect consumers’ real preferences.

Lastly, we argue that consumers with hedonic purchase motivations tend to perceive their preferences as unique (compared to others’ preferences) to a greater extent than consumers with utilitarian purchase motivations. As a result, consumers with hedonic versus utilitarian purchase motivations anticipate greater difficulty in finding a product that matches their preferences, resulting in predilection for larger assortments. In study 3A, we measure both perceived preference uniqueness and anticipated difficulty in preference matching to evaluate our sequential process model (purchase motivation $\rightarrow$ perceived preference uniqueness $\rightarrow$ anticipated difficulty in preference matching $\rightarrow$ assortment size). Participants were randomly assigned to a hedonic utilitarian or motivation for the book purchase, analogous to study 1B. Participants then indicated their perceptions of preference uniqueness as agreement (7-point Likert) with the following statement: “I believe my preferences for books are unique and different from others’ book preferences.” Participants subsequently indicated how difficult they felt it would be to find a book that satisfies their goal (1=Not at all Difficult, 7=Very Difficult). Participants stated how many books they would like to review in an assortment. The effect of purchase motivation on assortment size was replicated ($F(1, 208) = 4.96, p < .05$). Additionally, participants in the hedonic condition felt their preferences were more unique ($F(1, 208) = 10.32, p < .01$; $M_{H} = 4.58, SD = 1.28$ vs. $M_{U} = 3.96, SD = 1.51$) and perceived finding a preference matching product to be more difficult ($F(1, 208) = 5.95, p < .05$; $M_{H} = 4.07, SD = 1.73$ vs. $M_{U} = 3.50, SD = 1.66$) than participants in the utilitarian condition. Bootstrapping results from a serial multiple mediator analysis (Model 6; Hayes 2013) confirmed a positive and significant indirect effect ($\beta = .13$; 95% CI = (.05, .35)) verifying our full mediation pathway. We replicated our process model in study 3B using the same paint color manipulation.
as study 1D. Alternative explanations of maximizing/satisficing, anticipated enjoyment of choosing, efficiency of choosing, intrinsic motivation, and goal importance were explored but not supported.

REFERENCES


Gifts of Consolation: Gifts as Substitutes for Emotional Support
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Most research on gifts has examined celebratory gifts, or gifts that are given in response to others’ positive events, such as birthdays or holidays. However, consumers also give gifts in response to others’ negative life events, such as a loved one’s death or a break-up. In this research, we introduce the term “gifts of consolation” to refer to gifts given in response to negative events and examine when and why consumers give them.

We propose that gifts of consolation are a form of social support and thus that giving a gift can be a substitute for providing someone with emotional support. People have the existing psychological ability to substitute a product for a psychological construct (Chen, Wan, and Levy 2017), and we argue that giving gifts and providing emotional support both satisfy a person’s obligation to provide social support to close others (Clark 1987). Therefore, if givers are unable to provide emotional support, they should be more likely to give a gift and vice versa.

Studies 1a and 1b test the basic effect, examining whether givers spend more on gifts when they have not provided emotional support. Participants (n = 208; n = 209) were asked to imagine that their friend’s mother died and that they were able or unable to provide them with emotional support. Then in study 1a, participants chose between giving their friend one of three arrangements of sympathy flowers (small—$40, medium—$60, and large—$80) or not sending flowers, and in study 1b they chose between giving a gift and vice versa.

Prior research (Clark 1987) has found that people feel less obligated to provide social support to people they are distant from, so in study 2 we examine whether the givers’ closeness to the support recipient moderates the effect. Participants (n = 414) first read that a friend’s (close condition) or coworker’s (distant condition) mother had died, and they attended (did not attend) the funeral. Then they were asked how much they would donate to a memorial fund for their friend’s mother. Participants who provided less emotional support condition spent more on gifts, than did those who provided more support (t = 3.86, p = .006, t = 3.89, p = .029), suggesting that givers use gifts to compensate for not providing emotional support.

Study 3a tests whether givers substitute gifts for emotional support in celebratory situations or whether this effect is unique to gifts of consolation. Participants (n = 415) read about a friend’s positive event (another friend was throwing them a birthday party) or negative event (their mother died), and that they did or did not attend the birthday party (funeral). Then they indicated how much they would spend on a gift for their friend. There was a significant interaction between gift giving occasion and level of emotional support provided (p = .001) such that participants said they would spend more on a gift when they did not attend their friend’s mother’s funeral than when they did (p < .0001), but whether or not they had attended their friend’s birthday party did not influence how much they chose to spend on a gift (p = .36), showing that givers substitute more for negative than positive events.

Study 4 examines whether the substitution effect works in reverse: If a giver gives a gift, are they then less likely to provide the recipient with emotional support? Participants (n = 203) first read that a friend’s (coworker’s) mother had died and that they decided to send flowers and a sympathy note or just a note. Then they were asked to write the note they would send. These notes were coded for how emotionally supportive they were. Participants who gave flowers wrote significantly less supportive notes than did those who did not give flowers (p < .0001). This effect was moderated by a marginal interaction (p = .09) such that giving a gift led to less supportive notes in the friend condition (p < .0001) but only marginally less supportive ones in the coworker condition (p = .07). This shows that givers compensate for not giving a gift by providing more emotional support.

Study 5 looks at when givers prefer to give gifts rather than provide emotional support. We propose that when a giver wants to support someone who they think will be difficult to support (e.g., someone who is negative or has low self-esteem; Forest, Kille, Wood, and Holmes 2014), they will give a gift after their obligation to provide support while avoiding an unpleasant interaction. We test this idea in a lab study. Participants (n = 48) were told that they would provide another participant with social support and were shown the profile of the person they would support. The profile was actually not from another participant but manipulated how easy the person was to support by varying how pessimistic and low in self-esteem they were. Participants were asked if they wanted to spend five minutes talking to the person about their break-up (i.e., provide emotional support) or pay $1 to give the person a cookie and avoid the conversation (i.e., give a gift). Participants were significantly more likely to give support by giving a gift when the support recipient sounded hard to support (54%) than easy to support (25%, p = .039), showing that gifts of consolation are an appealing way to support difficult people.

In conclusion, we show that givers give gifts of consolation and treat them as substitutes for emotional support. Our findings suggest that thinking about gifts as a form of social support may be a fruitful direction for future research.

REFERENCES


You are not as Smart as You Think You are: Effects of Self-Perceived Knowledge on Consumer Information Processing and Decision Making

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

It is well established that product knowledge affects information processing and decision-making. For this reason, it has received extensive attention from marketers (Bettman and Park 1980; Brucks 1985; Johnson and Russo 1984; Moorman, Diehl, Brinberg, and Kidwell 2004). There are two distinguishable types of knowledge that affect how consumers process knowledge and make decisions: actual knowledge (i.e. objective knowledge) and consumers’ assessments of their knowledge (i.e. subjective knowledge) (Bearden, Hardesty, and Rose 2001; Moorman, Diehl, Brinberg, and Kidwell 2004). The two types of knowledge uniquely influence information search and choice behavior (Radecki and Jaccard 1995).

In this article, we focus on self-perceived knowledge. Specifically, we investigate how self-perceived knowledge affects purchasing behavior and decision-making through omission neglect, ignorance of missing information.

Detecting absent information is surprisingly difficult (Sanbonmatsu, Kardes, Houghton, Ho, and Posavac 2003; Sanbonmatsu, Kardes, Posavac, and Houghton 1997; Sanbonmatsu, Kardes, and Sansone 1991). Consumers often rely heavily on the given information and ignore the possibility of missing information or underweigh its importance even when they are aware it is missing. The failure to detect the absence of relevant information can encourage consumers to form more extreme judgments because the importance of the presented information is overestimated (Sanbonmatsu et al. 2003; Unkelbach, Fiedler, and Freytag 2007). Overlooking important omissions often leads to extreme judgments and poor decisions, which hinder the consumer. These decisions are often biased to the presented information. Because omission neglect is consequential, it is crucial to discover its antecedents. However, limited research has investigated the antecedents of omission neglect.

Prior research has demonstrated that objective knowledge reduces omission neglect (Hernandez, Han, and Kardes 2014). In contrary, we propose that self-perceived knowledge increases attitude extremity and purchase likelihood by enhancing consumers’ susceptibility to omission neglect. For instance, when evaluating a bottle of wine, if consumers are confident in their knowledge of wine, they are more likely to focus on given information at the expense of absent information. They believe that the given information is sufficient, form a highly favorable judgment, and decide to purchase the wine based solely on the positive description given in an advertisement.

This research sheds light on the following questions: Does self-perceived knowledge affect omission neglect differently from and more strongly than objective knowledge? How do these differences shape judgments and decisions? Can we manipulate self-perceived knowledge in order to change how consumers process information?

We argue that consumers who perceive themselves as highly knowledgeable form more extreme attitudes and are more likely to purchase the product based on favorable product stimuli. This happens because self-perceived knowledge increases consumers’ vulnerability to omission neglect. Whereas consumers high in objective knowledge process information more cautiously and are more apt to identify a lack of information, consumers high in self-perceived knowledge process information less cautiously and are less apt to identify a lack of information. However, when consumers are high in both actual and self-perceived knowledge, the impact of self-perceived knowledge is greater because of our general tendency to ignore missing information. Finally, self-perceived knowledge is susceptible to change through manipulation.

To test these hypotheses, five studies were conducted. In Study 1, we examined the impact of self-perceived knowledge on choice behavior. 136 participants viewed an advertisement of a bottle of wine. We found that given that the advertisement was favorable, regardless of objective knowledge, as self-perceived knowledge increased, participants chose to purchase the wine more often ($p < .05$; 1 = Yes, 2 = No).

In Study 2, we investigated the mediating role of omission neglect in attitude extremity and purchase intention. 102 participants were invited to evaluate a bottle of wine based on an advertisement. Regression analysis of self-perceived knowledge showed that participants with higher self-perceived knowledge had more extreme attitudes ($p < .01$), higher purchase intentions ($p < .0001$), and perceived the information as more sufficient ($p = .001$). Mediation analysis (Hayes, 2012; Model 4; Bootstrap: 5000) showed that perceived information sufficiency mediated the path from self-perceived knowledge to attitude extremity (95%; CI: .0275 to .1395) and to purchase intention (95%; CI: .0720 to .3040).

In Studies 3a and 3b, we changed participants’ vulnerability to omission neglect by manipulating participants’ self-perceived knowledge. Study 3a worked as the preliminary test for Study 3b. In Study 3a, 83 participants viewed information about a camera, and we found that participants who reported that they knew more about cameras perceived the information as more sufficient ($p < .0001$) and held more extreme evaluations ($p < .0001$).

In Study 3b self-perceived knowledge was manipulated rather than measured. 153 participants were randomly divided into either a high or low self-perceived knowledge condition. Participants in the low self-perceived knowledge condition were asked if they were professional photographers. We expected most participants would report that they were not professional photographers. Next, participants reported how much they knew about cameras on a scale biased to induce them to believe that they had a limited amount of knowledge about cameras (1 = very little, 5 = some).

Participants in the high self-perceived knowledge condition were asked if they had taken pictures using a camera. We expected most participants to have taken pictures using a camera. Participants then reported how much they knew about cameras on a scale biased to induce them to believe that they had high knowledge of cameras (1 = some, 5 = very much).

Participants in the high (vs. low) self-perceived knowledge condition perceived the information as more sufficient ($p < .05$) and held more extreme evaluations ($p = .05$).

In Study 4, a response latency task testing memory for previously presented (vs. absent) attribute information of a camera was used to show the direct effects of self-perceived knowledge on omission neglect. Out of 35 participants, those with greater self-perceived knowledge were more vulnerable to omission neglect. We see this because they recognized previously present attributes much faster than absent attributes ($p < .05$).
In this research, we offer a new, theoretical account of how self-perceived knowledge affects consumer information processing and decision-making through omission neglect.

REFERENCE
Feel Closer When Event Comes: Time-moving Metaphor and Temporal Estimation
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In the domain of time, various metaphorical expressions of time are borrowed from space. Two spatiotemporal metaphors attract particular attention: ego-moving metaphor in which we are actively moving towards a fixed target event along the timeline; event-moving metaphor in which the target event is moving towards us who are fixed (Boroditsky 2000; Matlock et al. 2011; Richmond, Wilson, and Zinken 2012).

The current research explores a novel consequence of time-moving metaphors: the perceived temporal distance from now to the event. For example, suppose you are going to the dreamy Maldives next month for vacation. Should you feel psychologically closer or farther away to this event when the departure date is constructed as event-moving (e.g., the departure day is coming) versus ego-moving (e.g., you are going to the departure day)?

Specifically, we propose that the event-moving metaphor will make consumers perceive a higher level of emotional arousal than the ego-moving metaphor. Our reasoning is twofold. First, people exert the motion action in the ego-moving metaphor, whereas the event exert the action in the event-moving metaphor. Therefore, people have a higher level of agency beliefs in the ego-moving metaphor, which reduces people’s emotional arousal. Second, the moving state of the event in the event-moving metaphor may induce a higher level of threat perception. The event is moving toward people in the event-moving metaphor, while it is static in the ego-moving metaphor. From an evolutionary perspective, humans are more alert and stimulated to moving objects than to still objects. Therefore, people in the event-moving metaphor perceive a higher threat, which might increase people’s emotional arousal. Furthermore, based on the idea that emotional arousal decreases perceived temporal distance (Van Boven et al. 2010), we propose that people in the event-moving metaphor may perceive the temporal distance from now to the event to be closer than those in the ego-moving metaphor.

The results of three studies provide converging support for our proposition. In study 1, undergraduate student participants (N=57) were randomly assigned to the two conditions. All participants were first asked to read a scenario which described a presentation for an important module next Monday. They were told that they did not like the interview. Time-moving metaphors were primed by asking participants to read two different descriptions of the day (e.g., “As I approach the day of the oral presentation, I hope......” in the ego-moving condition; “As the day of the oral presentation approaches, I hope......” in the event-moving condition). We used two items to measure participants’ perceived temporal distance to the presentation: (1) “How far away does the presentation feel to you?” (1 = right away, 10 = far away), and (2) “How temporally distant do you feel the presentation is?” (1 = very close, 10 = very distant). To measure participants’ emotional arousal, we adapted the scale used in Anderson et al. (1996). Results revealed that participants perceived the event to be farther away in the ego-moving condition than in the event-moving condition. A mediation analysis revealed that emotional arousal mediated the effect of time-moving metaphor on temporal distance perception.

Study 2 employed a 2 (event time: future vs. past) × 2 (time-moving metaphor: ego-moving vs. event-moving) between-subjects design. MTurk participants (N=134) were first asked to read a scenario which was similar to the one used in Study 1 with two exceptions. First, the module representation was replaced by a presentation for a job interview. Second, no specific attitude towards the interview was indicated. We manipulated event time by setting the job interview either on “next Monday” or “last Monday.” The time-moving metaphor manipulation was modified from Boroditsky (2000), and we presented participants with pictures showing a human figure and a box. After that, participants reported their perceived temporal distance as in Study 1. Results showed that for future events, participants perceived the event to be farther away in the ego-moving condition than in the event-moving condition. However, for the past event, there was no significant difference in perceived temporal distance between the ego-moving condition and the event-moving condition.

Study 3 tested the two accounts of time-moving metaphor on emotional arousal. MTurk participants (N=143) were randomly assigned to three conditions (ego-moving, event-moving, and control condition). Similar to study 1, all participants were first asked to read a scenario which was about preparing a birthday party for their best friend. We used the same manipulation of time-moving metaphors as in Study 1. In the control condition, the event was described as stationary (e.g., “With the party being one week away, I hope...”), and “The party is in a few days: I think I should...”). Temporal distance and emotional arousal were measured in the same way as in study 1. Results revealed that participants perceived the event to be farther away in the ego-moving condition than both in the event-moving condition and in the control condition. There was no significant difference in temporal distance between the event-moving and the control conditions. These results indicated that the difference in emotional arousal in the two time-moving metaphors was caused by agency beliefs, rather than by perceived threat. Mediation analysis confirmed the mediational role of emotional arousal in the effect of time-moving metaphor on perceived temporal distance.

To the best of our knowledge, this research provides the first evidence that time-moving metaphor can influence consumers’ temporal estimation of an event. The current research also complements existing research on time-moving metaphor and emotion. Prior research has demonstrated that the two time-moving metaphors induce emotions with different valences: ego-moving metaphor induces happiness while time-moving metaphor induces anxiety and depression (Richmond et al. 2012). Our research finds that time-moving metaphors also affect the other dimension of emotion, namely arousal.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

A rapidly growing body of research shows that incidental sensor
e experiences can influence consumers’ thoughts, feelings, and be
aviors. These influences can reflect a number of different processes,
 including the use of sensory experiences as a source of information;
the influence of sensory processes on mental simulations; and the
grounding of abstract concepts in metaphorically related concrete
experiences (for reviews, see Barsalou, 2008; Krishna & Schwarz,
2014; Landau, Meier, and Keefer 2010). In this work, we focus on a
consumption related sensory experience that has received little atten-
tion, namely bitter taste.

An analysis of metaphors and sayings related to bitter taste in-
dicates large cultural differences. Most notably, in the Chinese lan-
guage and culture, bitterness is associated metaphorically with con-
cepts of adversity. Chi-Ku (“eating bitterness”) means “to endure a
hardship”, “to overcome difficulties”, and “to forge ahead” (Loyalka,
2012). In China, young children are taught to embrace the experi-
ence of Chi-Ku because it is regarded as a necessary step to progress
towards their goals and achieve success, as illustrated by sayings
such as, “only via eating bitterness can you surpass your peers.” This
metaphorical meaning of bitter tastes is uncommon in the English
language and unfamiliar to Canadians. Instead, Canadians associ-
ate bitterness with unfair treatment and social injustice. This link
is exemplified by a famous quote from Emmeline Pankhurst, an early
British feminist leader, who observed, “I have not personally suf-
fured from the deprivations, the bitterness and sorrow which bring so
many men and women to a realisation of social injustice.” These ob-
servations suggest an association between bitter taste and endurance
of hardship in Chinese (but not in Canadian) culture and between
bitter taste and injustice in Canadian (but not in Chinese) culture.

Therefore, we conducted three study to test the culture-specific
metaphoric effects of bitter taste. We hypothesized that bitter taste (1)
influences Chinese (but not Canadian) participants’ judgments of en-
durance and (2) Canadian (but not Chinese) participants’ judgments
of fairness.

Study 1. To assess taste associations within each culture, we
asked 57 native Canadian students to rate how strongly sweetness,
bitterness, sourness, and saltiness are associated with injustice and
87 native Chinese students to rate how strongly these tastes are as-
associated with hardship and challenges (Chan, Tong, Tan, and Koh,
2013). As expected, Canadians associated injustice more with bitter-
ness (M=5.05) than sweetness (M=1.63), sourness (M=4.02) or salti-
ness (M=3.67; all p<.001); Chinese associated hardship more with
bitterness (M=5.77) than sweetness (M=3.28) sourness (M=4.09) or
saltiness (M=3.29; all p<0.001).

Study 2. To test the expected culture-specific behavioral effects
of bitter taste we conducted a 3 (taste: bitter/water/sweet) x 2 (cul-
ture: Canadian/Chinese) x 3 (judgment: fairness/effort/motivation)
factorial experiment, with the last factor manipulated within partici-
pants. Participants (N = 165; average age 20, 55.5% female) were
students at a major Canadian university; 84 were native speakers of
Chinese and 81 were native speakers of English. They were first ex-
posed to one of three randomly assigned taste experiences (bitter,
sweet, neutral) and then responded to measures of motivation and
effort in a challenging tasks context and measures of fairness in a job
rejection context. As expected, Chinese participants who tasted bitter
lotus seeds reported higher motivation and more effort in response to
challenging tasks than those who tasted candy or water (simple ef-
fect on Chinese for motivation F [2,159] =7.201, p=.001; for efforts
[2,159] =4.756, p=.01). These effects were not observed among
Canadian participants (simple effect on Canadians for motivation F
[2,159] =.641, p=.528; for efforts F [2,159] =.386, p=.680; interaction
effect for motivation F [2,159] = 5.253, p=.006; for efforts F
[2,159] = 3.722, p=.026). Also as expected, Canadian participants
judged the described job situation as more unfair after they tasted
something bitter than sweet or neutral (simple effect on Canadians
F [2,159] = 2.927, p=.05). The fairness judgments of Chinese par-
ticipants were not significantly influenced (simple effect on Chinese
F [2,159] =.354, p=.702) but showed a similar pattern (interaction
effect F [2,159] =.702, p=.488). This may reflect that the Chinese stu-
dents had acquired some of the cultural associations between injus-
tice and bitterness during their studies in Canada. Study 3 addressed
this possibility.

Study 3. 72 native speakers of English from a major Canadian
university and 88 native speakers of Chinese from a top Chinese uni-
versity were exposed to one of three taste experiences (bitter, sweet,
near) and then responded to the job rejection paragraph used in
Study 2. Replicating Study 2, Canadians found the job situation less
fair after tasting something bitter than after tasting something sweet
or neutral (simple effect on Canadians F [2, 154] =4.505, p = .013). Chi-
inese participants were not influenced by the taste manipulation
(simple effect on Chinese F [2, 154] = 1.283, p = .283), resulting in
the predicted interaction between culture and taste, F(2, 154) =
3.249, p = .041.

In combination, these findings highlight that the same sensory
experience can have divergent culture-specific effects on judgment.
Consistent with culture-specific metaphors, incidental bitter tastes
influenced Canadian, but not Chinese, assessments of social justice
and fairness and Chinese, but not Canadian, assessments of moti-
vation and effort in a difficult situation. A comparison of Chinese
students in China and Canada further suggests that culture-specific
metaphors can be acquired through prolonged cultural exposure.
How culture specific metaphors moderate the influence of identical
sensory experiences, and how such metaphors are acquired through
cultural exposure, provides a promising avenue for future research in
embodiment and sensory marketing.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Retailers can organize their products either taxonomically or thematically. Taxonomic product assortment involves organizing broad classes of products hierarchically into increasingly more specific categories, where members in each product category share many features and frequently serve as substitutes for one another. For example, the category of socks may consist of various low cut, ankle, and knee-high socks. In contrast, products are thematically organized if they perform complementary roles in a consumption situation (Estes et al. 2012). To illustrate, although socks, an MP3 player, and deodorant share few, if any, common features, they are thematically related because they are commonly used together during workouts.

These two types of product assortments are perceived by consumers differently (Diehl, van Herpen, and Lamberton 2015). Taxonomic assortments help consumers efficiently locate and compare substitute products that interest them, potentially enhancing their satisfaction with the purchase process and the goods they buy, whereas thematic assortments increase exposure to complementary products that may otherwise be overlooked by consumers. Studies that have compared the two types of assortment have found that thematic product assortments are perceived as more attractive, but also more effortful to process (Diehl, et al. 2014). Still, to date, little is known about how taxonomic and thematic product assortments influence the processing of consumers who examine them and any downstream effects such processing may have on their responses to goods observed in unrelated contexts.

We reasoned that the related versus compartmentalized nature of products displayed in thematic versus taxonomic product assortments may induce consumers who examine them to adopt a relational versus an item-specific processing mind-set. Moreover, extant research has established that each of these types of mind-sets can persist and carry-over, potentially producing downstream effects on consumers’ perceptions and/or behavior when they later encounter products in unrelated contexts (Kim and Meyers-Levy 2008). Pertinent to this, substantial evidence suggests that relational processing, which entails encoding connections among often distally related concepts, boosts not only creativity but appreciation of it (Runco 1991; Yang et al. 2011). Thus, we propose that consumers who examine thematic (versus taxonomic) product assortments will elicit a relational processing mindset that produces downstream enhancement in these consumers’ appreciation of innovative, novel, or otherwise creative goods, which typically carry higher profit margins.

Nevertheless, certain individual differences may modify whether such downstream effects occur in later contexts. Research on self-construal has distinguished individuals with an interdependent orientation, who define themselves more holistically in terms of their relationships with others, from individuals possessing an independent orientation, who define themselves more analytically by focusing on their internal attributes such as traits or abilities (Markus and Kitayama 1991). Further and importantly, Zhu and Meyers-Levy (2009) established that these alternative ways of thinking about the self more generally shape cognition, such that interdependents seem to gravitate toward relational processing that emphasizes connections and holism, whereas independents favor item-specific processing, characterized by analytic context-independent thinking whereby individual items are set contrastively against others.

Upon integrating these observations, we propose the following. Because interdependents (but not independents) are chronically inclined and possibly more adept at processing data relationally, the impact of thematic product assortments on a consumer’s relational processing mindset and its downstream effect on appreciation of creative goods may be more likely to occur when individuals possess an interdependent than an independent self-construal.

We conducted three experiments where in each, we manipulated whether individuals examined several thematic or taxonomic product assortments. Subsequently we investigated the downstream effect this exerted on individuals’ appreciation of creative ads or products encountered later in an unrelated context. Experiment 1 found that participants who previously examined several thematic versus taxonomic product assortments exhibited both greater appreciation of creative ads and they better understood them.

Experiment 2 extended on this by examining the anticipated moderating effect of self-construal, and instead of examining creative ads, study 2 investigated the downstream effect of the alternative product assortments on individuals’ willingness-to-pay (WTP) for both creative and conventional products. Consistent with expectations, treatment effects emerged only on individuals’ WTP for creative products, not conventional ones. Further, individuals with an interdependent self-construal reported higher WTP for creative products when they had previously examined the thematic, not the taxonomic product assortments. However, individuals with an independent self-construal reported equivalent WTP sums regardless of the products assortments they had examined earlier.

Finally, experiment 3 investigated whether a mediated-moderation effect of relational processing (mediator) and self-construal (moderator) can explain how product assortment influences consumers’ appreciation of creative products. The procedure and treatments used in this study were the same as those of experiment 2 except that only creative products were included, WTP was replaced by product evaluations, and an indicator was added to gauge individuals’ use of relational processing by asking them to solve 10 Remote Associates Test (RAT, Mednick 1962) problems. Because successful performance on RAT problems requires engaging iteratively in relational processing (Kray, Galinsky, and Wong 2006) participants’ relational processing was gauged by their number of correctly solved RAT problems. As anticipated, results revealed parallel interactive effects of product assortment and self-construal on both individuals’ evaluations of the creative products and on the indicator of their relational processing. In addition, bootstrap analysis indicated that among interdependent individuals, the effect of product assortment was mediated by relational processing. However, this was not the case among independent individuals.

In sum, this research contributes to the literature on both mind-sets and product assortments by demonstrating that examination of thematic (but not taxonomic) product assortments can trigger a relational processing mindset, and particularly among individuals possessing an interdependent self-construal, this mindset carries over and boosts appreciation of creative products and ads encountered later in unrelated contexts. The current research also has important
practical implications. It suggests that retailers can use thematic product assortments to increase consumers’ appreciation and possible purchase of frequently highly profitable innovative, novel, or otherwise creative products that may be featured elsewhere in the retail venue.

REFERENCES


Effects of Age on Taste Perceptions in a Food Service Context

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The population is aging. In 1990 9.2 percent of the population was 60 or older; by 2013 it was 11.7, and by 2050 it is expected to reach 21.1 (United Nations 2013). The aging of population has significant implications for the workforce. The 55+ segment is growing three times the rate of U.S. labor force, and is expected to reach 25% of the labor force by 2024 (Toossi 2015). At first glance it would seem that this predicted workforce expansion could provide an employment opportunity for older workers and vice versa. Alarming, elderly people face important challenges in the workplace (Kaufmann, Krings, and Sczesny 2015). They are perceived to be inefficient, slower to learn, and poorer at remembering than younger counterparts, (DeArmond et al. 2006; Ng and Feldman 2012). In the food service industry, where speed and efficiency are valued, perceptions that older employees are slower or get confused result in a belief that older workers can decrease customer satisfaction (Bae and Dae-Young 2014). In other words, restaurant managers tend to adhere to the negative stereotype that old equals slow, and assume that slow equals bad (Luch and Tsaur 2011; Bae and Dae-Young 2014).

The premise of this research is that this notion may be incorrect. Although older workers are indeed perceived to be slower, we argue that when it comes to food, slow is good. Similar to the time taken by a craftsman to perfect a project, we argue that consumers have a lay belief that “slow food=better food”. Grounded in the literature about the Slow Food Movement, which advocates a more thoughtful consumption and preparation of food (Dunn et al. 2011), we argue that in food context, slowness can be associated with effort and care. Therefore, because older people are slower this slow pace can lead to positive perceptions from consumers.

More formally,

**Hypothesis 1:** When food is prepared by an older (younger) person, consumers will evaluate it as more (less) tasty.

**Hypothesis 2:** The effect of age on taste evaluation is mediated by the perceived preparation time.

With four studies we demonstrate that although consumers indeed think that the older cook takes longer to prepare food, they also believe the food prepared by her will be tastier than that prepared by a younger person.

Study 1 (N=648) was conducted online using MTurk. Each participant evaluated 2 products (from a total of 8 products investigated). For that participants saw a picture containing the photo of the producer (which was young or old), and the information about the producer’s age. Congruent to the literature on age stereotype we show that people tend to judge non-food products (e.g. fashion accessories, electronics, decoration services, nail polisher) more negatively when designed and developed by older people in comparison to their younger counterparts. How-ever, for food or beverage products (e.g. cookies, soup, cake, chicken and tea) we found an inverse and positive impact of older age.

In study 2, 109 undergrad students participated in a cupcake tasting. The product was supposedly made by Tiane, the cook, who had either 25 or 55 years old. We manipulated age with two hired actresses and by reinforcing their age manipulation by informing consumers that Tiane is 25 (55) years old before the tasting. Study two provided evidence that food prepared by an older (versus younger) person is perceived to taste better and leads to higher purchase intention. Further, the effect of age on taste perception was mediated by participants’ perceived preparation time, whereby a slower preparation time led participants to believe that the food tasted better.

In study 3 (N=217 workers from an European panel) we clarify the direction of the age effect (if it was the fact that the chef was older that increased taste perception or if was the fact that she was younger that decreased taste perceptions) by adding a control group where the age of the cook was not informed. This study results show that the age effect seems to be driven by the perception that food prepared by an older person is better, rather than the perception that food prepared by a younger person is worse. Further, study 3 provided evidence that the effect of age on taste is caused by the assumption that the food took longer to be prepared.

Finally, in study four we identified a boundary condition for the positive influence of age on taste perception, chef’s expertise. The study shows that the age effect is mitigated when people are informed that both chefs have high expertise. We demonstrate that when the expertise on doing the food was framed as low the older chef lead to better taste perceptions and likelihood to visit the restaurant, supporting our argument that consumers perceive the food prepared by an older chef as better. In contrast, when both chefs are framed as having high expertise the age no longer impacts consumers’ perceptions and attitudes.

Through four studies—two involving actual taste experiences and two employing scenarios—we show that employee age can positively impact consumers’ taste perceptions and purchase attitudes. Consequently, this research makes a number of theoretical and managerial contributions. From a theoretical perspective, the positive effect of age on taste contributes to age stereotype literature and shows that there are contexts in which age is an advantage (Marcus et al. 2016). Our mediation of “slow food=better food” also contributes to the literature on lay beliefs and food assessment (Hoegg and Alba 2007; Raghunathan, Naylor, and Hoyer 2006; Werle, Trendel, and Ardito 2013; Mai and Hoffman, 2015). Finally, this research also has important managerial implications and shows that restaurant managers should be more open to hiring older workers and should communicate it to consumers.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Although recent market studies suggest that consumers may prefer nostalgic products and services when facing economic uncertainty, no empirical effort has been made to verify the influence of perceived economic insecurity (PEI) on consumers’ nostalgic consumption and to identify which psychological mechanism is activated in response to PEI. Therefore, we attempted to fill this gap in this study. Building on previous research on nostalgia and meaning in life, we suggest that PEI, both chronic and temporary, lowers consumers’ meaning in life, which in turn makes consumers feel nostalgic, prefer nostalgic products, and respond favorably to nostalgic ads.

Why does PEI affect nostalgic consumption? Prior studies report that economic uncertainty affects consumers’ various responses such as prosocial behaviors, preference polarization, investment in offspring, saving behavior, health care decisions, creativity, and preferences toward scarce goods. Recently, evidence indicates that PEI also lowers consumers’ meaning in life (Abeyta et al., 2016), because PEI threatens the continued satisfaction of basic psychological needs and therefore hinders consumers’ abilities to pursue personal meaningful goals. A restorative perspective highlights that nostalgia can counteract insecurities and threats to meaning in life by providing a reservoir of meaningful personal experiences that help ease the discomfort (Routledge et al., 2011; Zhou et al., 2008). For example, Loveland et al. (2010) found that social exclusion increases consumers’ preference toward nostalgic products, and consumption of nostalgic products reduces the social discomfort. By manipulating death awareness, Routledge et al. (2008) revealed that nostalgia can buffer the effects of existential threat on death-thought accessibility. To summarize, we hypothesize that PEI, both temporary and chronic, increases consumers’ preference toward nostalgic consumption. This is because PEI threatens consumers’ meaning in life. To counteract the threat, nostalgic consumption can act as an “inner refuge” and provide people with psychological shield and warmth. Four studies tested this hypothesis.

In study 1, 174 adults were recruited to complete an online questionnaire. We measured participant’s PEI, nostalgic index (Holbrook, 1994), meaning in life, childhood socioeconomic status, age, and current household income. The results indicated that higher PEI was associated with lower meaning in life and a higher nostalgic index. A 5000 resample bootstrap provided evidence supporting this indirect effect. In all four studies, childhood socioeconomic status had a negative impact on consumer’s nostalgic responses, but had no significant interaction effect with PEI.

Study 2 examined whether PEI manipulation increases interest in consuming nostalgic products. Additionally, study 2 tested the mediating role of meaning in life in driving the preference for nostalgic products after PEI manipulation. In total, 119 adults were randomly assigned to either the high- or low-PEI condition. In the first task, we used a news article to manipulate participants’ PEI. In the high-PEI condition, the article described the recent economic recession and how the economic problems are likely to persist into the subsequent year. In the low-PEI condition, the participants read an article similar in length to the high-PEI condition, which described a recent air pollution problem caused by a major manufacturer. After reading the article, participants finished relevant measurement. Subsequently, participants completed five choices between nostalgic and nonnostalgic brands in various product categories to form a nostalgic product choice index. Results showed a significant main effect of the PEI condition on the product choice index. Mean scores of the product choice index were higher for the high-PEI condition compared with the low-PEI condition. The results were reversed for meaning in life. A bootstrap test again confirmed the indirect path from the PEI condition through meaning in life to the product choice index.

Study 3 was conducted to conceptually replicate and extend the findings from study 2. First, we ascertained whether our experimental findings can be replicated in populations facing various levels of chronic PEI. Specifically, rather than manipulating the momentary sense of economic insecurity, we treated PEI as an individual difference factor and tested how this variable influences consumer preference toward nostalgic products. Second, we used popular music as the product context to increase the generalizability of our findings.

In total, 149 adults participated in this study. As predicted, PEI had a positive effect on the number of nostalgic songs chosen by participants but had a negative effect on meaning in life. Bootstrapping analysis revealed that meaning in life mediated the relationship between PEI and the number of nostalgic songs selected.

In study 4, we tested the meaning-in-life account by examining a theoretically relevant moderator: social connectedness (SC). Current research suggests that enhanced SC may alleviate the effects of PEI on meaning in life. In total, 184 adults participated in this study. Upon arrival, the participants were informed that the study involved three unrelated parts. The first part was a general “Lifestyle Survey” that measured participants’ childhood socioeconomic status and SC. The second part included the same PEI manipulation used in study 2. In the final part, participants received a full-color nostalgic ad promoting consumers to recall the “good times” of their past. After exposure to the ad, participants were asked to report their purchase intention. We found significant interactions between PEI and SC on both meaning in life and purchase intention. Subsequent spotlight analysis revealed that low-SC respondents were affected by the PEI condition. By contrast, high-SC participants were less affected by the PEI condition. We also uncovered a conditional indirect effect of the interaction between PEI and SC on purchase intention through meaning in life. The index of moderated mediation for the indirect effect was significant.

From a theoretical perspective, this research is the first to show that PEI, a threat to meaning in life, can elicit favorable consumer responses toward nostalgic products and ads. This article also contributes to the broader nostalgia field. The literature on nostalgia does not consider the influence of economic factors. The results of our research shed new light on the effects of insecurity on meaning in life and nostalgia. Our findings also have useful implications for marketing practitioners; that is, adding nostalgic elements into marketing activities may substantially improve consumers’ reactions.

REFERENCES


How Group Identification and Stereotype Content Determine the Effectiveness of Ads Portraying Positive Stereotypes

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

While prior consumer behavior research on stereotypes has largely focused on negative stereotypes (e.g., Lee, Kim and Vohs 2011), this research examines how positive stereotypes portrayed in advertising influence the effectiveness of these ads for consumers belonging to the stereotyped group. We propose that how consumers respond depends on their identification with the stereotyped group and the content of the positive stereotype (warmth vs. competence). We suggest that for high identifiers, positive stereotypes in advertising elicit a communal orientation and an increased valuation of warmth information, whereas for low identifiers, these stereotypes cue an agentic orientation and an increased valuation of competence information.

We propose that the effectiveness and persuasiveness of an ad portraying positive stereotypes lies in how much consumers value the ad’s arguments, which are often closely tied to the portrayed stereotype (i.e., warmth vs. competence). When a positive stereotype is portrayed in advertising, the brand and promoted product becomes linked to characteristics tied to the stereotype. Consequently, we predict that high identifiers will respond more favorably than low identifiers to ads that stereotype their group as warm because high identifiers are more likely to have a communal orientation and therefore be more persuaded by warmth-related arguments. In contrast, low identifiers will respond more favorably than high identifiers to ads stereotyping their group as competent because low identifiers are more likely to adopt an agentic orientation and find competence-related arguments more useful and informative.

In Study 1, we first focus on American Southerners to test the hypothesis that ads portraying positive stereotypes related to warmth will be more effective for those who identify highly with the stereotyped group. We also tested whether an increased communal orientation for high relative to low identifiers drives more favorable evaluations of the promoted restaurant.

Undergraduate students self-identified as Southerners completed Leach et al.’s (2008) measure of group identification one week in advance. In the main study, participants viewed either a stereotypical ad featuring Southerners promoting a restaurant that provided warm and welcoming service or a control ad which was identical except with no information regarding the spokespeople’s origins. Participants then rated the restaurant (good, favorable; $r_{w}=.72$, $p<.0001$) and the importance of communal values (e.g., altruism, harmony, Trappnell and Paulhus 2012).

Regression analysis revealed a two-way interaction between ad type and group identification ($t(99)=-2.42$, $p<.05$). For the Southern stereotype ad, high relative to low identifiers indicated more favorable evaluations, but this was not the case for the control ad. The same analysis on communal values endorsement also yielded a two-way interaction ($t(99)=-2.04$, $p<.05$) and same pattern of effects. Moderated mediation analysis confirmed that communal values endorsement mediated the positive effect of group identification on evaluations when participants viewed the Southern stereotype ad ($B=-.11$, 95% CI: .01, .32), but not when participants viewed the control ad ($B=-.01$, 95% CI: -.11, .40).

In Study 2, we examine ads that positively stereotype Asian Americans as being intelligent and quantitatively skilled (Lin et al., 2005) to test the prediction that low relative to high identifiers will respond more favorably to ads portraying competence-related stereotypes.

An online panel of Asian Americans completed two ostensibly unrelated questionnaires. In the first questionnaire, we manipulated group identification by having participants respond to three open-ended questions regarding their feelings about being Asian adapted from Leach et al. (2008). Then participants rated an ad for “Sherwood Test Prep,” a company that specialized in helping students improve their quantitative skills. While the stereotypical ad featured an Asian American spokesperson, the control ad featured a non-Asian American spokesperson. In addition to the same evaluation items used in the Study 1, participants provided product ratings (usefulness, value, effectiveness, purchase interest; $a=.96$). An ANOVA on product evaluations revealed a two-way ad type by group identification prime interaction ($F(3, 68)=3.72, p=.05$), showing that those primed with high relative to low identification provided less favorable product evaluations, but only after viewing the Asian stereotype and not the control ad.

In Study 3, we examine the responses of Asian American women who are unique in that they can be positively stereotyped as women along the warmth dimension or as Asian along the competence dimension (Shih et al., 1999). We test the prediction that high (vs. low) identifying Asian American women will respond more favorably to an ad that positively stereotypes women as empathetic and cooperative but less favorably to an ad that positively stereotypes Asians as intelligent and quantitatively skilled.

An online panel of Asian American women completed both gender and ethnicity versions of Leach et al.’s (2008) scale in random order one week prior. For the main study, participants viewed an ad featuring an Asian American woman promoting a company called “The Negotiation Institute” that positively stereotyped either women or Asian Americans and rated the company (good, favorable; $r_{w}=.65$, $p<.0001$).

To test our predictions, we used two regression models to examine product evaluations. For the ad type x female group identification model, analysis revealed a significant two-way interaction ($t(71)=-2.20, p<.05$). Those high relative to low in female group identification indicated more favorable evaluations after viewing the female stereotype ad but not after viewing the Asian stereotype ad. For the ad type x Asian American identification model, we also found a significant two-way interaction ($t(71)=-3.14, p<.01$). For the Asian stereotype ad, those low relative to high in Asian American identification provided more favorable evaluations. For the female stereotype ad, those low versus high in Asian American identification actually evaluated the company less favorably.

In conclusion, as the marketplace becomes more diverse, it is increasingly important to understand how consumers respond to portrayals of their social group. Given their complimentary nature, positive stereotypes are frequently and oftentimes inadvertently portrayed in the media, highlighting the need for more research on topics in this area. We hope the current research is useful for several different audiences, including marketers appealing to diverse markets, stereotyped consumers sorting through their own responses, and researchers exploring the psychological processes elicited by positive stereotypes in the marketplace.
REFERENCES
Effects of Matched and Mismatched Comparative Advertising Messages:
The Moderating Role of Consumers’ Processing Focus

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

A frequently employed framework to account for findings in persuasion research focuses on whether persuasive messages match or mismatch consumers’ self-schemata (e.g., extroversion; Wheeler, Petty, and Bizer 2005), goals (e.g., regulatory focus; Lee, Keller, and Sternthal 2010), emotions (Agrawal and Duhachek 2010), or contextual factors during message processing (e.g., temporal distance; Zhao and Xie 2011). Most of this research has documented a “matching” effect of advertising messages, suggesting that matched messages are more persuasive than mismatched messages, though on some (but rare) occasions, mismatched messages have been found to be more effective (Millar and Millar 1990; Aaker and Williams 1998).

Researchers have recently set out to account for these seemingly opposing findings of matched and mismatched messages. For example, Malaviya and Brendl (2014) show that hedonic motives moderate the effects of matched vs. mismatched messages. They find that favorable persuasion outcomes from a match (vs. mismatch) between regulatory focus and message framing occur only when the hedonic motive of the perceiver is consistent with (vs. opposes) that of the message. Extending this stream of research, we examine the moderating role of consumers’ processing focus (cognitive vs. affective) and posit that consumers with a cognitive (vs. an affective) focus find mismatched (vs. matched) messages more persuasive.

We conduct our inquiry by focusing on two types of indirect comparative messages: “leading brand” comparisons (“brand X analgesic relieves pain better than the leading brand”) and comparisons featuring “other brands” (“brand X trucks are better than other brands in their class”). We choose comparative advertising and, more specifically, indirect comparative messages, as our context because: (1) more than 70% of all advertising in the US may feature some type of comparison (Pechmann and Stewart 1990), and (2) though indirect comparative advertising is significantly more prevalent in practice than direct comparative advertising (Pechmann and Stewart 1990), most comparative investigations have focused on direct comparisons (e.g., Jain, Agrawal, and Maheswaran 2006; Zhang, Kardes, and Cronley 2000).

Drawing on categorization research, we posit that different comparative claims and ad contexts may induce alternative categorization approaches and distinct types of elaborations. First, consistent with Snyder (1992), we posit that “leading brand” claims invite consumers to compare the advertised brand to a specific (albeit unnamed) brand, leading to exemplar-based processing. Further, “other brands” claims invite consumers to compare the advertised brand to a group of brands, eliciting prototype-based processing. In addition, we propose that when a category consists of relatively few brands, consumers may be more predisposed to exemplar-based processing whereas when it comprises a relatively large set of brands, consumers may be more likely to hold prototypical representation of the category (e.g., Yeung and Soman 2007). Given that both comparative messages of different types (“leading brand” and “other brands”) and categories of differing sizes may influence the reliance on prototype- vs. exemplar-based processing, conceptually, and from a research design viewpoint, a match exists when the perceived category size is large (vs. small) and consumers are exposed to an “other brands” (vs. a “leading brand”) message. This is so because both such conditions promote a prototype-(vs. exemplar-) based representation.

On the basis of metacognition research (Alter et al. 2007) and the finding that matched messages are easier to process than mismatched messages, we contend that when processing matched comparative advertising messages (“leading brand” claims in a small category or “other brands” claims in a large category), consumers should experience less processing difficulty, which in turn will engender a feeling-based processing strategy that is affective, intuitive, and holistic; however, exposure to mismatched comparative messages (“leading brand” claims in a large category or “other brands” claims in a small category) will lead consumers to resort to a more analytical processing strategy that is cognitive, rational, and deliberative. We further propose that the extent to which matched or mismatched comparative advertising messages elicit more favorable consumer responses hinges on consumers’ processing focus, whether activated prior to ad exposure or chronically preferred by consumers. That is, consumers should develop more favorable reactions toward mismatched comparative advertising messages if their processing focus is also more cognitive. If their processing focus is affective, they should develop more positive responses toward matched comparative advertising messages.

We report two experiments which provide support to our theorizing. In the first experiment, respondents were first exposed to a cognitive (or an affective) processing focus manipulation task where they were asked to search words related to cognition or affect. Next, they received information about the car market where category size was manipulated (emphasizing there are many or few choices in the car market). Then they viewed a car ad which featured the “leading brand” claim or the “other brands” claim. Finally, they reported their brand evaluations. Our results find that when a cognitive (vs. an affective) focus was induced, respondents reported more favorable brand evaluations where there was mismatch (vs. match) between category size and type of claim. In the second experiment, the cognitive/affective focus was operationalized using chronic construal-level, which was measured using the behavioral identification form. Findings from experiment 1 were replicated.
Regulatory Focus and Donation to Proactive and Reactive Causes
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Charitable organizations often adopt divergent approaches to tackle the same problem. The American Heart Association (AHA), for example, has two distinct types of programs to deal with diabetes: (1) one aiming at fun research to develop new treatments and prevention strategies, and (2) the other focusing on assisting current diabetes patients pay for their treatment. How do potential donors react to these two types of causes? Why? This is the question that this research intends to address.

In this paper we propose a duality in altruistic motivations. While one pro-social motivation drives support for proactive causes where the focus is on preventing negative future outcomes, the other motivation impels support for reactive actions where the focus is on mitigating existing negative situations. While AHA’s initiatives for research and prevention are proactive, its help to existing patients is reactive. A proactive cause refers to the fund-raising programs that aim to prevent something bad from happening before it occurs, whereas reactive cause is characterized by the remedies that aim to resolve the problem after it arises. Notably, this classification is in line with the service marketing literature, which shows that there are two possible strategies to deal with service failure, proactive and reactive. Proactive strategies are implemented before service failure, whilst reactive strategies operate after a service problem appears (Worsfold et al. 2007). From a conceptual perspective, the two types of donation causes differ in who the beneficiaries of the donation are likely to be. While a proactive cause may potentially benefit themselves (including one’s offspring, and future generations), a reactive cause narrowly focuses on the victims who are currently suffering from the problem.

In this research, we predict that individuals’ regulatory focus has differential effects on their preference for these two types of causes. According to Higgins (1998), individuals possess two types of regulatory goals, namely promotion-focused and prevention-focused. The goals of promotion-focused individuals are characterized by the orientation toward seeking benefits, gains, and self-enhancements, whereas prevention-focused people are oriented toward avoiding uncertainty, mistakes, and losses (Aaker and Lee 2001). Because of this, individuals with a promotion focus tend to eagerly pursue their own interest and desires without much consideration for possible social consequences (Brebels et al. 2008). In contrast, those with a prevention focus are directed toward goals like duties, responsibilities, and obligations, and are more considerate to possible social consequences that represent a threat to things one ought to do (Brebels et al. 2008; Oyserman et al. 2007). Consistent with this qualitative difference across promotion- and prevention-focus, cross-cultural literature shows that the goal of individualistic countries (e.g., the U.S. and Canada, where people are usually promotion-focused) is to develop an individual sense of identity and self-sufficiency away from others (Triandis 1995). In contrast, from an early age, individuals in collectivistic cultures (e.g., China and India, where people are usually prevention-focused) are trained to become an integral part of the larger group and make contributions to the achievement and welfare of the collective (Triandis 1995).

Based on such differences, we expect that individuals with a promotion focus are more likely to donate to proactive causes than to reactive ones, because of a latent expectation that they or their offspring may potentially benefit from the former, but not so much from the latter. However, individuals with a prevention focus are equally likely to donate to both, as their tendency to donate is mainly driven by obligations and responsibilities, which makes cause type less relevant. These propositions find resonance in recent research examining the impact of regulatory focus on green consumption (Ku et al. 2012). Although not in the donation context, these findings show that prevention-focused consumers are more strongly persuaded by environment-benefit appeals, whereas promotion-focused consumers are more responsive to self-benefit appeals. This suggests that individuals with a promotion focus are more likely to focus on ways and means to self-benefit and be self-sufficient, while individuals with a prevention focus should be other-focused given their drive to fulfill their obligations and responsibilities to others. The foregoing discussion suggests that perceived self-benefit is the key mechanism through which regulatory focus affects individuals’ preference to proactive versus reactive causes.

If our theorization is correct, when other-benefit of the cause is made salient, social desirability of helping gets activated and self-serving motivations are subdued (Fisher et al. 2008). This will lead promotion-focused individuals to behave similarly to prevention-focused individuals.

The proposed effects are tested in three studies. Study 1 uses chronic measures to test the core thesis of this research, i.e., promotion focus leads to more preference for proactive (vs. reactive) causes but prevention focus does not differentiate between these two types of causes. Study 2 replicates study 1’s findings using situational activated regulatory focus, and provides direct evidence on the perceived self-benefit of the cause as the key mechanism. Study 3 manipulates the salience of self-benefit and other-benefit for the same cause, and shows that when self-benefit of the cause is made salient, the findings of studies 1 and 2 are replicated; however, when other-benefit of the cause is made salient, individuals with a promotion-focus do not differentiates the causes.

Study 1 (N=304) was conducted online using MTurk. Participants first read the description of AHA and were then asked to indicate their preference for these two types of causes (1 = definitely prefer the causes that help the patients deal with their current financial needs; 7 = definitely prefer the causes that aim at preventing diseases from happening in the future). Afterwards, participants provided ratings on their level of regulator foci, using Haws et al.’s (2010) scale. Participants’ age, gender, and family history of heart disease was measured as covariates. A regression analysis with preference of donation cause as the criterion and prevention focus and promotion focus as independent variables revealed a significant positive effect of promotion focus on preference (β = .14, t(301) = 2.36, p < .05). The effect of prevention focus on preference was not significant (β = -.08, t(301) = -1.45, p = .15). None of the control variables reached statistical significance (all p’s > .50). These results support our hypothesis that individuals with a promotion focus prefer the proactive cause over reactive cause, whereas individuals with a prevention focus have no difference toward the two causes.

The purpose of study 2 (N=172) is threefold: (1) to replicate study 1’s finding through manipulating regulatory foci, (2) to for-
mally test perceived self-benefit of the cause as the key mediator underlying our results, and (3) to rule out long-term orientation as an alternative explanation. It featured a 2 (regulatory foci: prevention vs. promotion) × 2 (cause type: proactive vs. reactive) between-subjects design. Regulatory foci were manipulated the same way as other researchers (Mourali et al. 2007). After the regulatory foci manipulation, participants were provided with an appeal from a charitable organization, framed as either proactive or reactive. Participants were asked how much they would like to donate to this project. The mediator, perceived self-benefit associated with the cause, was measured by two scales from White and Peloza (2009). A 2 (regulatory foci) × 2 (cause type) ANOVA on the donation amount found only a significant regulatory focus × cause type 2-way interaction (F(1, 167) = 5.80, p < .05). Neither of the main effects was significant (p’s > .50). When primed with promotion focus, individuals donated more (M = 12.44) to the proactive cause than to the reactive cause (M = 4.82, t(83) = -2.00, p < .05). In contrast, when primed with prevention focus, the donation amount did not vary across the two causes (M(proactive) = 6.82, M(reactive) = 11.70; t(82) = 1.09, p = .28). These results replicated study 1’s findings. Mediation was assessed with the bootstrapping method, using Hayes’s (2012) PROCESS macro. Consistent with our predictions, the model indicates that the indirect effect of moderated mediation is significant (95% CI = .15 to 7.66).

A follow-up study (N = 86) was conducted using a 2 (regulatory foci: prevention vs. promotion) × 2 (donation cause: proactive vs. reactive) mixed design, with regulatory foci being a between-subjects factor and donation cause as a within-subjects factor. Regulatory focus manipulation and the donation causes were the same as in study 2, except that participants viewed two causes and choose only one of them to donate. A binary logistic regression on the choice of proactive (vs. reactive) cause showed a significant effect of regulatory foci on decision outcome (β = .89, p < .05). For individuals primed with promotion focus, a greater portion selected the proactive cause (63.9%) compared to the reactive cause (42.0%, z = 2.00, p < .05). In contrast, for individuals primed with prevention focus, a smaller portion selected the proactive cause (36.1%) compared to the reactive cause (58.0%, z = -2.00, p < .05).

The purpose of study 3 (N = 158) is to test the moderation effect of the salience of benefit associated with the cause (self vs. other). Since prevention focus leads to non-differentiation between the two types of donation causes, we only focus on promotion focus in this study. We expect that in self-benefit conditions, individuals with a promotion focus intend to donate more to proactive causes than to reactive causes; however, in other-benefit conditions, they do not differentiate between these two causes. All participants were first manipulated by promotion focus, using the same stimuli as used in study 2. They were then randomly assigned to the conditions in a 2 (cause type: proactive vs. reactive) × 2 (salience of benefit: self-benefit vs. other-benefit) between-subjects design. Donation cause was manipulated in the same way as in study 2, except that an additional sentence was added before the donation intention measure to manipulate self-benefit [other-benefit] salience. We performed a 2 (cause type) × 2 (salience of benefit) ANOVA with the donation amount as the dependent variable. Neither main effects was significant (p’s > .15). More important and pertinent to our hypothesis, there was a significant perceived benefit × cause type 2-way interaction (F(1, 152) = 6.85, p = .01). When self-benefit was made salient, individuals with a promotion focus donated more (M = 17.95) to the proactive cause than to the reactive cause (M = 11.44, t(82) = -2.07, p < .05). In contrast, when other-benefit was made salient, the donation amount did not vary across two causes (M(proactive) = 9.74, M(reactive) = 13.53; t(72) = 1.46, p = .15).

This research contributes to the literature in three important ways. First, most studies in this domain focus on donation in general, without differentiating the cause type. Recently, non-profit organizations have started to offer more than one project for the same issue. In this research, we provide theoretical explanation about the difference between two types of causes, namely proactive and reactive. We suggest that these two causes may induce different levels of perceived self-interest and therefore affect individuals’ donation behavior. Such conceptual distinctions among donation causes open a new avenue for future research. Second, our research also extends the literature on regulatory focus. Previous studies on regulatory foci have mainly focus on the distinctions across risk perception. Extending this stream of research, the present study shows that regulatory foci also drive individuals to be sensitive to self-benefit embedded into the decision object. Specifically, individuals with a promotion focus are more responsive to self-benefit compared to individuals with a prevention focus. These findings also add to our understanding of self-benefit/other benefit appeals. For example, prior research indicates that other-benefit fund-raising appeals are more effective compared to self-benefit appeals (Fisher et al. 2008). Our results qualify these findings by demonstrating that this is not true for promotion-focused individuals. When other-benefit is salient, promotion-focused individuals perceive the two donation causes equally. When self-benefit is salient, promotion-focused individuals will donate more to proactive causes.

**REFERENCE**


**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

This research examines the interplay of consumers’ positive mood and the type of goals they pursue. We propose and demonstrate that although consumers believe that attainment goals are better for fostering a positive mood, they actually favor maintenance goals more than attainment goals when they are in a positive mood.

Attainment and maintenance goals are two common types of goals (Yang, Stamatogiannakis, and Chattopadhyay 2015). For attainment goals, the current state of consumers is different from their desired state (e.g., save, at least, $10 more this month). For maintenance goals, the current state already matches the desired state; consumers pursuing this type of goal seek to maintain a current state that is the same as or exceeds the desired state (e.g., keep saving, at least, the same amount this month).

Because attainment goals have better outcomes than the corresponding maintenance goals (e.g., save $10 more vs. the same), the outcomes of the former would be considered more affectively positive (cf. Plemmons and Weiss 2013). As such, consumers who seek to foster and elevate their positive mood may favor attainment goals over maintenance ones (Wegener et al. 1995). This reasoning is consistent with consumers’ lay beliefs shown in a pilot study: When given a choice between the two goal types, participants strongly preferred attainment over maintenance goals in order to maintain a positive mood. That is, according to extant mood maintenance theories as well as consumers’ lay beliefs shown in the pilot study, consumers may be more favorable towards attainment (vs. maintenance) goals when they are in a positive mood.

However, in this research, we argue and show that the opposite pattern can occur. We build on the prior research finding that positive affect can be generated by pursuing other goals involving activities that are congruent with a target goal (cf. Kruglanski 2006). For example, when team members’ private goals involve activities that are perceived as congruent with the target goal they pursue for their team, they tend to experience more positive affect (Kristol-Brown and Stevens 2001). In our research context, positive mood maintenance can be considered a target goal consumers hold (Wegener et al. 1995); attainment vs. maintenance goals (e.g., save $10 more vs. the same) are the other goals that consumers pursue while they are after positive mood maintenance. Because consumers tend to construe maintenance (but not attainment) goals as involving activities related to fostering and keeping one’s current state (Yang et al. 2015), maintenance (vs. attainment) goals are more congruent with the target goal of maintaining positive mood. Thus, to the extent that this congruence can generate positive affect (Kruglanski 2006), consumers in a positive (but not negative or neutral) mood would favor maintenance goals more than attainment goals.

Further, because both congruence effects (Kruglanski 2006) and mood maintenance (Handley et al., 2004) tend to operate nonconsciously, our propose interaction effect is also likely nonconscious in nature. Thus, the effect would persist when conscious cognitive resources are constrained, but be attenuated among individuals more aware of factors influencing their mood. Four field and lab studies involving different goal pursuit domains and different operationalizations of positive mood, support these propositions.

Study 1 examined real-life, bodyweight-management goal-setting behavior of over 1,300 consumers on a goal-management website for one year. Random-effect logistic regression models showed that, consistent with our proposition, consumers in a chronically more (vs. less) positive affective state were more likely to set a weight-maintenance than weight-reduction goal.

Study 2 had a 2 (positive vs. negative mood prime) × 2 (maintenance vs. attainment goals) between-participant design, and utilized goal domains that participants self-identified as important (e.g., work, health). A significant interaction effect revealed that, under positive mood, participants favored maintenance goals more than attainment goals. However, under negative mood, no difference was found.

Study 3 had a 3 (neutral mood vs. positive mood vs. positive mood and cognitive load) × 2 (health goal: attainment vs. maintenance) between-participant design. A significant interaction effect revealed that maintenance goals were favored more than attainment goals in both positive mood conditions (showing qualitatively identical results). However, in the neutral mood condition, no difference was found. Thus, consistent with our proposed nonconscious process, the effect persisted when conscious cognitive resources were constrained.

Study 4 had a 2 (positive vs. neutral mood prime) × 2 (health goal: maintenance vs. attainment) between-participant design and measured participants’ chronic awareness of factors influencing their mood. The mood × goal type interaction effect was replicated. More importantly, the results showed a significant 3-way interaction: The less participants were aware of factors influencing their mood, the more they favored maintenance (vs. attainment) goals under positive mood, suggesting that the effect is nonconscious.

Overall, our research contributes to understanding the interplay between mood and goal pursuit. Although extant mood maintenance theories and consumers’ lay beliefs predict that attainment goals would be better for fostering a positive mood, we propose and show in the field and lab that consumers in a positive (as opposed to negative or neutral) mood tend to favor maintenance (vs. attainment) goals more. Our findings thus add to the current understanding of the mood-goal relationship, complementing the existing theories on mood maintenance (Handley et al. 2004; Wegener et al. 1995). Our results also complement the prior research finding that goal achievement generates positive affect (Plemmons and Weiss 2013) by showing that different affective states can have unique effects on perceived favorability of different types of goals. Further, we also add to the literature by showing that this effect, resulting from the congruence between maintenance goals and the goal of positive mood maintenance, is largely nonconscious. The effect persists when consumers’ conscious cognitive resources are constrained, and is attenuated among consumers who are more aware of factors influencing their mood.

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The “Smile-Seeking” Giver: How Immediate Affective Reactions Motivate and Reward Gift-giving
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Why do gift-givers often seem to fail at giving what their receivers want? In the present paper, we identify a distinct cause for the disparity between givers’ choices and receivers’ satisfaction, which we term the smile-seeking account: givers primarily aim to induce desirable spontaneous affective display, such as positive facial expression and bodily reactions, as opposed to inducing the greatest receiver satisfaction.

The smile-seeking motive differs from the satisfaction-seeking motive commonly assumed in the prior literature, which characterizes givers’ primary motive as maximizing receivers’ satisfaction, and treats affective reactions as mere signals of satisfaction, consistent with the appraisal theory of emotion (Lazarus 1982). By contrast, the smile-seeking account builds on a growing literature which suggests that affective responses can occur without extensive perceptual and cognitive encoding (Forgas 2002, Zajonc 2000). In gift-giving, the misalignment between affective reaction and overall satisfaction gives rise to a discrepancy of motives between givers and receivers: givers’ choices may be primarily motivated and gratified by the affective consequences of gift-giving, whereas receivers’ satisfaction may be determined primarily by the more deliberate and holistic cognitive appraisal of the gift, albeit also informed by the initial spontaneous affective reactions to the gift.

We present six studies that test the impact of the smile-seeking account on gift choices and on post-giving enjoyment. We present Study 1 with full details on data screening, pretesting, additional measures, and mediation analyses. We then describe with less details Studies 2 and 3A in which same procedures and analyses were used. Last, we present the main results in Studies 3B, 4A and 4B in which data analyses were based on rating and coding of actual gifts.

Study 1: The Giver-Receiver Discrepancy

In Study 1, we test whether givers and receivers differ in their relative preference for a more affectively appealing gift in the context of a gift-registry, to hold constant receiver interest in the gifts and isolate the effect of anticipated affective reactions.

We aimed for approximately 100 participants per cell, based on an expected medium effect size (d = .05) and the use of 30-100 per cell in prior gift-giving research (e.g., Gino and Flynn 2011, Zhang and Epley 2012). We recruited 240 adult participants from Amazon MTurk, paid $1 each, yielding 213 completes (M = 33, 52% Male) after excluding invalid participants (duplicate IP addresses or having failed an instructional attention check in the end (Oppeheimer, Meyvis and Davidenko 2009). The exclusion criterion was used in all studies.

Participants read a scenario about a couple planning their wedding, who had sent a wedding registry to a group of friends, each of whom would choose one of the gifts to give. In the scenario, the couple would receive all the gifts listed on the registry, so the net outcome to the receivers was held constant, regardless of the giver’s choice. The receivers would open the gifts at a wedding shower where all the friends would be present. Participants were randomly assigned to either imagine they were the gift-giver or the gift-receiver in the scenario.

Participants saw pictures and descriptions of two similarly priced pairs of mugs, personalized mugs intended to be seen as inducing affective reactions and ergonomic mugs intended to be satisfaction-inducing. Participants, either as a giver or as a receiver depending on condition, first rated how much they liked each option, from “just a little (1)” to “very much (7)” (rater dependence). Participants then indicated their preference between the pairs of mugs, on a bipolar scale from strongly preferring the first option (1) to strongly preferring the second option (9).

Participants then rated the mugs on several measures. We expected that participants would rate the personalized mugs as inducing stronger positive affective reactions than the ergonomic mugs (“How much of an affective reaction (e.g., happy facial expressions) would the receivers show in response to these gifts when receiving them?” on a 7-point Likert scale). Conversely, we expected that the more comfortable ergonomic mugs would be rated as yielding higher satisfaction than the personalized mugs (“How much would the receivers be satisfied with these gifts when using them?”) on the same 7-point scale.

Results

First, the results confirmed that participants expected the personalized mugs to induce greater affective reactions than the ergonomic mugs (Mₐ = 5.79 vs. Mᵩ = 4.59, t(212) = 5.08, p < .001), while the mugs were expected to yield similar levels of receiver satisfaction (Mₐ = 5.31 vs. Mᵩ = 5.34, t(212) = -7.70, p < .001). The anticipated reaction benefit, relative to the satisfaction benefit, was significantly greater for the option intended to be reaction-inducing (personalized mugs) than for the option intended to be satisfaction-inducing (ergonomic mugs; bₐ = 4.48, bᵩ = -3.76, t(212)=8.88, p<.001).

Next, we tested our main hypothesis, comparing givers’ interest in giving the mugs to receivers’ interest in getting the mugs. The personalized mugs were more preferred by the givers than the receivers (5.37 vs. 4.81, t(211) = 2.10, p = .037, d = .29), while the ergonomic mugs were more preferred by the receivers than the givers (4.15 vs. 4.87, t(211) = -2.99, p = .003; ANOVA interaction, F(1,211) = 8.86, p = .003). Likewise, givers’ strong relative preference for the personalized mugs significantly differed from receivers’ between the two mugs on the bipolar scale (3.66 vs. 4.90, t(211) = -2.95, p = .004).

This giver-receiver preference discrepancy was not explained by differences in beliefs about the receivers’ satisfaction with the gift. Givers did mispredict receivers’ higher expected satisfaction with the ergonomic mugs (Givers’ predictions of receivers’ satisfaction: Mₐ = 5.42 vs. Mᵩ = 5.17; Receivers’ expected satisfaction: Mₐ = 5.21 vs. Mᵩ = 5.51; interaction F(1,211) = 8.16, p = .048). However, this misprediction did not explain the preference discrepancy between givers and receivers, which persisted controlling for expectations of receivers’ satisfaction (βₐ = .682, p = .030).

Instead, the discrepancy was largely explained by anticipated affective reactions. Givers reported a bigger difference in receivers’ anticipated affective reactions between the two mugs than did receivers (Givers: 5.89 vs. 4.10; Receivers: 5.70 vs. 5.07; interaction F(1,211) = 23.09, p < .001). Controlling for the difference in anticipated affective reactions, which predicts preferences between the two mugs, we no longer observe a significant giver-receiver discrepancy (βₐ = .219, p = .250; βᵩ = .919, p < .001). The effect of role (giver vs. receiver) on the relative preference between mug options was fully mediated by differences in expectations of receivers’
affective reactions ($\beta = .545, \text{CI} = [.277, .813], p < .001$), controlling for expected satisfaction. We find similar results using the bipolar preference scale.

The preference discrepancy also persists when controlling for other factors identified in prior literature as influencing gift-giving, including hedonic or practical perceptions of the gift, how much a gift was associated with indulgence or guilt, givers’ and receivers’ construal level (desirable vs. feasible) and regulatory focus (approach-avoidance), as well as social closeness between giver and receiver ($p < .025$). Response time, gender and age did not affect gift preferences or moderate the effect of role.

In sum, givers preferred to give the mug set that receivers liked less. This discrepancy was not explained by givers having mistaken beliefs about what receivers would be more satisfied with, the predominant account of such discrepancies in the prior literature (e.g., Cavanaugh, Gino and Fitzsimons 2015; Waldfogel 1993, Zhang and Epley 2009). Instead, the results suggest that the givers’ preferences diverged from what receivers liked better due to the givers’ “smile-seeking” motive: givers chose the option that they believed would result in a more desirable affective reaction.

**Study 2: Focus on Reaction vs. Satisfaction in Valentine’s Day Gifts**

We recruited 295 relationship partners ($M_{age} = 35, 51\% \text{Male}$) online to make gift choices for the next day - Valentine’s Day. After participants indicated their gender and their partner’s first name, male participants were asked to make choices for three pairs of options, one more reaction-inducing (e.g., blooming roses) and the other inducing more overall satisfaction (e.g., rose buds) as givers and female participants evaluated the same gifts as receivers. Participants then predicted the receivers’ affective reactions and satisfaction for each item. Last, we measured personality traits, current relationship status, length of relationship, closeness with partner, and age.

We replicated the giver-receiver preference discrepancy for all three pairs of gifts (average choices 52.3% vs. 40.3%, repeated-measures $p = .001$). As in Study 1, the preference discrepancy between givers and receivers persisted when controlling for predicted satisfaction ($\beta_{role} = .092, p = .007$). Moreover, we find the same mediation via differences in anticipated reaction on preference discrepancy ($\beta = .057$, bootstrapped $p = .028$), even controlling for the indirect effect via anticipated satisfaction.

**Study 3A & 3B: Discrepancy Eliminated When Receiver Reactions Are Unobserved**

Next, we further test whether anticipating being present to observe the receivers’ reaction affects givers’ choices, as predicted by the “smile-seeking” motive. In Study 3A, we randomly assigned 490 mturkers ($M_{age} = 35, 44\% \text{Male}$) to 2(role: giver vs. receiver) x 2(observable vs. unobservable) between-subjects conditions to imagine buying a blue-tooth speaker as a birthday-gift for a close friend (listed by participants themselves). In addition, participants either imagined that the gift-giver would be present on the receiver’s birthday and give the gift in person or that the gift-giver would be out of town and have the gift mailed. The giver was faced with two same-price upgrade options: gift-wrap (pretended as inducing initial affective reaction) and a LED-light (pretended as inducing satisfaction during use). The anticipated reaction benefit was greater relative to the satisfaction benefit for the option intended to be reaction-inducing (gift wrap) than for the option intended to be satisfaction-inducing ($t(448) = 18.4, p < .001$).

Givers prefer the gift-wrap upgrade (relative to receivers) when they would be present during gift-reception (44.8% vs. 19.8%, $\chi^2 = 16.1, p < .001$), but not when they would be absent during gift-reception (27.7% vs. 26.4%, $\chi^2 = .05, p > .250$; interaction ($F(1,445) = .78, p = .006$). The effect of role on choices in the observable-reaction condition held ($\beta_{role} = .17, n(224) = 3.91, p < .001$) when controlling for predicted recipient satisfaction. The giver-receiver preference discrepancy was again mediated by differences in anticipated reactions in the observable-reaction conditions ($\beta = -.058, \text{CI} = [-.101, -.015], p = .008$), controlling for anticipated satisfaction, but no indirect effect was found in the unobservable-reaction conditions ($\beta = .034, \text{CI} = [-.088, .020], p = .219$). Givers only sought smiles when they would be there to see the receivers’ smile.

In Study 3B, we recruited 198 actual gift-givers ($M_{age} = 33, 55\% \text{Male}$) online three days before Christmas. Participants each specified three gifts they had prepared to give, listed the receivers, rated both the anticipated affective reaction and expected receiver satisfaction for each gift, and indicated whether they would be present when each gift would be received.

The gifts participants chose did not differ in the anticipated level of satisfaction based on whether the givers expected to be present or not (self-reported $M_{satisfaction} = 5.47$ vs. $5.39, b_{present} = -.079, p > .250$). In contrast, participants rated their gifts as inducing marginally stronger affective reactions when they would be giving it in person ($M_{reaction} = 6.01$ vs. $5.71, b_{present} = -.27, p = .069, \text{observed power} = 90.7\%$). These findings held when we use independent coders’ ratings instead of participants’ self-report. The effect of presence on how reaction-inducing the gifts were (per coder ratings) also persists controlling for social closeness to the recipient and cost of the gift ($b_{present} = .184, t = 3.15, p = .002$).

**Study 4A & 4B: Post-Giving Outcomes and Enjoyment**

In Study 4A, we asked 80 participants ($M_{age} = 34, 43\% \text{Male}$) to recall recent favorite and least favorite gifts as either givers or receivers, and rated each gift on reaction and satisfaction scales. Overall, whether a giver liked or disliked a gift was primarily predicted by how reaction-inducing the gift was ($\beta_{reaction} = .199, p < .001, b_{satisfaction} = -.076, p = .133$). By contrast, receivers’ liking of gifts related to both how reaction-inducing and even more so than how satisfaction-inducing the gift was ($\beta_{reaction} = .085, p = .033, b_{satisfaction} = .215, p < .001$). In sum, the discrepancy between givers’ and receiver’s preferences persists even after the gift reception, which may further reinforce the givers’ “smile-seeking” motive in future gift choices.

In Study 4B, we used a longitudinal design to track givers’ preference and enjoyment after actual gift-giving. We recruited 87 Christmas gift-givers before and after Christmas ($M_{age} = 37, 58\% \text{Male}$). Participants indicated whether they had been present for the gift reception, rated their perception of the receiver’s immediate reaction to the gift, their perception of the receiver’s longer-term satisfaction with the gift, and their own enjoyment from having given each gift.

Reaction-inducing gifts resulted in greater giver enjoyment, via greater receiver reaction that givers reported (indirect effect $\beta = 2.93, \text{CI} = [.98, 6.58], p < .001$), whereas satisfaction-inducing gifts did not significantly contribute to the giver’s enjoyment, even though givers reported perceiving greater receiver satisfaction for such gifts (indirect effect $\beta = .55, \text{CI} = [-.66, 2.34], p = .45$). Moreover, givers enjoyed the gift-giving experience substantially more if they had been present to see the receivers’ reactions (87.1 vs. 46.3, $\beta = 40.9, p < .001$), even controlling for interpersonal closeness ($\beta = 38.7, p < .001$). Consistent with Study 3, observing the receiver’s reaction was critical to the giver’s enjoyment of gift-giving.
General Discussion

The foregoing studies offer evidence for a “smile-seeking” motive underlying gift-giving behaviors, challenging previous assumptions that giver-receiver discrepancies are due to givers mispredicting receiver satisfaction. This is an important distinction because the receiver’s display of affective reactions to a gift may often differ from the receiver’s satisfaction with the same gift. Facing a tradeoff between gifts that induce greater reaction and gifts that yield greater satisfaction, givers’ preference for reaction-maximizing gifts will deviate from what their friends, relationship partners and family members would prefer to receive. Furthermore, the givers’ smile-seeking preference was contingent on anticipating an opportunity to observe receivers’ affective reactions during gift reception. When givers believe that they would not observe the receiver’s reaction, the giver-recipient discrepancy was eliminated. The smile-seeking preference also persisted after giving, as givers derived more enjoyment from the receivers’ display of affective reactions.

Nonetheless, we do not wish to attribute all underappreciated gift choices to the smile-seeking motive. Bad gifts can occur due to obvious carelessness (e.g., candies for a diabetic patient), outright selfishness (e.g., a vacuum cleaner for a romantic partner), or mere lack of information. Also different from the smile-seeking motive, some gift choices may be instead guided by motives to form character or endow assets instead (e.g., parents giving educational materials or funds to children as birthday gifts).

Our findings have implications for research on gift-giving and interpersonal decision-making. In particular, our findings call into question prior assumptions that people making interpersonal choices primarily intend to maximize receiver satisfaction, and that others’ affective reactions are mere behavioral consequences of their appraisal outcome.

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The Effect of Pre-giving Incentives on Relationship Norms and Donation Behavior
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
A pre-giving incentive (hereafter, PGI) is the provision of a benefit/favor before requesting compliance (e.g., Regan 1971). In the past three years, PGIs such as coins and greeting cards, were included in approximately half of the total non-profit mail volume (Paradysz + PM Digital Research 2016). Including PGIs to potential donors requires resources that are already scarce for many nonprofits. Do the benefits of PGIs justify the costs? Additionally, it is unclear how different types of PGIs (e.g., coins, mailing labels) influence donor psychology and behavior. Although abundance of research demonstrates the persuasive power of reciprocity (Cialdini, 1993), we show that in certain pre-giving situations, providing gifts or favors before requesting compliance might have no effect or even backfire.

Due to charities’ focus on communal obligations (McGraw et al. 2012), we propose that people use communal norms when interacting with charities, giving benefits (usually time or money) without expecting comparable (or any) benefits in return. However, the perception of charities as communally oriented can be influenced by the type of PGI (monetary vs. non-monetary) enclosed in charity request letters. Empirical research suggests that reminders of money diminish communal motivations (Vohs, Mead, and Goode 2006) and lead people to perceive themselves to be in a businesslike or exchange relationship with others (Jiang, Chen, and Wyer, 2014). This line of research suggests that enclosing low value monetary PGIs evokes exchange norms and leads the charity to be perceived as relatively less communally oriented. In addition, donors who follow exchange (vs. communal) norms may reciprocate by giving the charity an amount roughly equivalent to what they received. Consequently, we predict that the inclusion of low value monetary PGIs will lead to lower donations than when no incentives are provided. Low value non-monetary PGIs, on the other hand, should not evoke exchange norms. Thus, donors receiving a non-monetary PGI should use communal norms as they do when they receive no incentive. However, because communal norms dictate non-contingent, need-based giving and do not necessitate immediate return of benefits (Aggarwal 2004; Clark and Mills 1993), a low value non-monetary PGI is unlikely to increase donations.

We tested our predictions in a pilot study, 3 lab experiments, and a field experiment. A pilot study (N=113) found that people perceived charities as more communally than exchange oriented (M communal = 5.45, M exchange = 3.38, F(1, 93) = 57.19, p < .001), and businesses as more exchange than communally oriented (M communal = 3.48, M exchange = 4.92, F(1, 93) = 29.18, p < .001).

Experiment 1A (N=175) and 1B (N=132) randomly assigned participants to view charity letters with a monetary PGI ($0.25 in 1A, $0.50 in 1B), a non-monetary PGI (a greeting card in both studies), or no PGI. Participants reported how much they would like to donate to the charity hypothetically in experiment 1A and from their study payment ($5 in $1 bills) in experiment 1B. In both studies, people who received monetary incentives donated less than those who received non-monetary PGI or no PGI (ps < .05). No differences emerged between the non-monetary PGI and no PGI conditions (ps > .30).

In experiment 2 (N=129), we examined the mediating role of communal and exchange orientation on donation behavior. Results showed that monetary PGIs elicited significantly less donations compared with no PGIs (p = .02) and marginally less donations compared with non-monetary PGIs (p = .08). Monetary PGIs also led participants to perceive the charity as less communally oriented than no PGIs (p < .001) and non-monetary PGIs (p < .01). Monetary PGIs increased the perceived exchange orientation of the charity compared with no incentives (p = .02). No difference was found in all other conditions (all ps > .17). Using PROCESS (model 4; Hayes 2013) and 10,000 bootstrap samples, we showed that the relative indirect effect of monetary versus no incentives on donation amount was mediated by perceived communal orientation of the charity (bootstrap CI: 1.6144, 7.5409) but not by the perceived exchange orientation of the charity (bootstrap CI: -0.415, 3.8874).

Similarly, results demonstrated an indirect effect of monetary versus non-monetary PGIs on donation amount, also mediated by perceived communal orientation (bootstrap CI: 9003, 5.9651) but not exchange orientation (bootstrap CI: -.2086, 2.6474). Overall, the results support our hypothesis that that lower communal orientation (but not exchange orientation) leads people to donate less.

In experiment 3 (N=9,000), we partnered with a local charity to examine the effects of monetary ($0.25), non-monetary (a greeting card), and no PGIs on donations in the field. Our response rate (52.2%) was comparable to that of other donor acquisition campaigns (Smart Annual Giving 2013). For average donation amount per new donor acquired, monetary PGIs generated less money than no PGIs (M monetary =$17.48, M non-monetary =$30.45, M control =$47.50; F (1, 45) = 10.36, p < .01). No donation difference was observed between non-monetary PGIs and no PGIs or between monetary PGIs and non-monetary PGIs (ps > .1). We also found that, on average, each mailing with a monetary PGI cost the charity $.59, which is significantly more than loss per mailing with non-monetary incentives ($.49), F (1, 8998) = 11.20, p < .001 or loss per mailing with no PGIs ($.25), F (1, 8998) = 21.65, p < .001. Extrapolated, for our campaign with 9,000 individuals, including monetary PGIs (versus no incentives) resulted in an additional $.34 net loss per mailing ($1,020 in total) while including non-monetary PGIs resulted in an additional $.24 net loss per mailing ($720 in total).

The present work provides important theoretical and practical implications. We integrate research on reciprocity, relationship norms, and prosocial behavior and suggest situations where gifts may not prompt reciprocal behaviors. Specifically, we show that reciprocity after receiving a low value monetary PGI results in lower donations than comparable value non-monetary or no PGIs under exchange norms. This is because external cues such as PGIs affect perceptions of the charity and thus the use of communal versus exchange norms. Practically, our results imply that charitable organizations should not be encouraged to use PGIs in soliciting donations.

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Choosing versus Rejecting: The Effect of Decision Modes on Subsequent Preferences

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

We are faced with the same decisions multiple times in many circumstances, and often do not employ a single strategy in making these decisions (Venkatraman, Payne, and Huettel 2014; Yoon, Vo, and Venkatraman 2017). For instance, one might sometimes purchase a product by actively choosing what they like, and other times by passively rejecting unattractive alternatives (Meloy and Russo 2004; Shafir 1993). While previous studies have shown that people focus on compatible attributes (i.e., positive attributes when choosing vs. negative attributes when rejecting), little is known about the underlying mechanisms and the impact of these decisions on subsequent preferences. Across three studies, we sought to understand how these two decision modes (choosing vs. rejecting) influence subsequent preferences for the chosen or non-rejected items.

Study 1

Seventy-two participants ($M_{age} = 19.46, SD = 1.52, 36\%$ female) were randomly assigned either to choosing or rejecting conditions. The experiment consisted of two phases, and participants made binary choice decisions between pairs of items chosen from a set of 48 triplets in each trial. In Phase 1, two items were randomly selected from each triplet and presented. In the choosing condition, participants chose the item they liked, while in the rejecting condition, they rejected the item they disliked. In Phase 2, the chosen/non-rejected (target) item from Phase 1 was paired with the remaining item (new) from the triplet, and participants chose the item they liked from the pair. We hypothesized that the preference for “target” items will be greater for the chosen item from Phase 1 relative to the non-rejected item.

Consistent with previous studies (Chen and Proctor 2017; Sokolova and Krishna 2016), participants in the rejecting condition spent longer time than those in the choosing condition in Phase 1 (choosing: $M = 4.14$ seconds, $SD = 1.24$ vs. rejecting: $M = 4.61$ seconds, $SD = 1.86; F = 8.06, p = .006$). We found that the two decision modes asymmetrically influenced subsequent choices. As hypothesized, the target items were selected more when they were chosen than non-rejected from Phase 1 ($t(70) = 2.37, p = .021$). Further analysis revealed that choice of the target items in the choosing condition was significantly higher than chance level (chance level $= .66; t(35) = 3.13, p = .004$), while that in the rejecting condition was at chance level ($t(35) = -0.82, p > .250$). Therefore, choosing increased the attractiveness of chosen item in a subsequent choice, while rejecting did not decrease the attractiveness of the non-rejected item.

Study 2

In Study 2 ($N = 90, M_{age} = 20.47, SD = 1.86, 56.67\%$ female), we used eye-tracking to elucidate the processes underlying these asymmetric preferences using a similar paradigm. We were primarily interested in mechanisms underlying the two decision modes in Phase 1. We found that participants in the rejecting condition switched their fixations more between the two items ($M = 4.09, SD = 1.25$) than those in the choosing condition ($M = 3.48, SD = 1.25; t(87) = -2.37, p = .020$). Additionally, participants in the choosing condition spent longer durations on preferred item than non-preferred item, while those in the rejecting condition spent longer duration on non-preferred item than preferred item. We contend that the increased attention to chosen alternative, and the focused search pattern in choosing condition may have biased subsequent choice, relative to the rejecting condition.

Study 3

In Study 3 ($N = 106, M_{age} = 21.38, SD = 3.97, 66.98\%$ female), we used a free-choice paradigm to elucidate how the choosing and rejecting decision modes affected post-choice preferences. In Phase 1, participants rated attractiveness of a series of 40 items. In Phase 2, items were paired based on the similarity of attractiveness ratings from Phase 1, and participants in the choosing condition chose one item they liked, while those in the rejecting condition rejected one item they disliked. In Phase 3, participants rated the attractiveness ratings of the 40 items again. We were primarily interested in how the two decision modes affected perceived attractiveness in Phase 3 relative to Phase 1. Consistent with Study 1, participants spent longer in rejecting than in choosing ($M_{choosing} = 3.13$ seconds vs. $M_{rejecting} = 3.70$ seconds; $t(104) = -2.79, p = .006$) in Phase 2. We found that the gap between preferred items and non-preferred items were greater in the choosing condition (chosen: $M = 0.49, SD = 0.33$ vs. non-chosen: $M = -0.49, SD = 0.33$) than in the rejecting condition (non-rejected: $M = 0.41, SD = 0.32$ vs. rejected: $M = -0.41, SD = 0.32$) in Phase 3. The results imply that post-choice preference changes were greater in choosing than in rejecting and the greater post-choice preference changes in the choosing condition may have affected subsequent choice more relative to the rejecting condition.

Conclusion and General Discussion

Our results show that choosing increases preference for the chosen item in a subsequent choice, while rejecting does not. We conjecture from eye-tracking data that participants focus on both relative attractiveness and unattractiveness in the rejecting condition providing no advantage to the non-rejected item and no disadvantage to the rejected item. However, they form positive overall impression for the chosen item in the choosing condition, which subsequently biases preference for the same item in future decisions. This was supported by the holistic search pattern from eye-tracking data and greater post-choice preference changes in the choosing condition than in the rejecting condition. We hope to extend these to multi-attribute decisions in future studies to specifically understand if these decision modes lead to increased emphasis on compatible attributes.

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988 / Choosing versus Rejecting: The Effect of Decision Modes on Subsequent Preferences
Don’t Kill the Suspense: The Duality of Suspense in Entertainment Consumption

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Numerous research studies and anecdotal evidence reveal that sports programs are much more likely to be watched live than other types of programs (e.g., Bernoff 2004; Nielsen 2010). Why do consumers prefer to watch sports events live vs. taped? To answer this question, we examine the nature of suspense more generally and when outcome knowledge (or spoilers) reduces suspense and consequent consumption enjoyment. While we focus on this question largely within the context of sports viewership, we note that our findings have implications for any experience that is engaged in due to suspense or excitement and which is repeated over time, such as effectiveness of television advertisements (Elliott 2013), use of reruns, and gift-giving.

Drawing on suspense literature (e.g., Duckworth 2012), we argue that lack of knowledge about an outcome is primarily limited to the cognitive processing of information related to estimating the probabilities of various outcomes, including the preferred one. However, a reader/viewer can continue to experience suspense and the resultant tension via an emotional pathway. That is, one is able to now focus more on the unfolding of the event and follow it in great detail since one need not invest any resources in predicting the outcome. We refer to these two types of suspense as “outcome suspense” and “process suspense” respectively. Specifically, outcome suspense refers to anxiety caused by what an outcome is, while process suspense refers to anxiety about how that outcome came to be. We propose that spoilers (outcome knowledge) spoil (reduce enjoyment) only in situations in which outcome suspense and process suspense are highly correlated (high outcome-process dependency). Further, we propose that the relationship between outcome suspense and process suspense varies by program type, and show how process suspense impacts consumer preferences for time-shifting TV entertainment consumption.

Study 1 shows that outcome-process dependency varies with program type, and program type influences preferences for real-time vs. tape-delayed viewing. Eighty participants were asked how likely they would be to watch their favorite sport or their favorite (non-sport) television program at different times (live or after 1 day, 2 days, 3 days, 1 week). Consistent with our hypotheses and real-world data (cf., Bernoff 2004), participants were significantly more likely to watch sports events broadcast live ($M_{sport} = 5.6, M_{tv} = 4.5, p < .003$). They were also willing to pay (WTP) more to watch sports events broadcast live ($WTP_{sport} = $11.09, WTP$_{tv} = $6.81), and this WTP drops sharply for sports, but not for TV programs after one day ($WTP_{sport} = $1.39, WTP$_{tv} = $4.76). Overall, 79% of participants show decreasing WTP patterns for sports compared to 38% for TV ($p < .001$). In addition, when asked to explain how watching sports live differed from watching it after its original airing (N=32), 72% of participants mentioned the likelihood of learning the outcome if watching the game late and that this knowledge would ruin the experience.

Having confirmed differences in real-time viewing by program type, studies 2-3 explicitly test our argument that the underlying level of suspense explains consumers’ likelihood of watching taped events. Study 2 (n=55) used a 2 (program type: sports event, TV series) x 2 (outcome knowledge: present, absent) between-subjects experiment. Participants imagined knowing or not knowing the outcome of a sporting event or television program. They then indicated how likely they were to watch the show, as well as how much suspense and uncertainty they expected to feel during the flow of events and how the episode/game would end. Consistent with our hypotheses, participants were more likely to watch a program when they did not know the outcome ($M_{knowledge} = 6.00, M_{knowledge} = 4.91 p < .05$). This relationship was mediated by process suspense, but not by outcome suspense (indirect effect for process suspense: 95% CI [-3.20, -.33]; and indirect effect for outcome suspense: 95% CI [-.95, 1.38]). In other words, outcome knowledge negatively influenced the likelihood of watching the program only when it diminished the process suspense. Furthermore, we found that the relationship between outcome knowledge and process suspense was moderated by program type such that outcome knowledge diminished the process suspense only for programs with high correlation between outcome and process suspense (taped sport event), and not for programs with low correlation (taped TV show; indirect effect for interaction: 95% CI [.03, .57]).

Study 2 (n=55) provides additional evidence that the differences observed in viewership preferences relates to the relationship between outcome and process suspense, and not just differences in genre. Participants viewed one of four sports scenarios according to a 2 (outcome-process dependency: low [snowboarding], high [ice hockey]) x 2 (outcome knowledge: yes, no) between-subjects design. Similar to Study 2, we again find that process suspense (and not outcome suspense) mediates the relationship between outcome knowledge and likelihood to watch (indirect effect for process suspense: 95% CI [-2.10, -.19]; and indirect effect for outcome suspense: 95% CI [-.19, 1.41]). In addition, the type of program moderated the effect of outcome knowledge on process suspense such that outcome knowledge had a bigger impact on process suspense for sport events with high outcome-process dependency (ice hockey) compared to sport events with low outcome-process dependency (snowboarding; indirect effect for interaction: 95% CI [-2.65, -.42]).

Thus, across three studies, we find that outcome knowledge reduces enjoyment only in situations in which outcome suspense and process suspense are highly correlated, a situation which characterizes many sporting events. Further, we show that the impact of spoilers on felt suspense helps explain consumer decisions not to time-shift viewing.

This research contributes to an increased understanding of the nature of suspense and offers an explanation for the “paradox of suspense” in entertainment consumption. Suspense acts as an important driver of consumer decisions to watch or re-watch shows as well as whether to watch those shows live or time-shifted (i.e., via DVR, online, etc.). By better understanding the factors that create suspense, marketers can choose more effective marketing messages and can better target their entertainment offerings to consumers.

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Hiding Gifts behind the Veil of Vouchers:
The Effect of Gift Vouchers in Conditional Promotions
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Marketers commonly offer gifts to induce purchases. In the marketing literature, such offers are often called conditional promotions, in which consumers receive a supplementary product for free or at a discounted price conditional on the purchase of a focal product (Neslin 2002; Palmeira and Srivastava 2013). Marketers face the question of whether to introduce a voucher when running conditional promotions. For example, a telecommunication service provider can offer its users a free pair of headphones upon signing up for a package, or hand them a voucher that consumers can exchange for the same pair of headphones. As of now, the effect of using vouchers as compared to using gifts directly in conditional promotions is a largely under-studied topic. Past research has been mostly devoted to comparing the effect of offering gifts with that of not doing a promotion at all (Kamins et al. 2009; Palmeira and Srivastava 2013; Raghubir 2004a; Raghubir 2004b), with that of offering price discounts (Chandran and Morwitz 2006; Krishna et al. 2002; Liu 2013; Mishra and Mishra 2011; Nunes and Park 2003), or with that of offering gifts that are incommensurate with the required purchases (Kivetz 2005). The current research, instead, compares the effect of directly giving gifts with the effect of using vouchers.

Consumers’ evaluation of a promotion is driven by the perceived promotion value, defined as the comparative value of the gift in relation to the price of the focal product (Value of the gift / Price of the focal product) (Krishna et al. 2002). For example, people are more likely to try a promotion if it offers a $5 discount for a $15 calculator than if it offers a $5 discount for a $125 calculator (Kahneman and Tversky 1984). The comparative nature of the attractiveness judgment implies that the evaluation is largely based on the comparison between the price of the focal product and the value of the gift.

In this research, we argue that using vouchers reduces price comparison for two major reasons. First, past research has shown that the acquisition of points and miles can make people focus more on the immediate relationship between invested resources and the points and miles, and less on the comparative value of the input of resources in relation to the output of reward that really matters (Hsee et al. 2003). Second, research on transaction decoupling finds that consumers spend more in other identical purchasing situations when paid by credit card than by cash or checks (Feinberg 1986; Hirschman 1979). By adding an intermediate step of swiping one’s credit card, the pain of paying is greatly reduced because credit card usage effectively dissociates the purchase action (happening on the spot) from the payment action (typically happening once a month) (Prelec and Loewenstein 1998).

These findings collectively suggest that adding something in between the input and the output impairs people’s ability to see the direct relation between the input and the output. We suggest that the introduction of a voucher will produce similar effects. It breaks the direct association between the focal product and the gift (buying the focal product—receiving a gift) and makes the association indirect (buying the focal product—receiving a voucher—exchanging for a gift). Thus, we anticipate that adding a voucher in between the focal product and the gift decouples the product from the gift, lowering people’s tendency to assess the comparative ratio between the focal product’s price and the gift’s value.

Importantly, this reduced tendency to compare can produce more than just a simple main effect on purchase intention. We suggest that the effect of using a voucher depends on whether the promotion is of high or low value. For high-value promotions, using a voucher deemphasizes the high value of the promotion and thus decreases consumers’ intention to purchase the focal product; whereas for low-value promotions, using a voucher shifts consumers’ attention away from the low value of the promotion, increasing their intention to purchase the focal product.

Our explanation of the effect of vouchers highlights the theoretical importance of the activation of the comparison process. Our theory is distinct from a possible alternative that consumers are still making the comparisons after a voucher is introduced, but they simply do not apply the comparison outputs to their purchase decisions. This distinction represents the importance of identifying whether an effect is driven by the activation of a psychological process or by the application of the outputs of a psychological process (Gilbert and Hixon 1991; Higgins 1996). As of now, no experiments have been conducted to tease apart these two possibilities in the literature on intermediaries.

In this research, we report experiments that could provide a theoretical test of the two possibilities. If people make comparisons but do not apply the comparison outputs into their decisions, then the effect of vouchers should not be influenced by whether a mental comparison process is activated. If, however, vouchers reduce the tendency to compare, then activating a comparison process should reduce the effect of vouchers.

The comparison tendency explanation also makes two predictions that have not been tested previously. First, the extent to which using a voucher results in a reduction of comparison tendency can be strongly affected by the saliency of the voucher versus the saliency of the gift value. We anticipate that if the gift value information is made salient even when a voucher is used, the voucher’s effect will diminish.

Second, the extent to which the promotion value influences purchase intention also depends on consumers’ familiarity with the focal product. Research has demonstrated that consumers who are familiar with the products are more sensitive to the size of price discounts in bundling promotions (Harlam et al. 1995). Thus, we predict that the effect of vouchers should be more prominent among novices than among experienced consumers.

Experiment 1
Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in a 2 (promotion value: high vs. low)  2 (voucher: presence vs. absence) between-participants design. Participants were told to imagine buying a digital camera and were presented with a print advertisement of a camera (including the price information of the camera). Participants were then informed that if they were to make the purchase, they would receive a gift. The gift was a 1-TB Toshiba external hard drive in high-value promotion conditions, and a 4-GB Toshiba flash drive in the low-value promotion conditions. Participants in the voucher-absent conditions were shown pictures of the gift directly. Those in the voucher-present conditions were shown a picture of a voucher stating that participants could use it in exchange.
for the specified gift. Then participants indicated their likelihood to purchase the digital camera.

We found a marginally significant main effect of promotion value, \( F(1, 157) = 2.76, p = .099, = .017 \). Participants reported a greater intention to purchase the digital camera when presented with a high-value promotion \( (M = 4.09, SD = 1.39) \) than low-value promotion \( (M = 3.77, SD = 1.33) \). Importantly, there was a significant interaction between promotion value and voucher, \( F(1, 157) = 9.09, p = .003, = .055 \). For high-value promotions (external hard drive as gift), using a voucher lowered participants’ purchase intention \( (M = 3.81, SD = 1.33) \) as compared to presenting the gift directly \( (M = 4.41, SD = 1.40); F(1, 157) = 3.95, p = .049, = .025 \). In contrast, for low-value promotions (flash drive as gift), using a voucher increased participants’ purchase intention \( (M = 4.10, SD = 1.28) \) as compared to presenting the gift directly \( (M = 3.42, SD = 1.30); F(1, 157) = 5.19, p = .024, = .032 \).

Experiment 2

Experiment 2 replicated the findings of experiment 1 using a design that involved decisions with real consequences. Participants decided whether to buy a toy (the product). With the purchase of the toy, they could also receive two packs of sticky notes for free (the gift). The promotion value was manipulated by changing the price of the toy. A low toy price makes a high-value promotion and a high toy price makes a low-value promotion. Participants were either shown the sticky notes directly (voucher-absence) or a printed voucher that could be exchanged for the notes (voucher-presence). Results showed that using a voucher in high-value promotions lowered the percentage of participants making the purchase from 63% to 39%, \( = 3.74, p = .053 \). In contrast, using a voucher in low-value promotions significantly increased the percentage of participants making the purchase from 25% to 59%, \( = 8.87, p = .003 \). The Logistic Regression returned a significant interaction between promotion value and voucher, \( = 11.67, p = .001 \).

Experiment 3

Experiment 3 adopted a theoretical method to test the importance of comparison tendency in causing the effect. It used a 2 (promotion value: high vs. low) 2 (voucher: presence vs. absence) 2 (priming: control vs. comparison) between-participants design. We primed half participants a comparison mind-set by asking participants to make a series of irrelevant comparisons before presenting them the main product and the gift. Participants in the control priming conditions were asked to make a series of judgments that did not involve comparisons. Then participants then decided whether to buy a toy that coupled with free bookmarks (5 bookmarks in the high-value condition and 1 bookmark in the low-value condition).

We expect to replicate the results of previous experiments in the control condition. When people are primed to compare, however, the comparison tendency is enhanced by the priming and the effect of vouchers is predicted to be mitigated. Consistent with this prediction, we replicated the results in the control conditions with vouchers either increased or decreased purchase intention depending on the promotion value (interaction \( = 8.57, p = .003 \)), but we didn’t observe similar effects in the conditions where people were primed with a comparison mindset \( = 1.36, p = .244 \).

Experiment 4

Experiment 4 adopted a more practically meaningful method to test the mediating role of comparison tendency. It used a 2 (promotion value: high vs. low) 2 (voucher: presence vs. absence) 2 (sequence: purchase intention first vs. gift price estimate first) between-participants design. We used the same materials from Experiment 1. Besides promotion value and voucher, we also manipulated whether consumers considered the price of the free gift before or after they indicated their purchase intention. We anticipated that making people consider the gift value before indicating their purchase intention would enhance the comparison tendency and this would consequently act against the effect of a voucher. We also measured comparison tendency at the end.

When participants indicated purchase intention before estimating gift price, the effect of voucher was replicated, \( F(1, 315) = 34.66, p < .0001, = .099 \). The bootstrap analysis revealed that the effect of a voucher on purchase intention was mediated by the measured comparison tendency \( (ab = -0.11, Boot SE = 0.08, 95\% confidence interval [-0.33 to -0.01]) \). However, when participants estimated gift price first, the effect of voucher was eliminated, \( F(1, 314) = 0.04, p = .84 \). The three-way interaction between promotion value, voucher, and evaluation sequence was significant, \( F(1, 629) = 16.80, p < .0001, = .026 \).

Experiment 5

In real marketing practice, marketers often state the gift price on vouchers. Experiment 5 tested how indicating the gift price on voucher affects the effect of using vouchers. It used a 2 (promotion value: high vs. low) 2 (voucher: presence vs. absence) 2 (gift price information: presence vs. absence) between-participants design. Participants were asked to imagine that they were considering buying a board game (the focal product) for an upcoming party, and that a store was running a promotion that buyers of the game would receive either four pieces of Godiva Signature Truffles (high-value promotion) or one piece of Ferrero Rocher chocolate (low-value promotion). Participants either received a picture of the gift or were presented with a picture of a voucher. In addition, half participants received no price information about the gift, the other half were informed about the market value of the gift \( ($10 for Godiva and $0.5 for Ferrero Rocher) \). We predict that explicitly mentioning the price of the gift will enhance comparison tendency and thus reduce the effect of using vouchers.

The effect of vouchers was replicated when participants were not informed of the gift price, with the interaction between promotion value and voucher being significant, \( F(1, 395) = 8.82, p = .003, = .022 \). However, stating gift price mitigated this effect, \( F(1, 367) = 0.94, p = .334 \), with three-way interaction between promotion value, voucher, and gift price information trending to significant, \( F(1, 762) = 1.96, p = .162, = .003 \).

Experiment 6

Experiment 6 used a 2 (promotion value: high vs. low) 2 (voucher: presence vs. absence) between-participants design to test whether the effect of vouchers is moderated by participants’ previous experience of purchasing the focal product. Participants imagined to buy an electronic toothbrush with a gift. The gift was either four tubes (high-value promotion) or one tube (low-value promotion) of toothpaste. Half participants were presented with a picture of the gift, and the other half were shown a voucher which could be exchanged for the gifts. Participants also indicated their previous experience of buying electronic toothbrushes. We split the data by whether one had purchased any electronic toothbrushes before. We predict that those with past purchase experience were better equipped with price info to judge the promotion value, and thus they would be less likely to be influenced by vouchers.

As expected, the voucher effect was replicated among novices \( (F(1, 634) = 45.77, p < .0001, = .067 \) but not for experienced cus-
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tomers (F(1, 425) = 0.04, p = .85), with three-way interaction between promotion value, voucher, and past purchase experience being significant, F(1, 630) = 5.63, p = .018, = .009.

General Discussion

Our findings further our understanding about how people process information when they are evaluating sales promotions. Although consumers usually evaluate a sales promotion by simply assessing its promotion value, our results show that when it is difficult to compare the gift value with the focal product price, such as when a voucher is introduced, consumers’ purchase intention is less influenced by the promotion value.

Our findings also advance research on the effect of intermediaries. Besides inducing medium maximization (Hsee et al. 2003) and reducing the pain of paying (Prelec and Loewenstein 1998), our research suggests that the decoupling effect created by intermediaries could cause changes in how conditional promotions are evaluated. Although the most effective way of assessing a promotion is to directly compare the gift value with the focal product price, people seem unlikely to skip the intermediary (in our context, the voucher) unless they are nudged to do so.

Our findings suggest that marketers should avoid using vouchers for high-value promotions. In comparison, using a voucher that can be exchanged for a relatively inexpensive gift in conditional promotions could boost sales while minimizing promotion costs.

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Counterhedonic Food Consumption: How Eating “Yucky but Healthy” Food Promotes Marketplace Morality

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
With rising awareness of widespread obesity and food-related health concerns, there has been an increase in the consumption of “yucky, but healthy” foods. This category of food includes items like cod liver oil, wheatgrass, kale, and Marmite, but also foods like edible worms, ants, crickets and grasshoppers. Since the consumption of these “yucky, but healthy” foods cannot be adequately explained by the fundamental homeostatic (to maintain one’s energy balance) or hedonic (reward-based) eating pathways (Lutter & Nestler, 2009), we herein posit that this category of food consumption is driven by a counterhedonic pathway that complements the homeostatic and hedonic pathways already established in food consumption theory. To be categorized as “counterhedonic”, a food has to be “yucky, but healthy”; i.e. the food has to be unpleasant in taste/texture/flavor and generate an offensive oral experience that leads to feelings of disgust during the consumption process, while delivering significant health benefits (for example, edible worms, wheatgrass juice, etc.).

We further theorize that since counterhedonic food consumption entails one’s ability to withstand disgusting food in order to gain its health benefits, the retrospective evaluation of this consumption leads consumers to experience heightened moral self-regard post-consumption that translates into marketplace morality. Moral self-regard is considered as a reflective view of oneself or a moment-to-moment self-concept that answer to the question “How moral am I” (Monin & Jordan, 2009). Drawing on opponent process theory (Solomon, 1980) and the retrospective rosy view theories (Ross & Wilson, 2002; Wilson & Ross, 2001), we theorize that the primary a process for counterhedonic food consumption is aroused at the time of consumption by the sensory properties of unappetizing foods, which elicits feelings of disgust or oral offensiveness. Such an affective state, however, is short-lived and terminates when the stimulus is removed (when food consumption is completed). Shortly after, the opponent loop b process is activated by self-reflection or self-evaluation wherein overcoming the bad taste and eating something good for one’s own health is considered positive, virtuous and morally good.

Since the desire for a positive moral self-regard motivates people to engage in prosocial actions (Schaumberg & Wiltemuch, 2014), and moral affective experiences serve as the energy that drive people to do good and avoid doing bad (Kroll & Egan, 2004), we further argue that the positive moral self-regard post-consumption would orient consumers to a greater good (Keltner, 2016) and can translate to enhanced marketplace morality (Kirmani, 2015; Loureiro et al., 2016).

This research aims to make three theoretical contributions. First, we propose a novel food consumption pathway – the counterhedonic pathway – to complement and expand upon the already established homeostatic and hedonic food consumption pathways. Second, we identify a novel downstream consequence of counterhedonic food consumption – the feeling of positive moral self-regard which in turn orient consumers to a greater good and promotes prosocial behavior and marketplace morality. Third, this work lends further support to the notion that food consumption can serve as an antecedent to marketplace morality - when we eat well (physical consumption), we can also feel virtuous and do good (impact on our psychological states).

We present a set of four studies to support our theorizing (Figure 1). In study 1, we provide evidence to support our main hypothesis that counterhedonic consumption leads to greater marketplace morality. As predicted, participants perceive counterhedonic food (wheatgrass juice; M_{counterhedonic} = 4.12) as to be significantly more disgusting (disgusting, unpleasant, revolting, tasty (reverse coded), 1 = not at all; 7 = very much; α = .89) than baseline homeostatic food (purified water; M_{homeostatic} = 1.99; F (1, 115) = 73.14, p < .05). However, participants in the counterhedonic condition showed heightened post-consumption morality: they were willing to donate more money to charity (M = $13.28) compared to participants in the homeostatic condition (M = $8.63; F (1, 115) = 4.85, p < .05).

Study 2 compares the counterhedonic food pathway with the higher order hedonic food pathway and provides initial support for the underlying mechanism. Results show that even counterhedonic food (Marmite spread; M_{counterhedonic} = 4.70) was considered significantly more disgusting than hedonic food (chocolate spread; M_{hedonic} = 1.97; F (1, 84) = 62.70, p < .05), participants in the counterhedonic condition felt significantly heightened moral self-regard compared to participants in the hedonic condition (M_{counterhedonic} = 3.50, M_{hedonic} = 2.82; F (1, 84) = 5.00, p < .05). In terms of marketplace morality (helping experimenter pick up pencils), participants in the counterhedonic condition were more likely to help the experimenter than those in the hedonic condition (63% vs. 41%, $\chi^2(1) = 4.05, p < .05), and they also picked up more pencils (M_{counterhedonic} = 6.39, M_{hedonic} = 3.38; F (1, 84) = 7.28, p < .05). Mediation analysis indicates significant mediation by post-consumption moral self-regard on consumption type and marketplace morality (95% CI = [.0168, .5441).

Studies 3 and 4 examine the parameters of counterhedonic consumption as well as identify boundary conditions for the effect. Specifically, study 3 shows that changing the costliness of the initial behavior by modifying a counterhedonic food (original edible worms) to look and sound tastier (chocolate covered worms) diminishes both the post-consumption moral self-regard (M_{original} = 4.01, M_{chocolate} = 3.13; F (1, 153) = 10.53, p < .05) and marketplace morality (time to volunteer for a charitable event; M_{original} = 10.53 hours, M_{chocolate} = 7.28 hours; F (1, 153) = 7.38, p < .05). Study 4 replicates and builds upon the findings of study 3 by illustrating that modifying the counterhedonic food to make it more hedonic or by concealing the health benefits of the food similarly diminish moral self-regard and decrease marketplace morality.

Taken together, these studies demonstrate that counterhedonic food consumption is uniquely characterized by the sensory feeling of core disgust during the consumption of a food that delivers significant health benefits. Post-consumption, these feelings of disgust are replaced by positive moral self-regard, which orients consumers to a greater good and can translate to enhanced marketplace morality.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research has recently begun to illuminate the impact of an important retail atmospheric variable, namely, the allocation of shelf space to products. For instance, additional space allocated to a product in a retail setting increases product sales (Dreze et al. 1994) and facilitates greater product preferences (Sevilla and Townsend 2016). However, what is still missing from this literature is the mere effect of the existence (vs. nonexistence) of space between products on a retail shelf. Space between products is a crucial retail factor to consider because the perceptual representations of space influence people’s attitudes, thoughts, and judgments (Williams and Bargh 2008). In this research, we put forward a novel idea that space between products can impact the effectiveness of a multiple (e.g., two for $2) versus single (e.g., one for $1) unit price promotion strategy.

We build our conceptual framework based on grounded cognition and sociocultural messages that suggest that people are likely to learn to associate spatial distance concepts with relational distance (Meier et al. 2012). Furthermore, previous research posits that the activation of the concept of relational closeness is likely to trigger thoughts involving these close others (Aron et al. 1992), whereas activating relational distance is likely to facilitate people’s desires to be different from others (Mashek et al. 2011). Hence, we propose that the nonexistence of a space between products is likely to activate the concept of relational closeness which in turn leads to thinking about close others, whereas the existence of a space between products is likely to develop a sense of relational distance that in turn triggers consumers’ distinctiveness motivations.

Prior research also suggests that the quantity anchor in a multiple (vs. single) price promotion motivates thoughts about large product consumption with others (Manning and Sprott 2007). As such, we propose that the nonexistence of a space between products, which enhances consumers’ thinking about others, is likely to facilitate this type of thoughts and, thus, enhance the effectiveness of multiple versus single unit price promotions. In contrast, research also indicates that the quantity anchor in a multiple (vs. single) unit price promotion motivates consumers to buy multiple homogenous items (Manning and Sprott 2007). It is logical to assume that consumers with distinctiveness motivations will be less attracted to the idea of consuming multiple homogenous products. Overall, we propose that when there is a space between products on a retail shelf, multiple (vs. single) unit price promotions would be less effective and would lead to lower purchase intentions.

Furthermore, we theorize that as product variety is more likely to satisfy consumers’ desires to be different (Kim and Drolet 2003), anchoring on multiple consumption (induced by multiple unit price promotions) of a variety of products should attenuate the negative effect of multiple (vs. single) unit price promotion on purchase intentions in the space context. We also theorize that because information regarding lower product popularity is likely to reduce consumers’ thoughts about consuming these less popular products with others (Zhu and Zhang 2010), anchoring on multiple consumption (induced by multiple unit price promotions) of less popular products should attenuate the positive effect of multiple (vs. single) unit price promotion on purchase intentions in the no space context.

In Studies 1 and 2, participants were presented with a shelf that displayed products either with a space or no space between them. A price promotion was manipulated by a price tag (e.g., “Now on sale, $2.50” (single unit) vs. “Now on sale, 2/$5.00” (multiple unit)). As predicted, participants in the space condition were less likely to purchase a product when they viewed a multiple vs. single unit price promotion (MUPP vs. SUPP) tag (Study1: $M_{\text{multiple}} = 3.24 \text{ vs. } M_{\text{single}} = 4.35; F(1, 97) = 11.51, p < .01). Studies 2: $M_{\text{multiple}} = 4.52 \text{ vs. } M_{\text{single}} = 5.47; F(1, 99) = 4.22, p < .05). In contrast, the MUPP vs. SUPP led to greater purchase intentions in the no space condition (Study 1: $M_{\text{multiple}} = 4.28 \text{ vs. } M_{\text{single}} = 3.49; F(1, 97) = 5.63, p < .05). Studies 1 and 2 find support for the positive (negative) effect of MUPP vs. SUPP on purchase intentions in the no space (space) condition. Study 2 further sheds light on the mediating effect of consumers’ distinctiveness motivations (consumers’ thoughts about others) on the relationship between the type of price promotions and purchase intentions in the space (no space) condition.

Study 3 examines the moderating effect of product variety in the space context. As predicted, participants presented with no product variety indicated lower purchase intentions when they were exposed to MUPP vs. SUPP ($M_{\text{multiple}} = 3.89 \text{ vs. } M_{\text{single}} = 5.30; F(1,102) = 10.33, p < .01). In contrast, we found no significant differences in purchase intentions between MUPP and SUPP ($p > .70) in the product variety condition. Further regression analysis results revealed a significant indirect path from product variety to purchase intentions through CNFU in the MUPP condition (a point estimate for the effect = -.20; 95% CI = [-.48,-.04]).

Study 4 investigates the moderating effect of product popularity in the no space context. Participants in the popular product condition had greater purchase intentions when they were exposed to MUPP vs. SUPP ($M_{\text{multiple}} = 5.25 \text{ vs. } M_{\text{single}} = 3.83; F(1,112) = 8.22, p < .01). In contrast, we found no significant differences between MUPP and SUPP ($p > .90) for participants in the less popular condition. Further regression analysis results revealed a significant indirect path from product popularity to purchase intentions through the thoughts about others index in the MUPP condition (a point estimate for the effect = .35; 95% CI = [.03,.88]).

Overall, our research is the first to establish the novel relationships between space and multiple versus single unit price promotions. This work also contributes to prior research on spatial cues by shedding new light on processes underlying the impact of space on price promotions, as well as on important boundary conditions.

REFERENCES


Unpacking Mixed Emotions at Experiential Endings: Total Emotionality, and Differential Roles of Enjoyableness, Meaningfulness and Sociality of Experience

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

When you realize that a positive event is coming to an end, how does the salience of its ending make you feel? This research provides a deeper understanding of this emotional state and its antecedents, and some implications for maximizing consumer experiential and emotional well-being.

Emotions research shows that people can sometimes experience complex emotional states where positive and negative emotions concur simultaneously (Williams and Aaker, 2002) and awareness of limited time will increase occurrence of mixed emotions (Carstensen et al., 2006). However, although previous literature focused on mixed emotions produced by endings of meaningful experiences (Routledge et al., 2011; Baumeister et al., 2013), the role of meaningfulness of the experience in this relationship remains unclear. Specially, it is unclear whether the complex emotion of happiness mixed with sadness is unique to the ending of meaningful experiences, or if complex emotions can generalize to the ending of any positive, enjoyable experiences, even when they are relatively low in meaning. Further, previous research tended to examine meaningful experiences intertwined with sociality (Hershfield et al., 2008), while in many situations meaningful experiences may not be shared with others (i.e., experiences done alone, Ratner and Hamilton, 2015). Consequently, another question that arises is whether mixed emotions at endings are also determined by the sociality of the experience. Thus one main objective of this research is to understand the emotional state of impending endings, and in particular, whether enjoyableness, meaningfulness, and sociality, are critical drivers of the mixed emotion when the experience approaches an end. We proposed that mixed emotions will occur when an enjoyable experience is approaching an end (H1), higher (vs. lower) level of enjoyableness increases mixed emotions when the experience is coming to an end, independent of meaningfulness (H2), higher (vs. lower) level of meaningfulness increases mixed emotions when the experience is coming to an end, independent of enjoyableness (H3), and sociality per se is not a driver of mixed emotions when facing an end of the experience (H4).

Another question that has not been explicitly explored in previous research is the total amount of emotionality when an experience is coming to an end. It may be heightened because of the intensified positive and negative emotions induced by endings (Loewenstein, 1987), and may also be dampened because of the decreased positive emotions and increased sadness resulted from endings. These two possibilities paint very different pictures for the emotional quality of an experiential ending, one intense (H5), and one subdued (H5a), and this research seeks to uncover which state is the more accurate representation of the affective state during endings. To test our hypotheses, we conducted 3 studies and the results provide a deeper and more thorough understanding of the emotional state at experiential endings.

In study 1, we randomly assigned 456 participants, recruited through MTurk, into five conditions, which is a 2 (high vs. low enjoyableness) × 2 (ending vs. continuing) + Control between-subjects design. For the enjoyableness manipulation, we asked participants to recall an experience which is highly enjoyable versus mildly enjoyable. For the ending manipulation, they will read a paragraph informing them there is an approaching ending of that experience versus no information about ending and they continue to enjoy that. In the control condition, there is neither recalling task nor reading task. As the measure of the mixed emotion, we use the 19-item PANAS (Watson et al., 1988) and get the mixed emotion by MIN (happiness, sadness) (following Hershfield et al., 2008). We found that when highly enjoyable experience was recalled, people generate higher mixed emotion in the ending condition than in the no-end condition (M_ending = 1.76 vs. M_controlling = 1.25, p=0.000). But when the mildly enjoyable experience was recalled, people just generate marginally higher mixed emotion in the ending condition than in the no-end condition (M_ending = 1.64 vs. M_controlling = 1.39, p=0.071). And both in highly and mildly enjoyable experience, mixed emotion between the continuing condition and control condition has no significant difference. These results support H1 that the more intensely enjoyable the experience, the greater the increase in mixed emotions towards its ending. Besides, planned contrast analysis showed that emotionality is significantly lower in the ending condition than in the continuing condition (M_ending = 3.96 vs. M_controlling = 4.48, p=0.000), supporting H5a that experiential endings subdue rather than heighten one’s overall emotional state (in addition to making it more mixed) than when the event is continuing.

Next, we tested the role of meaningfulness in study 2 and role of sociality in study 3. The manipulation of the meaningfulness and sociality is similar to study 1, which used the experience recalling task. The ending manipulation and dependent measures were the same as in study 1. We separated the different roles of enjoyableness and meaningfulness in study 2 and employed a 2 (high vs. low enjoyableness) × 2 (meaningful vs. meaningless) × 2 (ending vs. continuing) between-subjects design. A three-way ANOVA showed a main effect of ending (p=0.000) and a two-way interaction effect of enjoyableness and ending (p=0.006), but no two-way interaction effect of meaningfulness and ending (p=0.076) nor three-way interaction effect of enjoyableness, meaningfulness and ending (p=0.702). And the planned contrast results also supported H1, H2, but not H3, which means that the level of enjoyableness, but not the level of meaningfulness of an event critically determines whether one will feel mixed emotions when the event is coming to an end. Then we tested H4 in study 3, with a 2 (meaningful vs. meaningless) × 2 (social vs. non-social) × 2 (ending vs. continuing) between-subjects design, and as predicted, we found sociality did not impact how much mixed emotions were engendered by an approaching ending. Besides, the emotionality analysis all supported H5a.

Generally, if marketers wish to maximize total emotionality, they may not wish to make salient the ending of a positive event; on the other hand, if marketers wish to maximize mixed emotions, making the ending salient is an effective way. In future research, we wish to examine negative experiences, to see whether it mirrors or reverses, and examine the downstream consequences.

REFERENCES


Exercise Your Mind –
Physical Activity Alters Attribute Weighing in Consumer Choice
Laura Zimmermann, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK
Amitav Chakravarti, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Across five studies we find that physical activity (PA) leads to improved decision-making in unrelated decision domains. Specifically, we find that PA (both measured and manipulated) leads consumers to weigh different pieces of information more appropriately and improves reliance on relevant product information. The results were robust to the inclusion of several control variables in the analysis.

PA has tremendous health benefits as decades of medical and epidemiological research show (e.g., Moore et al., 2016; Morris, Heady, Raffle, Roberts, & Parks, 1953). In addition, researchers have started to investigate the complex relationship between PA, physical wellbeing and brain health. In particular, beneficial effects of PA have been found for emotional health, memory and executive functions (Hopkins, Davis, Vantigheim, Whalen, & Bucci, 2012). Overall, studies point to the direction that PA enhances cognitive functions and protects against the development of neurodegenerative diseases (Kramer & Erickson, 2007). Despite the abundant evidence of PA benefits for cognition, little research has investigated the effect of PA on judgment and decision-making. We hypothesized that both regular and single bouts of PA would lead to spillover effects on unrelated judgments and decision-making due to improved information integration. In particular, we predict that decision makers will be better able to ignore unimportant features and not neglect important features of their decision environment.

Our conjecture is based on very recent neuroscience research. Raichlen et al. (2016) that argues that PA, such as running, represents a complex activity for the brain. It involves sophisticated, simultaneous processing and monitoring of internal and external information. According to them, areas of the brain related to cognitive functions such as planning, inhibition, monitoring, attentional switching, and multi-tasking are activated when engaging in PA. Nevertheless it remains unclear whether PA also influences how people make decisions in real-life domains that are unrelated to exercising, and how they integrate different pieces of information to make such unrelated decisions.

In particular, we investigated spillover effects of PA on two well-researched consumer decision paradigms – the desirability / feasibility choice conflict (Liberman & Trope, 1998) and the dilution effect (Meyvis & Janiszewski, 2002; Nisbett, Zukier, & Lemley, 1981). If PA improves the integration of different pieces of information, we would expect people who engage in PA to apply more appropriate weights to different decision attributes. In the feasibility-desirability choice conflict it is commonly observed that decision-makers overly focus on the desirability features and neglect feasibility features; we expect PA would lead to less or no neglect of feasibility attributes in product choices, which require trade-offs between desirability and feasibility attributes. Conversely, in the dilution paradigm (wherein people are unable to ignore irrelevant information and end up “diluting” their judgments) this would lead to smaller or no dilution effects in product judgments when consumers are faced with irrelevant information.

In studies 1-3 we find that PA affects how decision-makers make desirability-feasibility trade-offs in consumer decisions. Usually, decision-makers tend to overly contrite on the desirability considerations, often at the expense of feasibility considerations. Our findings indicate that PA leads consumers to focus less overly on desirability and consider feasibility criteria more in choices that require trade-offs.

In Study 1 we tested exercisers before vs. after visiting a gym (N=90) in a consumer choice task that required making trade-offs between feasibility and desirability attributes (adapted from Liu, 2008). Participants were asked to imagine they wanted to go on a hiking trip and were presented two options. One of them was characterised by high desirability (scenery with creeks and waterfalls) and low feasibility (limited parking, 70 miles away). The other option was characterised by low desirability (scenery with boulders and bushes) and high feasibility (plenty of parking, 40 miles away). Participants were asked to choose between both options and to rate how much they focused on the desirability attribute and the feasibility attribute. Results showed that participants considered desirability and feasibility attributes more equally after exercising compared to before ($F(1,88) = 4.64$, $p = .034$). The results were robust to the inclusion of several control variables in the analysis.

Study 2 (N=257, online) compared participants who engage in regular PA to non-active individuals. Non-active individuals rated their likelihood to purchase a high desirability/low feasibility option significantly higher than their likelihood to purchase a low desirability/high feasibility option ($M_{HDLF} = 61.00$ vs. $M_{LDHF} = 44.79$). Regular PA individuals on the other hand showed no difference in their likelihood to purchase ($M_{HDLF} = 53.11$ vs. $M_{LDHF} = 52.89$, $F(1, 253) = 4.24$, $p = .041$).

Study 3 (N=59, parkrun UK) shows that regular runners with significantly better average 5 kilometre running performances tended to choose a low desirability/high feasibility option rather than a high desirability/low feasibility option ($\chi^2(1) = 4.87$, $p = .027$, $\beta = -.134$, $p = .042$). Overall, these findings indicate that PA leads decision-makers to focus less overly on desirability and consider feasibility criteria more when making choices that require trade-offs.

In studies 4 and 5 (total N=527, online), we find that regular PA seems to improve a decision-maker’s ability to rely on relevant vs. irrelevant information. When faced with irrelevant product information, consumers find it difficult to ignore irrelevant information, and typically “dilute” their judgments (i.e., their product judgments are lower). Two studies reveal that PA aids people’s ability to focus on relevant information and ignore irrelevant information in product judgments. When faced with irrelevant information in addition to relevant information, sedentary subjects significantly diluted (i.e., lowered) their product judgments. However, there was no significant dilution effect for PA individuals ($F(1, 283) = 4.56$, $p = .033$).

Across these sets of studies, it appears that PA leads decision-makers to weigh different pieces of information more appropriately. The results remain unchanged after controlling for various confounding variables including demographics (e.g., education and income), affect and personality traits (e.g., conscientiousness). Our findings have important implications since they extend the benefits of PA to a novel and important domain - attribute weighing in consumer decision-making. Finally, our findings shed light on potential remedies against bias in situations when people tend to overweight the importance of feasibility attributes and overweight irrelevant information.
REFERENCES
Luxurious Emirati Weddings: The Expenses, Pressures and Consequences
Damien Arthur, Zayed University, UAE
Sara Mohamed Al Marzooqi, Zayed University, UAE
Nuha Nasser Salem Al Amri, Zayed University, UAE

Intended Contribution to Knowledge: This videography explores a ritual and site that due to religious and cultural norms is typically not for public broadcast. It is the first study to date to systematically analyze the expenses pressures and consequences associated with luxurious Emirati Weddings. It provides a unique insight into a closed culture where traditional rituals and values exist but have been warped by wealth and commercialization. Literature Foundations: This videography builds on the work of Russell Belk Rana Sobb and their colleagues (2011 2012 2013 2014) who explored how the concepts of hospitality privacy mimetic excess and gendered spaces are enacted by the people of the Arabian Gulf. Research Method: In-depth interviews and focus groups were undertaken with Emirati brides grooms mothers of grooms wedding attendees wedding planners and venue managers. As society’s norms encourage women to protect their image a major obstacle we overcame was depicting the female-only wedding reception without filming the occasion (as it is prohibited) and finding Emirati women willing to be interviewed on camera about the sensitive topic of marriage. To itemize the costs and quantify the pressures associated with hosting an Emirati wedding an online self-completion survey of 44 Emirati brides and 50 mothers of Emirati grooms was also conducted. Findings and implications: The omnipresent forces of culture religion and wealth have combined to normalize the commercialized and luxurious weddings of the indigenous people of the UAE. The average cost of hosting an Emirati wedding is now over US $185000. It is being driven largely by normative pressure to conform and avoid criticism that may impact family honor. Cultural values of hospitality and generosity also promote excess and are at odds with the Islamic value of modesty. Concerns about the cultural and societal impact exist however the population exhibit little will to change.

Envisioning How New Technologies Can Fulfill Customers’ Unmet Needs
Yaliang Chuang, Eindhoven University of Technology, The Netherlands
Yu-Shan Athena Chen, Eindhoven University of Technology, The Netherlands
Lin-Lin Chen, National Taiwan University of Science and Technology, Taiwan
Yung-Hsun Chen, National Taiwan University of Science and Technology, Taiwan

Intended Contribution to Knowledge: Undeniably home is the most important environment for human beings. This study investigates customers’ unmet needs develops design concepts with new IoT technologies envisions the values for family members and reveals its impact on human life and interpersonal relationships. Literature Foundations: The videography contributes to the literature regarding human-centered design and the acceptance and diffusion of innovation. We demonstrate the contextual approach in finding customers’ unspoken needs from their living contexts. Research Method: Our focus is to reveal how future technology impacts interaction among household members. There are five folds of studies. First ten families (with 2-6 household members and living in 712-1300 m2 living space) were longitudinal followed and interviewed. Second employing the thematic analysis six critical needs in home environment were consolidated. Third through multidisciplinary workshops three value propositions were identified for generating a hundred ideas. Fourth the video prototyping was used to sketch the user experiences. Finally a focus group was conducted to gather target consumers’ feedbacks purchasing attitudes and marketing potentials. Findings and implications: Our first contribution is the five unmet needs for household markets: a house with emotional intelligence having an adaptive atmosphere singing songs everywhere as you wish collecting living memories and the assistance of parenting. These scenarios could assist marketers and designers to scheme the future home environment. Then we consolidate two value propositions which enhance consumers’ well-being and life satisfaction. First the home environment should provide emotional fulfillments. Second it could bridge the parent-children communications and educate the young children to build their routines that are compatible to the parents. Those concepts were envisioned in the videography and validated by eight target customers participated in the focus group discussion. The smart home is expected to ease tensions and bring happiness to family members.

Excessive Online Gaming: Inside the Routine of an E-Sports Fanatic
Thiago Rafael Ferreira Marques, SENAC, Brazil
Tania Veludo-de-Oliveira, Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo da Fundação Getulio Vargas – FGV EAESP, Brazil

Although playing digital games online is an enjoyable experience literature reveals that playing online excessively in extreme cases may lead to symptoms commonly related to addiction such as alienation from the real world degradation of academic performance loss of sense of Time mood swings and so on (Chiu Lee & Huang 2004). Therefore there is a need to study the motivations that lead to excessive behavior with the aim to outline new strategies to prevent the abusive consumption of online games (Kuss & Griffiths 2012). The objective of this videography is to identify these motivations and analyze how they interact in the context of competitive online games (e-sports). A series of in-depth interviews (20) was conducted with players of Dota 2 and Counter strike who closely follow the competitive scene of these games. It was observed that much of the players’ experience is anchored in the social relations and friendship created within the game circle and by the competitive mindset of the players. The informants reported a high perception of flow state during the online gaming experience which corroborates the findings of previous studies (e.g.: Lee 2009). Flow’s perception was found to be a highly influential factor of the behavior in question. The informants also reported a strong identification with the professional players who serve as role models to them. The mimicry
of their role models’ gaming behavior as seen in the consumer doppelganger effect (Ruvio Gavish & Shoham 2013) further explains the excessive gaming. The videography contributes with rich insights to deal with abusive e-sports online gaming. It offers important subsidies for the creation of marketing cues which could drive consumers away from both the near-addictive or addictive stages of behavior (Martin et al. 2013) and closer to a healthy consumption habit.

Searching for RNGesus: A Study on the Use of Randomization in Video Games
Jacob Hiler, Ohio University, USA
William Northington, Idaho State University, USA
Laurel Cook, West Virginia University, USA

The discussion of randomization in marketing up until this point has focused primarily on its use as an experimental methodological tool. This study however focuses on studying intentional randomization in consumer experiences notably in the video game industry. The focus of this study is to explore both how randomization is employed by developers in video games as well as how it is experienced and perceived on the part of their consumers. As Kozinets (2015) suggests in Netnography Redefined more netnographic attention needs to be placed on video websites such as YouTube and Twitch rather than textual data in online forums and communities especially since many online communities and much of the discourse are moving to more video based discussions. Thus using this netnographic videography approach the filmmakers immersed themselves in over 25 hours of user-generated video content shared publicly on YouTube and Twitch and various user-generated text commenting on the nature of the random across various forums comment sections and reddit.

Tomorrowland Festival: A Journey in Devirotopia
Julie Masset, University of Namur, Belgium
Alain Decrop, University of Namur, Belgium

Intended contribution: Each year the music festival ‘Tomorrowland’ gathers in Belgium about 180000 people who come from all over the world. A large number of festival-goers walk around with national flags accessories or fancy dresses which makes the festival unique. This research investigates consumers’ identity construction and expression through such material objects. Few studies have explored identity issues related to a music festival and the paraphernalia consumed during a festival. Literature: This videography relies on consumer research literature related to the meanings of objects (i.e. the role of material objects in consumers’ identity construction) and the consumption experiences (e.g. experiential marketing). Methodology: Through a naturalistic interpretive approach we interviewed 29 informants of both genders and of different ages nationalities educational levels and professional statuses. We also observed the festival and camping sites and the behaviors of festival-goers. Findings and implications: Emerging from data analysis and interpretation this videography documents various profiles of festival-goers from their material possessions (i.e. the patriot the devout the child the bohemian girl and the provocateur) as well as the functions fulfilled by these possessions in their identity construction (i.e. national pride egological exhibitionism universal brotherhood and normalized deviation). We also propose two more original interpretations that enhance our contribution to the literature. First the consumption of paraphernalia used at Tomorrowland is typical of a cathartic release of inner tensions and emotions. The festival creates an “absorbing experience” that allows a “controlled decontrolling of emotions” in an increasingly disenchanted and ruled contemporary world. Second referring to Foucault’s concept of heterotopia the festival can be considered as a heterotopia of deviation because many festival-goers take benefit from Tomorrowland to regress and/or transgress societal rules and norms. The film illustrates a series of ritualized and commoditized deviant behaviors taking place in the fantasy and ideal context of the festival.

Becoming the Character: The Cosplayer Experience in a Con
Stefânia Ordovás de Almeida, Pontíficia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil
João Pedro Fleck, Pontíficia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil
Rafael Mello, Pontíficia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Intended Contribution to Knowledge: This study aims at contributing to the knowledge on the role played by the consumer when he produces elements of his consumption experience (WEIJO 2016) and to understand how this process might be used to contribute to their personal development (RYFF & SINGER 2008). Literature Foundations We know that many products can generate unique experiences that wouldn’t happen without their usage (e.g. surfboard GUEVARA & HOWELL 2015) however with few exceptions (such as SEREGINA & WEIJO 2016) we know little about how the consumer can play an active role in taking this products to consumption environments and how this can create positive experiences that contribute to them as persons. - Research Method: The study involved a participant observation on 12 days of geek culture events and cons and also 14 interviews were videorecorded. Field notes and interviews were transcribed and read many times leading to the interpretation of results according to ideas of Spiggle (1994); McCracken (1988); and Arnould and Wallendorf (1994). - Findings and implications: As the cosplayers bring a product with them to the conventions they dedicate themselves to change their consumption experience generating a new set of behaviors and meanings. Many consume these events as a form of enjoyment however there are some the consume the events aiming at living a significant experience that can be also a personal challenge for them such as overcoming shyness or the lack of skills therefore the consumption ends up being a form of personal growth.
Re-Assembling: Social Entrepreneurship, Motorcycles and Cast-Away Youth
Joonas Rokka, EMLYON Business School, France
Joel Hietanen, Aalto University, Finland
Klaus Kangaspunta, Finland
John Schouten, St. John University, Canada

“Re-assembling” is a videography that explores the notion of social entrepreneurship in the context of how ‘cast-away’ youth with little or no marketable professional skills can be brought back to working-life and re-connected with meaningful lives and sustainable ways of being. The film unfolds as a story about and around our social entrepreneur. Working at his “workshop” where bikes and motorbikes are re-assembled from abandoned lost or used parts often discovered from trash or parts re-circulated in second-hand bike market. The parts are carefully re-worked re-connected and put together as unique beautiful manually crafted bikes that are then sold or traded forward. But he not only re-assembles and sells bikes. He has a broader mission and calling that links his workshop with a social cause. For three years he has started to bring along youngsters often from difficult backgrounds to his workshop to learn what he calls ‘basic life skills’. It is this ongoing re-assembling – of both material objects but also humans – that the film examines and its implications for conceiving potential new forms of social entrepreneurship. We thus seek to illuminate how the new form entrepreneurship performed in one field – such as the practice of motorcycle construction – via accumulation of resources (material social networks and skills) may engender potential for the possibility for translating those resources to simultaneously addressing a social cause – here by supporting the cast-away youngsters. In this way we hope to increase understandings about the work and challenges of such social entrepreneurship.

Stealing from the Rich
Stefan H. Szugalski, Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden
Jonas Colliander, Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden
Magnus Söderlund, Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden
Sofie Sagfossen, Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden

Intended Contribution to Knowledge: We explore the effects bad behavior might have and look at this from a marketplace morality perspective. Researchers have mainly focused on good and bad behavior as two different acts. With this videography we expect to widen the knowledge on morality in the marketplace and specifically add perspectives on self-interest. We extend knowledge by revealing how economical and other self-interests contradict each other. We discuss personal desires and the effects the experience of winning may have on a group of people to the extent that it might impact a whole town. Literature Foundations: The theoretical foundation of the study is the assumption that a marketplace of morality is a market of morality inputs and outputs (Dunfee 1988). Here we study a case in which a person donated money (good behavior) to a sports organization which were obtained illegally (bad behavior) and investigate the possible positive effects of it. What really makes this case interesting from a research perspective is that the person that carried out the dishonest behavior was also the one who lost money as the funds were embezzled from his family business. Research Method: The empirical base is an interview with the person that carried out the illegal act (the input). We also conducted interviews with people living in the town where it all took place. Together with secondary data (articles from 2003-2010) this gave us a ground to explore the impact a “winning culture” might have on collective well-being (the output). Findings and implications: We extend the knowledge on the possible positive effects immoral behavior may have on the marketplace and about value-transfer in the marketplace. This story sheds light on the impact of winning and demonstrates how experiences can increase well-being in a way that products do not.
Roundtable Summaries

**ROUND TABLE**
The Evolution of Signals

**Participants:**
Russ Belk, York University, Canada
Silvia Bellezza, Columbia University, USA
Jonah Berger, University of Pennsylvania, USA
James R. Bettman, Duke University, USA
David Gal, University of Illinois at Chicago, USA
Anat Keinan, Harvard University, USA
Amna Kirmani, University of Maryland, USA
Ayalla Ruvio, Michigan State University, USA
Yajin Wang, University of Maryland, USA
Morgan K. Ward, Emory University, USA
Caleb Warren, University of Arizona, USA

Consumers leverage the symbolic nature of products to signal unobservable characteristics such as identity or status. Due to their symbolic nature the meaning and hence use of signals is constantly evolving. This roundtable discussion explores open questions regarding the antecedents and consequences of signal evolution.

**ROUND TABLE**
Expanding the Horizons of Videographic Consumer Research

**Participants:**
Russell Belk, York University, Canada
Robert Kozinets, University of Southern California, USA
Brownlie Douglas, University of Dundee, UK
Paul Henry, University of Sydney, Australia
Joel Hietanen, Aalto University, Finland
Eric Li, University of British Columbia, USA
Jacob Ostberg, Stockholm Business School, Sweden
John Schouten, University of St. John, Canada
Baptiste Cléret, University of Rouen, France
Anastasia Seregin, Aalto University, Finland

The purpose of this roundtable is to map out and explore the future directions for videography in consumer research. While only limited ontological epistemological and methodological accounts readily exist to assist videographers this session intends to explore potential new pathways for video-based theorizing and the production of consumer research knowledge.
**ROUNDTABLE**

**Friends with Money: The Interplay of Social and Financial Well-Being**

**Participants:**
Jonathan Z. Berman, London Business School, UK
James R. Bettman, Duke University, USA
Cynthia E. Cryder, Washington University, USA
Elizabeth W. Dunn, University of British Columbia, Canada
Gavan J. Fitzsimons, Duke University, USA
Cassie Mogilner Holmes, University of California Los Angeles, USA
Michael I. Norton, Harvard University, USA
Jenny G. Olson, Indiana University, USA
Colbey Emerson Reid, North Carolina State University, USA
Scott Rick, University of Michigan, USA
Avni M. Shah, University of Toronto, Canada
Stephen A. Spiller, University of California Los Angeles, USA
Abigail B. Sussman, University of Chicago, USA
Kathleen D. Vohs, University of Minnesota, USA
Lisa A. Cavanaugh, University of British Columbia, Canada

As in everyday life discussions of consequential financial decisions and social processes have been largely separate in consumer behavior and psychology. This roundtable will consider how work on decision-making financial behavior social dynamics and interpersonal relationships can inform one another to better understand how these domains interact in consumer’s lives.

**ROUNDTABLE**

**Everyday Consumer Aesthetics**

**Participants:**
Lauren Block, Baruch College, USA
Laura Peracchio, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, USA
Claudia Townsend, University of Miami, USA
Mario Pandelaere, Virginia Tech, USA
Ravi Mehta, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA
JoAndrea (Joey) Hoegg, University of British Columbia, Canada
Maureen Morrin, Temple University, USA
Aradhna Krishna, University of Michigan, USA
Maura Scott, Florida State University, USA
Luca Cian, University of Virginia, USA
Henrik Hagvedt, Boston College, USA
Adriana Madzharov, Stevens Institute of Technology, USA
Kelly Herd, Indiana University, USA
Maura Scott, Florida State University, USA
Martin Reimann, University of Arizona, USA
Theodore Noseworthy, York University, USA
Xiaojing Yang, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, USA
Xiaoyan Deng, Ohio State University, USA
Yuwei Jiang, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
Lei Jia, Ohio State University, USA
Rita To, University of Houston, USA
Zhe Zhang, University of Houston, USA
Tim Doering, University of Michigan, USA
Julio Sevilla, University of Georgia, USA

Everyday consumer aesthetics is defined as “non-art non-nature aesthetic experiences that are diverse and dynamic and result in specific consumer actions (e.g. purchasing) and consumption behaviors” (Patrick 2016). The roundtable will discuss the current state of the literature related research areas and future directions for this sub-field of consumer behavior.
ROUNDTABLE
Theoretical Advances in Consumer Neuroscience: How Affective, Cognitive, and Social Neuroscience Informs Consumer Behavior (and Vice Versa)

Participants:
Clark Cao, University of Arizona, USA
Adam Craig, University of Kentucky, USA
Raquel Castañó, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico
Moran Cerf, Northwestern University, USA
Angelika Dimoka, Temple University, USA
Bill Hedgcock, University of Iowa, USA
Hilke Plassmann, INSEAD, France
Martin Reimann, University of Arizona, USA
Ale Smidts, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Carolyn Yoon, University of Michigan, USA

During the roundtable participants will debate theoretical advances in consumer neuroscience especially how concepts from affective cognitive and social neuroscience can inform consumer research and vice versa. The roundtable aims to develop directions for theory development and testing in the field of the neurophysiology of consumption.

ROUNDTABLE
Conspicuous Consumption Revisited in the Digital Era

Participants:
David Dubois, INSEAD, France
Paurav Shukla, Essex University, UK
Valentina Clergue, HEC Lausanne, Switzerland
Bruno Kocher, HEC Lausanne, Switzerland
Leif Brandes, Warwick University, UK
Martin Liu, Nottingham University, Ningbo Campus, China
Teck Y. Eng, University of Southampton, UK
Julia Wolny, University of Southampton, UK
Chunyan Xie, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway
Lily Wang, Zhejiang University, China
Elodie Caucigh, University of Vienna, Austria
Jeff Lee, NYU Shanghai, China
Nailya Ordabayeva, Boston College, USA

Digital technology including social media challenge fundamental premises of luxury brands including exclusivity status authenticity and sensory experiences. Digital luxury experiences differ from their offline counterparts and brought forward terms like “webmosphere” or “luxemosphere” indicating new approaches. Little is known about the underlying mechanisms manifested in these new phenomena.

ROUNDTABLE
What is a Consumption Experience?

Participants:
Richard Lutz, University of Florida, USA
Hope Jensen Schau, University of Arizona, USA
David Mick, University of Virginia, USA
Deborah Macinnis, University of Southern California, USA
Cassie Mogilner Holmes, University of California Los Angeles, USA
Rebecca Hamilton, Georgetown University, USA
Markus Giesler, York University, Canada
Robin Coulter, University of Connecticut, USA
Eileen Fischer, York University, Canada
Linda Price, University of Oregon, USA

Consumption experience is the heart of consumer behavior and value creation. This roundtable will explore several questions related to consumption experiences. What is a consumption experience and its most important dimensions? How do we study each dimension? How can we develop a more comprehensive view of consumption experience? This session integrates diverse perspectives and methodologies to guide research investigating how consumption experience drives value creation.
ROUND TABLE
Charting the Future of the Transformative Consumer Research Movement

Participants:
David Mick, University of Virginia, USA
Cornelia Pechmann, University of California Irvine, USA
Maura Scott, Florida State University, USA
Martin Mende, Florida State University, USA
Janet McColl-Kennedy, University of Queensland, Australia
Lucie Ozanne, University of Canterbury, New Zealand
Chris Blocker, Colorado State University, USA
Andres Barrios, Universidad de los Andes, Colombia
Laurel Anderson, Arizona State University, USA
Jeff Murray, University of Arkansas, USA
Lauren Block, Baruch College, USA
Linda Price, University of Oregon, USA
Madhu Viswanathan, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, USA
Leonard Lee, National University of Singapore, Singapore
Beth Vallen, Villanova University, USA
Karen Winterich, Penn State, USA
Laura Peracchio, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, USA
Rodrigo Castilhos, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Portugal
Samuelson Appau, University of Melbourne, Australia
L. Lin Ong, Cal Poly Pomona, USA
Marcus Phipps, University of Melbourne, Australia
Shikha Upadhyaya, California State University Los Angeles, USA
Emily C. Tanner, West Virginia University, USA
Elizabeth Crosby, University of Wisconsin, USA
Christopher Berry, Colorado State University, USA
Sterling Bone, Utah State University, USA
Daniele Mathras, Northeastern University, USA
Kelly Haws, Vanderbilt University, USA
Zafeirenia Brokalaki, Kings’ College London, UK

Transformative Consumer Research leaders from the advisory committee or past conference track chairs organize five task force discussions around key challenges and opportunities facing the movement. Each task force will present initial recommendations and then seek questions and input from ACR roundtable attendees for a strategic planning report.
ROUNDTable
Toward an Integrated Understanding of Resource Scarcity

Participants:
Andrea Morales, Arizona State University, USA
Angela Lee, Northwestern University, USA
Anthony Salerno, University of Cincinnati, USA
Anuj Shah, University of Chicago, USA
Brent McFerran, Simon Fraser University, Canada
Chiraag Mittal, Texas A&M University, USA
Danit Ein-Gar, Tel Aviv University, Israel
Darren Dhal, University of British Columbia, Canada
Debora Thompson, Georgetown University, USA
Deborah Roedder John, University of Minnesota, USA
Eesha Sharma, Dartmouth College, USA
Juliano Laran, University of Miami, USA
Julio Sevilla, University of Georgia, USA
Kirk Kristofferson, Arizona State University, USA
Lan Nguyen Chaplin, University of Illinois at Chicago, USA
Liat Levontin, Israel institute of Technology, Israel
Meryl Gardner, University of Delaware, USA
Rebecca Hamilton, Georgetown University, USA
Rebecca Ratner, University of Maryland, USA
Sarah Hill, Texas Christian University, USA
Kristina Durante, Rutgers University, USA

This roundtable aims to encourage constructive discussion and create a space for researchers interested in resource scarcity to start integrating the different definitions operationalizations and findings from extant scarcity research into a coherent framework in order to identify gaps requiring further attention and share ideas that will stimulate future collaborations.
17-D: Friends with Benefits: Social Support and Pain of Payment
Deborah Abrams, Georgia Tech, USA
Samuel Bond, Georgia Tech, USA
Michael Lowe, Georgia Tech, USA

This research demonstrates how social presence through its effect on social support can attenuate pain of payment. Studies 1 and 2 show a direct negative effect of social presence on pain of payment as well as a mediating effect of social support.

13-J: The Effect of Stress on Consumers’ Private Information Disclosure
Sinem Acar-Burkay, University College of Southeast Norway, Norway
Bob M. Fennis, University of Groningen, The Netherlands

Consumer privacy in the age of big data is an important research topic for consumer researchers. In two studies we examine how stress affects private information disclosure. Results show that stress increases consumers’ likelihood of answering highly-sensitive and even incriminating questions affirmatively while potentially making them susceptible to privacy risks.

20-U: Who are the Influentials?
Social Media, Opinion Leadership and New Product Adoption
Duygu Akdevelioglu, University of California Irvine, USA
Selcan Kara, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, USA

This research examines how innovativeness and extraversion influence self-reported and sociometric opinion leadership in social media which affect new product adoption. Findings contribute to extant work on new product adoption by showing that self-reported leadership and sociometric leadership are distinct characteristics because they act differently in their nomological networks.

8-E: Jeitinho Brasileiro:
Understanding Financial Vulnerability from a Cultural Perspective
Rafaela Almeida Cordeiro, Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing, Brazil
Nancy Wong, University of Wisconsin - Madison, USA
Mateus Ponchio, Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing, Brazil

The current research provides a unique context in showing how financial vulnerability is jointly shaped by weak policies and consumer values. It contributes to market system dynamics in explaining how culture and social capital shape consumer resistance and coping strategies in the Brazilian marketplace.

9-FF: Emotional Labor and Emotional Intelligence in Healthcare Delivery Organizations: The Case of Medicaid Recipients
Eklou Amendah, Southern New Hampshire University, USA
Adrienne Hall-Phillips, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, USA

For healthcare providers serving Medicaid recipients emotions play an important role when managing beneficiaries and recipients. The study aims to demonstrate that service recipient characteristics and work environment challenges moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional labor when Medicaid beneficiaries are being served by healthcare organization employees.
2-U: The Effect of Healthcare Product Type and Anthropomorphized Brand Role on Consumer Judgments

Jiyoon An, University of Rhode Island, USA
Daniel Sheinin, University of Rhode Island, USA

Drugs and dietary supplements are now often available in the same distribution channels. Drugs are heavily-regulated medical products while dietary supplements are lightly-regulated food products. This paper explores whether anthropomorphized brand role (servant versus partner) changes perceptions about these products and intentions to engage in healthy behaviors.

1-F: Grotesque Imagery Enhancing Persuasiveness of Luxury Brand Advertising

Donghwy An, Hongik University, South Korea
Chulsung Lee, Hongik University, South Korea
Janghyun Kim, Korea Christian University, South Korea
Nara Youn, Hongik University, South Korea

The current research examines consumers’ perceived fit between grotesque imagery and luxury branding. We showed that the fit between grotesque imagery and luxury brand advertising facilitates transportation which in turn enriches brand experience and increases purchase intention of the featured product.

1-A: Art Appreciation Opens Affirmed Minds to Cultural Diversity

Donghwy An, Hongik University, South Korea
Boram Lee, Hongik University, South Korea
Nara Youn, Hongik University, South Korea

Appreciating artworks enhanced endorsement of cultural diversity for individuals with high self-affirmation (Study 1) and for those with authentic pride but not for those with hubristic pride (Study 2). The effect of art appreciation was significant for narcissistic individuals only when their openness to cultural diversity was publicized (Study 2).

13-G: New with Tags: Consumer and Brand Relationships in Consumer-to-Consumer Buy/Sell/Trade Groups on Social Media

Catherine Armstrong Soule, Western Washington University, USA
Sara Hanson, University of Richmond, USA

This paper introduces and explores the emerging and impactful phenomenon of branded consumer-to-consumer buy/sell/trade groups on social media. These groups are independently organized marketplaces where consumers buy and sell one focal brand exclusively. Through in-depth interviews field data scraped from Facebook and survey data we identify brand and retailing implications.

14-I: Signaling Nothing: Conspicuous Anti-Consumption in Demarketing Contexts

Catherine Armstrong Soule, Western Washington University, USA
Tejvir Sekhon, Western Washington University, USA

This paper explores the link between status-signaling and demarketing. The anti-consumption resulting from demarketing strategies does not have a public display of virtuous behavior. We test whether an observable signal can motivate anti-consumption by providing status-signaling opportunity and whether this signal benefits the anti-consumer as well as the demarketing brand.
19-A: The Interactive Effect of Type and Framing of Discounts on Consumers’ Preference

Amin Attari, University of Kansas, USA
Promothesh Chatterjee, University of Kansas, USA
Surendra Singh, University of Kansas, USA

This article investigates consumers’ preference for probabilistic versus sure discounts across two frames the amount of discount frame and the reduced price frame. We show that consumers’ preference between the sure and probabilistic discounts can reverse depending on the type of frame used to present the discount.

13-K: The Fit Between Depth of Self-Disclosure and Self-Construal on Consumer Evaluations in Peer-to-Peer Markets

Sumitra Auschaitrakul, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, Thailand
Ashesh Mukherjee, McGill University, Canada
Dan King, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, USA

Peer-to-Peer markets (P-to-P) are platforms where individual sellers exchange products with individual buyers. Based on a fit-fluency framework the present research shows that depth of disclosure in peer-to-peer markets has a positive effect on product evaluation when self-construal is interdependent but this positive effect is eliminated when self-construal is independent.

9-GG: Narrative Engagement: A Model for Suicide Prevention

Caroline Graham Austin, Montana State University, USA
Sarah Keller, Montana State University, USA

This paper explores one community-based approach to addressing suicide. Narrative engagement encourages people to collectively share personal stories yielding information about shared perceptions attitudes and beliefs. Such community engagement shines light into “dark closets” reducing stigma and isolation. Identifying communal strengths and weaknesses builds resiliency and identifies potential resources.


Ana Babic Rosario, University of Denver, USA

This study explores how consumers legitimize hybrid consumption practices such as gluten-free eating to support their identity work. Based on netnographic interview and archival data several consumer strategies for moral legitimation were identified. The insights extend the work on consumer and practice legitimation to the context of hybridized cultural forms.

14-U: Seeing Through Consumer: Predicting Consumer Preferences and Choices by using Deep Learning Neural Networks

Marija Banovic, Aarhus University, Denmark
Vladan Arsenijevic, Seven Bridges Genomics, Serbia

Training neural networks with consumer data can critically change marketing practice. This research shows that consumer choices can be predicted by usage of deep learning neural networks. Apart from prediction of what consumer is most likely to select we can optimize the product to fit consumer’s preferences.
5-M: Saved by the Past?
Activated Disease Threat Promotes Consumer Preferences for Nostalgic Products

Dovilė Barauskaitė, ISM University of Management and Economics, Lithuania
Justina Gineikienė, ISM University of Management and Economics, Lithuania
Bob M. Fennis, University of Groningen, The Netherlands

Consumer research experienced a surge in interest in when and why consumers prefer nostalgic products. The present work complements this literature by examining the role of a yet untested antecedent for nostalgic consumption – salient disease threat. Across two studies we show that activated disease threat promotes heightened consumer nostalgic preferences.

7-G: How the Uniqueness of Goods Influences Consumers’ Response to Price Increase for Experiences versus Objects

Wilson Bastos, Catholic University of Portugal, Portugal

This research shows that consumers react more favorably to a price increase when it is associated with an experiential good than a material one. Further it examines five potential explanations (closeness to the self conversational value impression management social relatedness and purchase uniqueness) and reveals uniqueness as the mechanism.

7-C: Conceptualizing the Digital Experience in Luxury

Wided Batat, University of Lyon 2, France
Olivier Sinai, Birkbeck, University of London, UK

This research introduces a theory of digital luxury experience conceptualizing what it is and identifying its drivers. This is of importance to luxury consumption as it offers a framework to understand digital luxury an empirical phenomenon which has gained prominence in the last 10 years and has remained poorly understood.


Wided Batat, University of Lyon 2, France

This research draws on a subjective personal introspection (SPI) approach and Breakwell’s identity process theory (IPT) principles to show how elements from different cultures are performed by an individual to form a unique patchwork identity and how this patchwork identity will contribute to deepen consumer experience of a cultural destination.

11-I: Effects of the Qualification of Potentially Misleading Claims on Production Characteristics on Buying Intention

Tino Bech-Larsen, Aarhus University, Denmark
George Tsalis, Aarhus University, Denmark
Trine Moerk, Aarhus University, Denmark
Klaus G. Grunert, Aarhus University, Denmark

This consumer (n=1420) study analyzes the qualification of potentially misleading statements about production processes based on conjoint ratings of taste health and animal welfare qualities and buying intentions. Deception potential is revealed by mediation tests of taste health and AW ratings on the effects of conjoint attributes on buying intentions.
14-O: The Neuroscience Viewpoint on the Interaction Effect between Persuasive Arguments and Celebrity on Attitude Change

Lien-Ti Bei, National Chengchi University, Taiwan
Li-Keng Cheng, National Chengchi University, Taiwan
Wei-Chin Hsu, National Taiwan University of Science and Technology, Taiwan
Yu-Shan Athena Chen, Technische Universiteit Eindhoven, The Netherlands

This study investigated the interaction effect between arguments and celebrity on attitude. The results of traditional and fMRI experiments showed that heuristic arguments with celebrity required more cognitive resources than strong and weak arguments. Also consumers generated stronger emotion reaction toward celebrities with heuristic arguments than strong and weak arguments.

9-CC: Will Consumers Accept Foods Made from Surplus Ingredients?

Siddharth Bhatt, Drexel University, USA
Jeonggyu Lee, Drexel University, USA
Jonathan Deutsch, Drexel University, USA
Hasan Ayaz, Drexel University, USA
Benjamin Fulton, Drexel University, USA
Rajneesh Suri, Drexel University, USA

To address the global food waste problem researchers have proposed creating foods from ingredients that would otherwise be wasted. This research examines consumers’ perceptions of Value Added Surplus Products which are foods made from surplus ingredients to conclude that consumers indeed accept these as a new category.

12-F: The Motivation to Exclude Others and its Impact on Brand Commitment

Samantha Bittner, Florida State University, USA
Tatiana Fajardo, Florida State University, USA

This research examines exclusion in the context of brand communities. The authors demonstrate that in communities of high (low) personal relevance consumers are more (less) motivated to exclude others. Furthermore in communities of high (low) personal relevance consumers report higher brand commitment after excluding (including) another from the brand community.

4-Q: The Use of Ethnically Ambiguous Models in Advertising to Preserve Consumer Well-being in an Organic Multicultural Market

Wim Booyse, University of Pretoria, South Africa
Samantha Swanepoel, University of Pretoria, South Africa

Our research compares a multiculturated consumers’ feeling of well-being when evaluating advertisements with differing variations of ethnic targeting. Consumers within a multicultural market (South Africa) have a greater feeling of consumer wellbeing when evaluating an advertisement containing ethnically ambiguous models compared to models of multiple ethnicities or individual ethnic models.

9-T: Savoring Stress: Can Feeling Stressed Reduce the Rate of Satiation?

Benjamin Borenstein, University of Miami, USA
Juliano Laran, University of Miami, USA
Luke Nowlan, University of Miami, USA

In this research we propose that stress reduces the rate of satiation to hedonic consumption experiences. In order to restore control stressed individuals engage more with the activities they are currently pursuing. As a result they take longer to satiate to music (study 1) and food (study 2).
20-J: Promotional Reviews, Social Influence, and the Information Content of Online Reviews

Leif Brandes, University of Warwick, UK
Rosa Cacabelos, University of Zurich, Switzerland
Egon Franck, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Does social influence during the review provision process reduce the information content of reviews when individuals are exposed to promotional reviews? We show that social influence reduces the evaluation gap between products of different quality levels but that this reduction is insufficient to make average review scores uninformative.

1-G: I Want the Best, So Give Me All the Bells and Whistles: How Maximizers versus Satisficers Evaluate Feature-Rich Products

Daniel Brannon, University of Northern Colorado, USA
Brandon Soltwisch, University of Northern Colorado, USA

We find that maximizers (vs. satisficers) give more favorable evaluations to feature-rich products indicating that they are less likely to anticipate feature fatigue. Underlying this relationship is a dual process whereby maximizers perceive feature-rich products as status signals as well as overestimate how much they will use the additional features.

11-S: When Do Ethical Consumers Elicit Inspiration Instead of Denigration?

Claire Brouwer, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain
Jan Willem Bolderdijk, University of Groningen, The Netherlands
Gert Cornelissen, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain

This work identifies a boundary condition under which ethically motivated consumers elicit positive responses from observers rather than typically negative ones. We show that exemplars have the potential to harvest applause and can inspire others to emulate but only if there is sufficient psychological distance between themselves and potential observers.

20-K: Provision of Sales Volume Information Influences Consumers’ Preferences Via Perceived Purchase and Word-of-Mouth Popularity

Adrian Camilleri, RMIT University, Australia

Across three experiments we show that when consumers are presented with both the number of online reviews and the number of sales many of them use the ratio between these numbers – the reviewer percentage – to infer a product’s “word-of-mouth popularity” which is distinct from a product’s “purchase popularity”.

2-A: Shante you Stay/ Sashay Away: Approaching Language Within Brand Assemblages

Mario Campana, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK
Katherine Duffy, University of Glasgow, UK
Alessandro Callandro, Middlesex University, UK

This research extends brand assemblage theory to contribute to understanding how language assembles and evolves in brand niche communities. We question how consumers of RuPaul’s DragRace create and circulate a cultural product then we explore how this is scaled-up and mainstreamed moving from a brand minor to a brand major.
9-L: Healthy or Happy? How Awe Enhances Consumers’ Preferences for Healthy Products

Fei Cao, Renmin University of China, P.R. China
Xia Wang, Renmin University of China, P.R. China
Ze Wang, University of Central Florida, USA

Three studies demonstrate that experiencing awe (vs. neutral emotion) enhances consumers’ preferences for healthy products (vs. unhealthy products). The effect is driven by analytic processing and is stronger for consumers with chronic affective (vs. cognitive) information processing style.

7-K: Negotiated Outsourcing – Towards an Understanding of Market Tension in Enduring Consumption Experiences

Flavia Cardoso, Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez, Chile
Pilar Rojas-Gaviria, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile
Daiane Scaraboto, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile

We contribute to a recent stream of research on consumer outsourcing by examining enduring (i.e. long-term transformational) consumption experiences. We identify cultural and social sources of tension related to outsourcing in the schooling market and map the emergence of a parallel market in which these issues are negotiated and resolved.

2-R: Oxytocin Increases Trust for Familiar and Familial Brands

Lilian Carvalho, Fundacao Getulio Vargas, Brazil
Gad Saad, Concordia University, Canada
Eliane Brito, Fundacao Getulio Vargas, Brazil

We designed two experiments to investigate the relationship between oxytocin and brand trust. The first study found that both known and unknown brands can reap the effects of oxytocin. In the second study we investigated if oxytocin had effects for both social vs. status stimuli and also found significant effects.

17-A: Consumer Perceptions of Social Robots

Noah Castelo, Columbia University, USA
Bernd Schmitt, Columbia University, USA

Robots are being used in a range of consumption settings. We explore how consumers’ perceptions of robots depend on the robots’ memory and emotionality. Using a social robot called Nadine we find that emotion and memory interact in shaping consumers’ perceptions of the robot.

5-Q: The Effect of Working with Ingroup versus Outgroup Members on Affective Forecasting Bias

Lorenzo Cecutti, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, China
Jessica Kwong, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, China

Normally individual’s emotionality is considered detrimental to shared goals. However the present findings show that in group settings affective forecast bias can be functional to goal pursuit. We found that when working with ingroup members participants’ affective forecast motivated goal persistence. Yet this pattern reduced when working with outgroup members.
3-F: Pride Shapes Decisions through Construal Level:  
The Effect of Authentic vs. Hubristic Pride on Construal Level  
Melis Ceylan, Koc University, Turkey  
Nilüfer Aydinoğlu, Koc University, Turkey  
Selin Atalay, Frankfurt School of Finance and Management, Germany

Pride is a pervasive emotion. Thus it is critical to understand how this emotion affects how consumers construe information and make subsequent choices. This research demonstrates that individuals experiencing authentic (hubristic) pride adopt lower- (higher-) levels of construal. This result contributes to research in emotions and judgment & decision making.

10-C: Calendar Framing Affects Perception and Anticipation of Sunday  
Rebecca Chae, University of Michigan, USA  
Christine Kang, California State University Long Beach, USA

We examine the effects of calendar framing on time perception and anticipatory emotions. We demonstrate how the location of Sunday on a calendar (i.e. at the beginning vs. the end of the week) influences perception and anticipation of Sunday. We further discuss its implications on marketing communications.

5-O: The Effect of Antecedents of Sadness on Brand Evaluation  
Luxi Chai, University of Kansas, USA  
Yexin Jessica Li, University of Kansas, USA

The current paper contributes to research on emotion in consumer attitudes and behaviors by showing that when consumers experience sadness from status loss they value brand competence and rate competent brands more desirable than warm brands. Ratings of brand traits do not differ when consumers experience sadness from social loss.

9-A: “I Reward Myself with Salad!” Framing Healthy Food Option as a Reward Increases Purchasing Intention  
Luxi Chai, University of Kansas, USA  
Marija Grishin, University of Kansas, USA

The current research examines the impact of gratification-enhancing framing on healthy food-related decision making by demonstrating that framing the healthy (vs. unhealthy) food option as a reward increases the rewarding feeling and purchase intention.

16-A: Adding a Charitable Donation to a Product or Adding a Product to a Charitable Donation? How Much You Can Raise Depends on How You Frame the Case  
Chia-Chi Chang, National Chiao-Tung University, Taiwan  
Po-Yu Chen, National Chiao-Tung University, Taiwan

For charity sales hedonic products will solicit more help than utilitarian products. For donation with a thank-you gift adding a charitable donation to utilitarian products tend to be more effective in soliciting more help than adding the same donation to hedonic products.

19-D: Studying Bets and Hedges in Simple Lotteries  
Subimal Chatterjee, SUNY Binghamton, USA  
Satadruta Mookherjee, SUNY Binghamton, USA

We use a simple lottery to test if consumers value a hedge against losing in any way that is different from how they value the risk and test some potential explanations that might drive these valuations.
3-H: Through the Looking Glass:  
Role of Construal Level on Description-Intensive Reviews

Swagato Chatterjee, Institute for Financial Management and Research, India  
Aruna Divya T, IIM Ahmedabad, India

Focus on consumer engagement has led service providers to explore contextual factors influencing consumers’ satisfaction. In this paper we draw insights from Construal Level Theory to identify the conditions when own vs. others’ experiences along with Process vs. Outcome attributes of services become more important in overall service evaluation.

14-M: The Making of a Successful Advocate:  
How Incentivizing Consumer Referrals Affects Persuasion

Lauren Cheatham, Stanford University, USA  
Zakary Tormala, Stanford University, USA

When it comes to consumer product and service referrals do incentives work? We find that there is an important tradeoff such that incentivizing referrals increases reach but undermines the effectiveness of the advocacy. We provide evidence for this tradeoff being driven by a shift in intrinsic motivation.

4-G: Examining Tourists’ Intentions to Revisit Religion Processions:  
The Role of Religiosity and Flow Experience

Annie Chen, University of West London, UK  
Norman Peng, University of Westminster, UK

The purpose of this research is to examine the factors that contribute to tourists’ intentions to re-participate in religious processions. The results from 109 participants show flow experience positively affects revisit intentions. Addition religiosity positively moderates the relationship between flow experiences and revisit intentions.

5-B: Coping with On-going Terror and Threats:  
Resilience, Place Attachment, and Behaviors

Ning (Chris) Chen, University of Canterbury, New Zealand  
Rohail Ashraf, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan

This study looks at regions in Pakistan where people live in constant terror of terrorism political unrest and threats of death and aim to understand how people cope with the extreme situations how their attachment to the place evolves and changes and how people’s perceptions and ideologies on consumption shift.

6-A: Chooser or Suitor: The Effects of Mating Cues on  
Men’s vs. Women’s Reaction to Brand Rejection

Rui Chen, Xiamen University, China  
Chun-Ming Yang, Ming Chuan University, Taiwan  
Hao Shen, Chinese University of Hong Kong, China

Once mating motives are activated males will respond to rejection less negatively than they otherwise would whereas this effect does not occur for females. Two studies examine the marketing implications of these effects.
7-M: When a Minor Problem Causes a Major Trouble for Experiential Purchases
Qihui Chen, Peking University, China
Jingjing Ma, Peking University, China

Although past research has consistently shown that experiential purchases produce higher satisfaction than material purchases this research shows that experiential purchases could lead to lower satisfaction when these purchases are mixed-valence purchases. This is because consumers evaluate experiential purchases based on feelings; a minor problem could cause a major dissatisfaction.

5-P: The Effect of Nostalgia Advertising on Brand Loyalty
Jia Chen, University of Illinois at Chicago, USA
Jingjing Ma, Peking University, China

Prior research showed that nostalgic ads of certain brands improve consumers’ attitude towards these brands. Here we propose that if a brand has made inconsistent changes of its positioning in the past nostalgic ads can also result in decreased consumer loyalty. We speculate that self-brand connection might be a mechanism.

8-F: Or Else! The Positive Effect of an Advisor’s Ultimatum on Perceived Expertise
Shirley Shuo Chen, University of Alberta, Canada
Kyle B Murray, University of Alberta, Canada

This research examines how advice given with an ultimatum affects perceived expertise in the context of financial decision-making. In a series of three studies we find that perceptions of expertise increase when an advisor threatens to provide no future advice if the current recommendation is not accepted.

Shijiao Chen, University of Otago, New Zealand
Damien Mather, University of Otago, New Zealand
Hongzhi Gao, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
John Knight, University of Otago, New Zealand

This paper conceptualizes country-of-origin (COO) cues as indicators of country institutions and tests the effect of COO cues on consumers’ perceptions and purchase preference in the Chinese food market. This paper includes a survey experiment and a choice modelling experiment and offer implications for international marketing researchers and practitioners.

20-T: When Too Many Friends Inhibit Talking: The Impact of Social Roles on Social Sharing Online
Yu-Jen Chen, Lingnan, Hong Kong

We study how social roles affects online sharing behavior. We propose that as the number of friends increases consumers may perceive role conflict due to the perceived difficulty in managing diverse role expectation. As distinct social roles are made salient they may inhibit online sharing behavior.

1-B: Cross-Cultural Differences in Aesthetic Judgments of Products: The Role of Cognitive Styles
Tseng-Ping Chiu, University of Michigan, USA
Carolyn Yoon, University of Michigan, USA
Shinobu Kitayama, University of Michigan, USA

This study investigates cross-cultural differences in consumers’ aesthetic judgments of products in a matching versus non-matching context. Our findings suggest that those with holistic cognitive styles (East Asians) are more tolerant of object-context mismatch than those with more analytic styles (European Americans).
18-A: Green by Itself, But Brown in Comparison: The Influence of Sustainability Disclosures at the Shelf

Yoon-Na Cho, Villanova University, USA
Robin Soster, University of Arkansas, USA
Scot Burton, University of Arkansas, USA

Consumers receive little or no consistent brand level sustainability information. Drawing from comparative processing and information disclosure literatures we conduct (1) a retail laboratory experiment and (2) a field study in a retail store to examine effects of provision of brand-level sustainability information on choices product evaluations and retailer perceptions.

18-E: Not Green or Healthy as You Think? Misperceptions From Sustainability Labeling

Yoon-Na Cho, Villanova University, USA

The trend of environmental consciousness in food is expected to increase as consumers demand more information on environmental and social impacts. Drawing from consumers’ lay theories and the match-up hypothesis we examine the influence of healthfulness of food and sustainability levels on product evaluations to promote green food decisions.

8-I: How Temporal Separation in Budgeting Affects Spending Behavior

Yuna Choe, Texas A&M University, USA
Christina Kan, Texas A&M University, USA

We propose that as the temporal separation between budgeting and purchase increases people become more willing to overspend. Budgeting money may produce similar pain of payment to spending money and as people adapt to the cost with the passage of time the pain associated with the decision lessens thereby increasing spending.

5-N: Take it Humorously: Effects of Humorous Rebuttals to Negative Attacks

Hsuan-Yi Chou, National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan
Xing-Yu Chu, National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan
Ching Chin, National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan

Response to election attacks might have a greater impact on the effects of the attack and on voters’ evaluations of both candidates. However this issue is under-researched. This study analyzes the relative effects of different rebuttal strategies and demonstrates the moderation of the responding candidate gender and negative attack type.

6-C: Mr. Right vs. Mr. Right Now: The Impact of Male Physical Dominance on Women’s Consumption Patterns

Brett Christenson, University of Alabama, USA
Christine Ringler, University of Alabama, USA
Nancy Sirianni, University of Alabama, USA

Evolutionary psychology posits the motivations for consumption are made to satisfy genetic and reproductive goals. However the relationship between evolutionary drivers and gender roles has yet to be examined. We look at the interaction between male physical dominance and traditional gender roles on women’s consumption of self-enhancing versus homemaking products.

12-B: Interpersonal Face: A Major Motivation for Luxury Consumption in Asia

Jung-Han Chung, Sogang University, South Korea
Young-Won Ha, Sogang University, South Korea

We investigate whether face affects consumers’ desires for luxury consumption. Across three experiments we show that interpersonal face as well as authentic pride is a critical factor in Asia and that Asian consumers are willing to pay a face premium. Marketers need to formulate a strategic plan to elicit face motivation for Asian consumers.
4-M: Psychological Antecedents of Luxury Brand Purchase Intent in Asian Market

Hoeun Chung, Fayetteville State University, USA

Despite of much attention given to the penchant for luxury consumption among Asian consumers our understanding on the underlying psychological reasons of this phenomenon is limited. The primary purpose of the current research was to explore culture-relevant psychological correlates of luxury brand purchase intent based on social consumption related theories.

8-A: Attenuating Money Illusion? How Personalization Affects the Consideration of Inflation in the Consumers’ Financial Planning

Henning Cordes, University of Muenster, Germany
Carsten Erner, University of Muenster, Germany, and University of California Los Angeles, USA
Thomas Langer, University of Muenster, Germany

We study how letting consumers construct their personal inflation rate affects the consideration of inflation in the long-term financial planning. We find that the personalization is not beneficial: The complex elicitation procedure reduces the subjective knowledge about inflation which induces consumers to care less about inflation in their financial planning.

9-AA: What Did You Eat at School Today? The Influence of Preschool on Children’s Food Consumption

T. Bettina Cornwell, University of Oregon, USA
Sung-Hee Paik, University of Oregon, USA
Eric Setten, University of Oregon, USA

This observational study shows significant differences across classrooms in the consumption of condiments vegetables grain and protein in publicly funded preschools. We theorize several possible mediators of this “classroom effect” on consumption. This research aids in the understanding of food socialization and has public policy implications for early childhood programs.

2-Y: Uncommon Beauty: Disabled Models in Ads Improve Brand Liking

Martina Cossu, Bocconi University, Italy
Zachary Estes, Bocconi University, Italy

Two studies demonstrate that advertisements involving a disabled model increase brand liking. A first study demonstrates the main effect using as stimuli female disabled models. A second study replicates this result in the lab using both female and male models and tests for political correctness by measuring respondents’ response times.

18-H: The Authenticity of Corporate Social Responsibility Actions on Brand Symbolism

Diego Costa Pinto, ESPM Business School, Brazil
Marcia Maurer Herter, ESPM Business School, Brazil
Leonardo Nicolao, UFRGS, Brazil
Mellina Terres, UFCSPA, Brazil

This research analyzes how corporate social responsibility (CSR) actions (related or unrelated to the company’s core business) influence brand symbolism. Findings suggest that CSR actions unrelated (vs related) to the company’s core business increase perception of brand social consciousness influencing brand symbolism and having downstream effects on behavioral intentions.
11-U: Doing Good by Buying from a Peer:  
When and Why Consumers Prefer Peer Economy Options

John Costello, The Ohio State University, USA  
Rebecca Walker Rezek, The Ohio State University, USA

This research finds that consumers evaluate peer economy purchases as more prosocial than similar traditional options and that these evaluations mediate higher purchase intentions. This relative preference is attenuated when the consumer’s focus is drawn to the fact that the peer-to-peer provider is a corporate entity vs. an individual.

11-T: Carpe Diem: Examining the Impact of Hedonic Experiences on Prosocial Behavior

Daniela Cristian, BI Norwegian Business School, Norway  
Bob Fennis, University of Groningen, The Netherlands  
Luk Warlop, BI Norwegian Business School, Norway

We examine whether consumers behave more altruistically after engaging in volitional hedonic consumption. Results show that consuming pleasurable foods fosters intentional as well as factual helping behavior. This facilitating effect of hedonic consumption is more prominent for consumers that are chronically prone to disinhibit.

7-D: Do Hedonic Experiences Facilitate the Disregard of Sunk Costs?

Daniela Cristian, BI Norwegian Business School, Norway  
Bob Fennis, University of Groningen, The Netherlands  
Luk Warlop, BI Norwegian Business School, Norway

Besides enjoyment hedonic experiences lead to myopic behaviors and enhance a present-moment orientation. This seemingly “myopic” focus reduces the consideration of past and leads to positive outcomes. We show that following hedonic consumption consumers display lower sensitivity to sunk costs. Thus under particular conditions yielding to temptation is beneficial.

16-F: I’m Just Trying to Help:  
How Prosocial Bragging Behaviors Hurt and Help Nonprofit Organizations

Michelle Daniels, Arizona State University, USA  
Kirk Kristofferson, Arizona State University, USA  
Andrea Morales, Arizona State University, USA

Consumers frequently brag about their volunteering behaviors. While prior research has shown that bragging negatively impacts the bragger our research examines the negative spillover effects of one’s bragging on the non-profit organization. We find that viewing a volunteer’s bragging actually negatively affects both attitude toward and support for the organization.

16-I: Structure-Seeking in the Sharing Economy

Alexander Davidson, Concordia University, Canada  
Mohammad Reza Habibi, California State University Fullerton, USA  
Michel Laroche, Concordia University, Canada

The sharing economy has transformed peer-to-peer consumption into a multi-billion dollar industry. Despite its success resistance towards participation prevails and has been shown to be related to perceptions that sharing economy experiences lack structure and consistency. The current research identifies personal need for structure as a psychological barrier towards participation.
15-G: The Smell of Selling: Olfactory Cues as a route for Product Aesthetic Preferences
Ramona De Luca, FGV-EAESP Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo, Brazil
Delane Botelho, FGV-EAESP Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo, Brazil

Olfactory information is not simply emotionally experienced but also cognitively processed by consumers in the marketplace. This theoretical article explores the effect of scent on decision-making. In particular we propose that scent affects stimulus processing fluency and product aesthetic preferences especially for atypical and no scent-based products.

16-J: Temporal Focus and Consumer Response to Donation Appeals
Yoshiko DeMotta, Fairleigh Dickinson University, USA

This research shows that people who are hopeful respond to a donation appeal positively when the appeal suggests their contribution enhances the wellbeing of both themselves and other people more than when the appeal suggests it enhances other people’s wellbeing. This effect reverses when people are nostalgic.

19-B: Keeping a Low Profile: When Outcome Uncertainty Promotes Behavioral Inhibition
Xun Deng, Shanghai JiaoTong University, China
Liangyan Wang, Shanghai JiaoTong University, China

We propose that when waiting for uncertain outcomes of important life events people tend to display behavioral inhibition and keep a low profile in public. Three experiments support this “low-profile effect” hypothesis. The shorter the temporal distance of the outcome the stronger the low-profile effect.

20-R: Weird Products: Too Weird For Purchase, But Perfect For Sharing.
Qian (Claire) Deng, University of Alberta, Canada
Paul Messinger, University of Alberta, Canada

This paper challenges the common view that weirdness is negative and usually leads to negative consumers’ responses. Specifically we found that compared to regular products consumers’ information-share (purchase) intentions and behavior toward weird products are higher (lower) because of perceived funniness (failed sense-making of the product usefulness).

2-L: Decomposing Consumer Evaluations of Brand Extensions: Market-based Congruity versus Engineering-based Congruity
Qian (Claire) Deng, University of Alberta, Canada
Paul Messinger, University of Alberta, Canada

For brand extensions we identify two fundamental and robust dimensions of congruity: market-based congruity (including target-market image usage-occasion fit scale items) and engineering-based congruity (including feature function resource fit). We further find that market-based congruity has a much larger effect on consumers’ overall evaluation of brand extensions than engineering-based congruity.

10-G: Consumer Reasoning Reduces Post-Choice Satisfaction while Increasing Commitment
Alexander DePaoli, Northeastern University, USA

Past literature argues that reasoning about a product decision leads consumers to choose less satisfying options. I find that paradoxically it also increases consumers’ commitment to those options. Acting through distinct channels reasoning steers choice toward products which are rated as less satisfying while simultaneously promoting consistency with those choices.
9-EE: Compulsive Consumption and Smoking Behavior

Timothy Dewhirst, University of Guelph, Canada
Drew Harden, University of Guelph, Canada
Wonkyong Beth Lee, Western University

In the spirit of transformative consumer research that aims to inform policy and improve well-being this qualitative study uses the tobacco industry’s consumer research made public from litigation to examine compulsive consumption. Compulsive consumers are linked by common traits such as low self-esteem proneness to fantasy urgency and sensation-seeking.

3-D: Exploring the Role of Consumption Values and Self-Construal in the Purchase of (In)Conspicuous Luxury Goods and Shopping Preferences: A Questionnaire Study

Karolina Dovgialo, London School of Economics, UK
Ben Voyer, ESCP Europe, UK

We investigate luxury preferences for quiet vs loud luxury goods online vs offline shopping preferences and individual consumer differences. We found significant relationships between: i) bandwagon consumption interdependent self and preference for loud goods and ii) snob consumption independent self and willing to pay a premium for quiet goods.

17-M: The Dark Side of Competition: How Competition Results Predict Unethical Behavior

Rui Du, University of Hawaii, USA
Qimei Chen, University of Hawaii, USA
Miao Hu, University of Hawaii, USA

Our findings suggest that the association between competition results and unethical behaviors is moderated by power such that in the high power conditions losers are more likely to engage in unethical behaviors than winners. When differentiating beneficiaries of unethical behaviors a three-way interaction shows that both winners and losers lie.

20-S: When Having Too Many Facebook ‘Friends’ Hinders Your Online Social Activity: The Impact of Social Identity Complexity

Kimberly Duval, Concordia University, Canada
H. Onur Bodur, Concordia University, Canada

This research shows that having more Facebook ‘friends’ decreases online engagement (likes shares comments) and purchase intentions for featured products for individuals with complex social identities. This effect is reversed however by highlighting a specific reference group when using normative messages. Findings have implications for marketers both online and offline.

9-Z: Using Practices Theories to Analyze Food Practices Related to Food Waste and Healthy Eating

Margot Dyen, Montpellier Supagro, France
Lucie Sirieix, Montpellier Supagro, France
Sandrine Costa, Montpellier, INRA, France

Consumers have to integrate recommended behaviors related to food waste and healthy eating. This work studies it holistically with practice theories. A two-step qualitative methodology shows that individuals and environment play variable roles in practices structuration and that each individual has various conduits of practices in his/her own framework.
9-II: The Resilient Consumer
Akon Ekpo, Rutgers University, USA
Samantha Cross, Iowa State University, USA

This paper uses a novel mixed-method approach to investigate how behaviors and attitudes towards disability differs among disabled consumers. The authors argue that acknowledgment of one’s own marketplace vulnerabilities and societal constraints may result in greater control and awareness of the need to build and invoke resilience in the marketplace.

20-G: Is it Safe to Spread the Word? Exploring the Impact of Psychological Safety in Virtual Communities on Consumer Choice
André Escórcio Soares, Coventry University, UK
Anvita Kumar, Coventry University, UK

This study introduces the concept of psychological safety as a facet of social contagion in online networks. Specifically it explores the impact of psychological safety on member participation level and subsequent influence on consumer choice. Academic and managerial implications of this study are discussed herein.

8-C: Higher Price Higher Quality?
How Feeling Financially Constrained Affects Consumers’ Price-Quality Judgment
Yafeng Fan, Renmin University of China, China
Jing Jiang, Renmin University of China, China

The paper examines how consumers make price-quality judgment when they feel financially constrained. The results showed that there is an interactive effect of financial constraint and value consciousness on consumer’s price-quality judgment. When feeling financially constrained consumers with high value consciousness (vs. low consciousness) tend to make higher price-quality judgment.

4-C: Culture Matters: How Power Distance Belief Influences the Effectiveness of Scarcity Appeal in Advertising
Yafeng Fan, Renmin University of China, China
Jing Jiang, Renmin University of China, China

The article proposes that power distance can moderate the effect of scarcity appeal on product evaluation and the perceived threat from other consumers mediated this moderating effect. In addition we try to examine the moderating role played by product type (publicly vs. privately consumed products).

12-J: When Failure Isn’t the End:
How Temporal Framing of Goal Failures Can Affect Goal Reengagement
Matthew Farmer, University of Arizona, USA
Jennifer Savary, University of Arizona, USA

The way in which consumers fail goals can impact goal reengagement. We demonstrate that holding magnitude constant integration of failures into fewer (versus separation into several) incidents leads to better attitude toward and likelihood of goal reengagement. This effect reverses when failure separation scenarios are evaluated alongside failure integration scenarios.
6-H: Marketplace Resources and Gender: A Standpoint Analysis of Status Bias, Cultural Stereotypes and the Production of Positional Inequalities

Shelagh Ferguson, University of Otago, New Zealand
Jan Brace-Govan, Monash University, Australia
Diane Martin, Aalto University, Finland

This study investigates the ways market resources support or hamper women negotiating a hyper-masculine context and the dynamic interactions between homosocality status gender-bias in the perpetuation of cultural stereotypes and positional inequalities. Standpoint analysis shows that highly accomplished female mountain climbers experience status gender-bias in their consumption community.

2-T: The Effect of Brand Heritage and Brand Authenticity on Consumer-Brand Relationships

Francielle Frizzo, Federal University of Parana, Brazil
Jose Carlos Korelo, Federal University of Parana, Brazil
Paulo Henrique Prado, Federal University of Parana, Brazil

Drawing on consumer-brand relationships theory this paper examines the brand heritage and the brand authenticity as determinants of the consumer self-reinforcing assets. The findings show that the effect of these brand stimuli on brand-self distance occurs through experiential and hedonic benefits delivered from the brand.

4-J: I Am What I Bought: A Cross-Cultural Study on Consumers’ Evaluations toward Different Types of Purchases and Advertisings

Pei-Wen Fu, National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan
Ruoyun Lin, Leibniz-Institut für Wissensmedien, Germany
Sonja Utz, Leibniz-Institut für Wissensmedien, Germany
Chi-Cheng Wu, National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan

This study investigates how material values influence Western and Eastern consumers’ perceptions toward material and experiential purchases and whether the differences would further be reflected on their advertising attitudes. The results show that both Eastern and Western consumers have a more positive attitude toward experiential-values appeal advertisings.

8-H: Second Guess Yourself, But Do It Right: When Does Making A Second Estimate Improve Quantitative Judgments?

Celia Gaertig, University of Pennsylvania, USA
Joseph Simmons, University of Pennsylvania, USA

When does averaging multiple estimates from the same person improve quantitative judgment? We find that averaging participants’ first and second estimate is less helpful when they are first asked to consider whether their first answer was too high or too low.

19-L: The Effect of Long-Term Versus Short-Term Orientation on Variety Seeking

Huachao Gao, University of Victoria, Canada
Yinlong Zhang, University of Texas at San Antonio, USA

This research focuses on the understudied cultural dimension of long- versus short-term orientation. Specifically we find that long-term oriented consumers have a higher preference for dynamics and changes which in turn makes them to engage in more variety-seeking behaviors than their short-term oriented counterparts.
9-V: Take a Bite out of Apple:  
How Does Static Food Advertising Signaling Dynamic Influence Food Consumption  
Fei Gao, HEC Paris, France  
Weiwei Zhang, University of Otago, New Zealand  
Tina M. Lowrey, HEC Paris, France  

The present study demonstrated that static food advertisements signaling dynamic can positively influence people’s judgments toward foods and found that it influences female’s and male’s portion size choices from different directions. Furthermore we also demonstrated the role of mental imagery plays in this effect.

20-L: Sell Out Without Losing Out:  
Overcoming the Harmful Impact of Incentivized Reviews  
Maximilian Gerrath, Leeds University, UK  
Bryan Usrey, University of East Anglia, UK  

Despite the commonality of incentivized product reviews research widely neglected its impact on product review blogs. Three experimental examine the impact of review valence (negative vs. neutral vs. positive) disclosure (intrinsically vs. extrinsically motivated) and attachment on review credibility and blog loyalty.

10-M: Ownership Polarization: An Alternate Account of the Endowment Effect  
Colleen Giblin, Carnegie Mellon University, USA  
Carey Morewedge, Boston University, USA  

We find that merely associating an experience with the self in turn polarizes evaluations: the good things in life seem even better but the bad things seem even worse. This finding is inconsistent with previous theory supporting a new perspective on the cognitive framing effects of ownership.

5-A: Affecting Consumers: A fMRI Study on  
Regulatory Focus Framed Information in the Field of Animal Welfare  
Nadine Gier, Heinrich-Heine-Universität, Germany  
Caspar Krampe, Heinrich-Heine-Universität, Germany  
Peter Kenning, Heinrich-Heine-Universität, Germany  

Applying regulatory focus theory to animal welfare information we show that promotion focus framed information elicits greater subjective liking indicated by increased neural activity in the vmPFC. Moreover framed information influence neural processing of subsequent information demonstrated by a greater activity in ACC an effect not seen on behavioral level.

9-BB: When Innovation Collides with Nature: Mere Consideration of  
Novel Food Products Can Decrease Evaluations of the Entire Product Category  
Justina Gineikiene, ISM University of Management and Economics, Lithuania  
Bob Fennis, University of Groningen, The Netherlands  

We show that exposure to novel products entailing an inherent trade-off between healthiness and naturalness can lead to ambivalent evaluations. In turn such evaluations may spill over from single product exemplars and negatively affect evaluations and willingness to try the entire product category. This negative impact on ambivalence was not invariant but a function of (higher) levels of preference for predictability.

4-S: When You Expect It the Yeast: The Emergence of Craft Beer Culture in Finland  
Alexei Gloukhovtsev, Aalto University, Finland  

This working paper contributes to literature examining the impact of globalization on consumer behavior. Initial findings from the Finnish craft beer context illustrate how global consumer culture takes root in local hegemonic consumptionscapes by tapping into consumer resistance movements and consumer identity work with the aid of cultural intermediaries.
10-B: Do You Feel Like a Fraud?  
How Experiencing the Impostor Phenomenon Influences Consumption Choices

Emily Goldsmith, Marymount Manhattan College, USA  
Stephen Gould, Baruch College, USA

Most people occasionally feel like a fraud. Usually we overcome these feelings by acknowledging why we deserve our accomplishments. There are times when despite all external evidence we feel like an impostor. We propose that a person experiencing the impostor phenomenon prefers products that allow them to hide fraudulent feelings.

17-O: Unaffordable Option and Sensitivity to Social Inequality

Pierrick Gomez, NEOMA Business School, France  
Adilson Borges, NEOMA Business School, France

This research investigates the effect of adding an unaffordable option to a choice set on sensitivity to social inequality. Two experiments demonstrate that adding an unaffordable option to a choice set fosters concern for social inequality and diminishes support for group based dominance especially for individuals high in political conservatism.


Xiushuang Gong, Renmin University, China  
Ying Ding, Renmin University, China  
Yafeng Fan, Renmin University, China

This paper examines how direction of comparison influences consumer preference for distinctive products. Across two experiments we show that consumers are more inclined to choose unique products after making upward comparisons than downward comparisons. This effect is mediated by consumer need for uniqueness.

2-Q: Low Fit in Co-Branding: Explaining the Success of Designer-For-Retailer Collaborations

Gabriel Gonzales, Pennsylvania State University, USA  
Johanna Slot, Pennsylvania State University, USA  
Margaret Meloy, Pennsylvania State University, USA

The current research finds that co-branded collaborations between low-cost retailers and high-end designers are attractive to consumers due to a ‘misfit’ between collaboration partners providing consumers with access to otherwise inaccessible products. The designer’s creative control moderates demand. Ironically product attractiveness is attenuated if prices are lower than expected.

17-P: When Not Having Enough Prompts Consumers to Show Off: Reminders of Resource Scarcity Prompt Narcissism

Laura Goodyear, Concordia University, Canada  
Caroline Roux, Concordia University, Canada  
Ali Tezer, Université de Montréal, Canada  
Kelly Goldsmith, Vanderbilt University, USA

We propose that reminders of resource scarcity prompt consumers to become more narcissistic and consequently shifts their product preferences. Across three experiments we demonstrate that: scarcity (vs. control) increases narcissistic tendencies narcissism mediates the effect of scarcity on selfishness and scarcity shifts consumers’ preferences toward products with more prominent brands.
10-T: The Moderating Effect of Handedness on Lateral Placement Effects
Stephen Gould, Baruch College, USA
Emily Goldsmith, Marymount Manhattan College, USA

This research examines differences in product preference for people based on handedness. We find that right-handers are influenced by display order while left-handers are not. No matter which side a stimulus is placed on left-handers will not vary in their choices. Right-handers favor the choice that is presented first.

2-I: Communication Style Mismatch on Twitter and Facebook: How Luxury Brands Fail to Communicate Their Desirability and Exclusivity
Simone Griesser, University of Warwick, UK
Qing Wang, University of Warwick, UK
Thomas T. Hills, University of Warwick, UK

The essence of luxury is exclusivity and desirability which is fostered by abstract language. Consumers use more abstract words when tweeting luxury brands than functional brands. Luxury brands responding fail to employ similarly abstract language suggesting a mismatch of communication style and hindering processing fluency which enhances brand communication evaluation.

5-F: Forget Your Regret: Invoking Post-Purchase Hyperopia Mitigates Impulse Purchase Regret
Jamie L. Grigsby, Midwestern State University, USA
Robert D. Jewell, Kent State University, USA
Colin Campbell, Kent State University, USA

This research investigates how regret over an impulse purchase can be reduced post-purchase thus improving customer satisfaction. If customers think about a time in the distant past in which they made a hyperopic choice they are happier with their decision to indulge in a recent impulse purchase.

7-F: Googled Experiences: Internet-induced Confidence in Decision Abilities Increases Enjoyment
Tito L. H. Grillo, University of Texas at Austin, USA
Cristiane Pizzutti, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil
Adrian F. Ward, University of Texas at Austin, USA

Consumers increasingly use the Internet to prepare for decisions. The current studies show that Internet search elicits a “feeling of already knowing” that inflates consumers’ decision confidence (S1 S2). This confidence may be self-fulfilling; searching online before choosing experiences increases consumers’ experience enjoyment independently of the option they choose (S3).

4-L: Mixed Emotions Taking Me Over: How Anticipatory Emotions and Civic Risk Determine Choices for Stigmatized Products
Jerry Grimes, Grenoble Ecole de Management, France

Fighting temptations is human nature but how exactly do we reconcile our personal desires for stigmatized products whose consumption may negatively impact our civic standing? Two studies demonstrate how consumers appraise two closely linked stigmatized products (alcohol and cannabis) differently considering situational factors one’s anticipatory emotions and civic risk perception.
9-E: Children’s Food-related Consumer Socialization: Parental Goals and Strategies

Alice Grønhøj, Aarhus University, Denmark
Malene Gram, Aalborg University, Denmark

We study food-related consumer socialization through family interviews in a qualitative study. Parents socialize children for healthy eating but other concerns such as preserving family cohesion are perceived as more important. The findings suggest that family dynamics parents’ goals strategies and context are important for understanding children’s healthy eating socialization.

9-C: Brand Authenticity Revisited: The Case of Three Times a Day

Amélie Guèvremont, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada

This research examines the construction of an authentic brand image in an online community. Based on a netnography of Three Times a Day brand and five individual interviews four authenticity dimensions are identified: brand virtuousness brand proximity brand instinct brand imperfections. Results confirm the complex context-contingent nature of brand authenticity.

12-A: Input vs. Output-Based Framing and How They Influence Motivation

Manissa Gunadi, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Bram Van den Bergh, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Should people be told to perform 10000 steps as fast as they can or to complete as many steps as they can in 24 hours? Our results suggest that stipulating expected output (i.e. quantity) leads to higher motivation compared to specifying expected input (i.e. duration).

17-K: Role of Group Cohesiveness in Consumers’ Responses to Mobile Promotions

Reetika Gupta, ESSEC Business School, Singapore
Sourjo Mukherjee, ESSEC Business School, France
Kasthuri Jayarajah, Singapore Management University, Singapore

This research examines the role of social networks in consumers’ responses to mobile promotions. Using CLT we show that in cohesive groups consumers have a more favourable attitude towards the proximal promotion (shorter lead time) than the distal promotion enabling the marketer to deploy real-time consumer-specific targeted promotion strategies.

Practicing the (un)Healthy = Tasty Intuition: Towards an Ecological View of the Relationship between Health and Taste Consumer Judgments.

Simona Haasova, University of Vienna, Austria
Arnd Florack, University of Vienna, Austria
Christoph Welles, University of Vienna, Austria

Do consumers apply the unhealthy=tasty intuition to real food products from a supermarket? Three studies (two representative) revealed that consumers mostly find healthier products also tastier but this relationship varies between products and individuals. Consumer judgments might rely rather on package cues simultaneously implying tastiness and healthiness than the intuition.

2-E: Are Brands Known by the Company They Keep?
The Effects of Speech Rate on Employee and Brand Perceptions

Fatima Hajjat, Ithaca College, USA
Elizabeth Miller, University of Massachusetts, USA

We examine the effect of employee speech rate on perceptions of employee and brand personality. Across four experiments we find that slower-speaking employees are perceived more negatively than employees speaking at a fast or normal rate. These employee perceptions then “spill over” to affect customers’ perceptions of the brand.
3-C: Does Incompetence Hurt More than Immorality?  
Construal Levels Affect Responses to Negative Brand Information

Bing Han, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China  
Liangyan Wang, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China  
Ke Xue, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China

In three experiments the authors find that for consumers with a high (low) construal level incompetence (immorality) information causes lower brand evaluation than does immorality (incompetence) information respectively in manufacturing and service industries. Also we confirm that information accessibility and diagnosticity mediate this interaction effect.

2-X: To Collaborate or to Support:  
The Effects of Implicit Theory on Consumer Response to Anthropomorphized Brand Roles

Bing Han, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China  
Liangyan Wang, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China  
Ke Xue, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China

Through three experiments in manufacturing and service industries the authors find that anthropomorphized brand roles (partner vs. servant) and consumers' implicit theories (entity vs. incremental) can interactively impact brand evaluation as well as purchase intention. Also we confirm that consumers' perceived efficacy mediates this interaction effect.

3-G: Reducing Regret for Maximizers: The Role of Construal Level

Louise Hassan, Bangor University, UK  
Edward Shiu, Bangor University, UK  
Miriam McGowan, Bangor University, UK

Maximizers generally regret their choices more than satisficers. We are the first to suggest a strategy easily undertaken in the marketplace to break through the regret-maximize-regret cycle. Across three experiments we show that manipulating the construal maximizers experience to more abstract level reduces the intensity of the affective response (regret).

7-L: Role of Arousal in Experiencing Feeling of Missing Out

Ceren Hayran, Doctoral Candidate in Marketing Koc University, Turkey  
Zeynep Gürhan-Canli, Professor of Marketing at Koc University, Turkey

This research enhances our knowledge about the consequences of feeling of missing out (FOMO) on desirable experiences that are taking place in one’s environment. Based on the circumplex model of affect we examine how the arousal dimension of a FOMO state influences individuals’ experience and product preferences in consumer context.

16-H: Secret Keeping Spurs Conformity Consumption

Dongjin He, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China  
Yijie Wang, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China  
Yuwei Jiang, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China  
Gerald Gorn, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China

This research shows that secret keeping increases consumers’ conformity behavior in consumption. This effect is mediated by the motivation to avoid social attention. Moreover perceived self-control moderates the effect of secret keeping on conformity such that the effect is more salient for consumers with lower perceived self-control.
2-K: Consumer Responses to Anthropomorphized Brand Alliances
Dongjin He, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China
Fangyuan Chen, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China
Yuwei Jiang, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China

We explore the impact of brand anthropomorphism on consumers’ perceptions and reactions toward brand alliance. In three studies we demonstrate that when a human schema was activated (vs. not) consumers felt more negatively about the termination of a brand alliance due to the relationship norm associated with humanlike alliance relationship.

Daniel He, Columbia University, USA
Jonathan Hurwitz, Columbia University, USA
Ran Kivetz, Columbia University, USA

We investigate the psychological benefits of viewing digitally live streamed content particularly content normally considered uninteresting to watch. Using an online video platform we propose and find that compared to prerecorded content live streamed content increases consumers’ intention to join in on uninteresting activities because live experiences make mundane activities feel more social.

5-D: Does Humor in Advertising Trigger Competence and Warmth Inferences about Advertisers?
Chi Hoang, BI Norwegian Business School, Norway
Luk Warlop, BI Norwegian Business School, Norway
Klemens Knoferle, BI Norwegian Business School, Norway

This study proposes that people make warmth and competence inferences about advertisers who express humor in advertising. Advertisers are perceived as competent but not warm when using incongruity to elicit laughter as both warm and competent when using arousal humor and as neither competent nor warm when using disparaging humor.

2-V: The Influence of Sex Appeal in Advertising: The Moderating Role of Brand Loyalty
Sujeong Hong, Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea

This research shows that consumers exhibiting high loyalty toward a brand react more negatively to sex appeals in brand advertising than those exhibiting low loyalty. We intended to examine an additional boundary condition under which the effect of sex appeal can be either enhanced or diminished.

13-L: When Dissimilar Others Positively Impact Online Purchase Intentions
Rahil Hosseini, Pompeu Fabra University, Spain
Ana Valenzuela, Baruch College, USA & ESADE Business School, Spain
Maria Galli, ESADE Business School, Spain

Research on the influence of others in product adoption has generally found a positive role of similar-other product advocates. We study the influence of dissimilar-other product advocates in online contexts and find that dissimilar advocates can encourage product adoption by catering to certain motivations particularly when perceived social presence increases.

12-I: Upward Social Comparison in Goal Pursuit: Exploring the Role of Regulatory Focus
Yu Hu, Salem State University, USA

An experiment showed that during a goal pursuit a person’s regulatory focus affected how social information is used in goal monitoring judgment. Specifically in an upward social comparison assimilation effect is more prominent in people with promotion focus whereas contrast effect is more prominent in people with prevention-focus.
19-K: Sleepiness, Need for Stimulation, and Variety-Seeking by Consumers
Zhongqiang (Tak) Huang, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
Yitian (Sky) Liang, University of British Columbia, Canada
Charles B. Weinberg, University of British Columbia, Canada
Gerald J. Gorn, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

Previous research has revealed the negative impact of sleep deprivation on health but no research to date has investigated its effects on consumer behavior. This investigation fills this void by showing that sleepier consumers tend to seek more variety which is driven by a desire for sensation to maintain wakefulness.

16-P: Renting Alone? Relationship Status and Differential Appeal of Acquisition Modes
Li Huang, Hofstra University, USA
Anastasiya Pocheptsova Ghosh, University of Arizona, USA

We investigate the impact of relationship status on preference for acquisition mode: renting or buying. We find that single consumers are more likely to rent products than married counterparts however buying preferences are not affected by the relationship status. This tendency is attenuated by increasing prevention focus of single consumers.

16-N: Exploring Fling Relationships with Rented Products
Li Huang, Hofstra University, USA
Natalie Truong, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
Jennifer Argo, University of Alberta, Canada

How do consumers form relationships with rented products? Across three studies we found that renting a product is conceptually similar to a fling resulting in higher excitement compared to consuming an owned product. We validate the mediating role of fling perception on not only excitement but also various downstream behaviors.

20-E: How Broadcasting vs. Narrowcasting on Social Media Affects Consumer Memories
Li Huang, Hofstra University, USA
Frank Zheng, University of Texas at Austin, USA
Adrian Ward, University of Texas at Austin, USA

How do audiences impact the memories shared on social media? We find that sharing with a small group attenuates sharer’s memories as compared to a large group. This advantage is due to outsourcing memories to identifiable audiences and is diminished by enhancing the perceived heterogeneity of large group.

18-B: Jumping on the Bandwagon or Seeking Novelty: An Experimental Study on the Effectiveness of Heuristics to Promote Pro-Environmental Behavior.
Liselot Hudders, University of Ghent, Belgium
Veroline Cauberghe, University of Ghent, Belgium
Carla Mingolla, University of Ghent, Belgium

This study examines the impact of two distinct forms of heuristics (bandwagon and novelty) when promoting sustainable behavior. Results show that the effect of a bandwagon heuristic is mediated by normative influence while novelty heuristic is mediated by perceived uniqueness. In addition the self-concept regulates the susceptibility for the heuristic.

9-W: Taste Perception and Creativity
Young Eun Huh, HKUST, Hong Kong
Yoonah Hong, Hongik University, South Korea
Nara Youn, Hongik University, South Korea

Taste perception plays a key role in consumers’ food decisions. The current research examines consumers’ taste preference for a snack/drink to enhance their creativity and how different tastes influence performance on a creativity task.
17-G: How Satisfied Are You with Your Purchase?: Role of Experience Variety and Self-Construal Level

Kyoung Tae Huh, Seoul National University, South Korea
Yuseok Lee, Seoul National University, South Korea
Sang-Hoon Kim, Seoul National University, South Korea

Prior research reveals that perceiving less variety in product usage experiences increases the satisfaction on the purchase. This research extends the finding by showing that utilitarian value plays a role in producing this effect and that this outcome is enhanced for interdependent thinkers who recognize greater similarity among product attributes.


Claudia Iglesias, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada
Grant Packard, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada

We examine how the speech of artificial intelligence (AI) assistants (e.g. Siri) impacts perceptions of them as persuasion agents. A lab study reveals that first name addressing by AI assistants shifts perceptual mediators of the persuasion attempt from functional (i.e. processed like a product) to personal dimensions (like a person).

2-N: Does the Negativity Effect Really Work?
The Positive-Negative Asymmetry in Computer Brand Evaluation.

Magdalena Jablonska, SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Poland
Andrzej Falkowski, SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Poland

We challenge the negativity effect and present empirical evidence showing that in some situations positive information about the brand may have stronger effect on brand evaluation than the negative one. The effect is moderated by the reference point. Our findings add to the discussion on the effectiveness of negative advertising.

9-K: Healthy Cake or Decadent Cake, Could Dialecticism Be the Answer?

Alexander Jakubanecs, Norwegian School of Economics, Norway
Alexander Fedorikhin, Indiana University, USA
Nina Iversen, BI Norwegian Business School, Norway

Research on drivers of consumer reactions to indulgent products with healthy claims has been limited. We focus on dialectical thinking to predict and explain responses to these products within and across cultures. We find that consumers with situationally and chronically accessible dialecticism are significantly more accepting of such products.

11-E: Giving Money versus Giving Time:
The Timing Effect of Thank-You Gifts on Donation Satisfaction

Miaolei (Liam) Jia, National University of Singapore, Singapore
Isabel Ding, National University of Singapore, Singapore

Charity organizations often give thank-you gifts to donors. We demonstrate that when giving money receiving thank-you gifts after the donation (vs. before the donation) decreases donors’ donation satisfaction. However when giving time receiving thank-you gifts after the donation (vs. before the donation) increases donors’ donation satisfaction.

10-A: Does Purging Lead to Better Self-Control? The Role of the “Simplification” Mindset

Lei Jia, Ohio State University, USA
Xiaoyan Deng, Ohio State University, USA
Xiaojing Yang, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, USA

We propose that purging can activate a simplification mindset that features a mental process of simplifying prioritizing and abstracting. Such a mindset can carry-over to a subsequent unrelated context with decision outcomes that involve self-control.
14-P: The Power of Verbs: The Effect of Verbs on Purchase Intention
Miaolei (Liam) Jia, National University of Singapore, Singapore
Isabel Ding, National University of Singapore, Singapore

The usage of concrete verbs such as “Grab the Gold Bars” is commonplace in marketing advertising and promotions. We demonstrate that concrete verbs (vs. adjectives) increase consumers’ purchase intention. However using explicitly instructive verbs (e.g. “Buy Now”) decreases consumers’ purchase intention.

1-L: The Spillover Effect of Beauty:
Narcissists’ Overemphasis on Aesthetics in Product Choice
Lei Jia, Ohio State University, USA
Xiaojing Yang, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, USA
Huifang Mao, Iowa State University, USA
Xiaoyan Deng, Ohio State University, USA

We propose that narcissism both as a personality trait and a temporary state increases the preference for aesthetics over utilitarian attributes in consumer product choice even for products with little symbolic and social signaling values and such an effect is mediated by self-possession link.

Jinfeng (Jenny) Jiao, State University of New York at Binghamton, USA
Fang-Chi Lu, Korea University, South Korea

This paper focuses on the effect of an individual’s economic situation and feeling of power on financial risk taking. Across three studies we illustrate that an individual’s level of power increases his or her financial risk taking and that this effect is moderated by economic situation.

11-K: Pride and Dishonesty Why Does Authentic Pride Lead to More Dishonesty?
Jinfeng (Jenny) Jiao, State University of New York at Binghamton, USA
Cathy Cole, University of Iowa, USA
Gary Gaeth, University of Iowa, USA

This paper focuses on authentic pride and hubristic pride as antecedents to consumer dishonesty and has both theoretical and empirical implications. We further examine the moderating role of cognitive resources in influencing pride effects on dishonesty. We demonstrate that it is moral disengagement that mediates the found effect.

11-D: How Power States Affect Charitable Behaviors towards
In-Group versus Out-group Recipients
Fei Jin, Peking University, China
Ping Tu, Peking University, China
Huawei Zhu, Wuhan University, China
Keyi Li, Peking University, China

People primed with low power demonstrate stronger willingness to in-group than out-group members whereas individuals in high power state show similar propensities to both in-group and out-group members. For the low power helping in-group victims heightens reciprocity which in turn increases their propensity to behave generously.
10-N: Quantification and Experience in Effortful Task: Modifying Role of Causality Orientation, Gender.

Daoyan Jin, University College of Southeast Norway, Norway
Halgeir Halvari, University College of Southeast Norway, Norway
Natalia Maehle, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway
Christopher Niemiec, University of Rochester, USA

This study aims to conduct experiments to investigate the effect of quantification on people’s experience (e.g., vitality enjoyment) in effortful task. Another focus of this paper is to explore the moderating role of individual differences (e.g., causality orientation, gender) on the relationship between quantification and effortful task experience.


Sunghee Jun, Seoul National University, South Korea
Kiwan Park, Seoul National University, South Korea

These days most companies are engaging in direct communication with their customers via instant messengers. However, little research investigates the differences between instant messages and text messages and how marketers use them effectively. Our objective is to explore varying perceptions toward instant messages and text messages and suggest optimal strategies.

2-J: Consumer Brand Sabotage: When and Why Does it Cause Damage among Other Consumers?

Andrea Kähr, University of Bern, Switzerland
Bettina Nyffenegger, University of Bern, Switzerland
Harley Krohmer, University of Bern, Switzerland
Wayne D. Hoyer, University of Texas at Austin, USA

This article shows that consumer brand sabotage (CBS) can damage the brand by decreasing consumers’ brand attitude and purchase intention and by increasing negative word-of-mouth. Indirect effects of CBS on consumers’ attitude and behavior through their cognitions were significant for consumers with high (vs. low) brand relationship quality only.

15-F: The Self-regulatory Power of Environmental Lighting

Seo Yoon Kang, Hongik University, Korea
Nara Youn, Hongik University, Korea
Heakyung Cecilia Yoon, Hongik University, Korea

The current research investigates the impacts of color temperature and its interaction with brightness on consumers’ self-control. The interaction of brightness and color temperature creates fluent (vs. disfluent) lighting condition that leads to less (vs. more) cognitively depleted mental state and consequentially enhances self-control.

11-N: The Impact of Vice Magnitude on Evaluations of Vice-Virtue Bundles

Mustafa Karatas, Koc University, Turkey
Zeynep Gürhan-Canli, Koc University, Turkey

We show that low (vs. high) comparability of payoffs of vice and virtue components leads to a more abstract (vs. concrete) processing and a credentials-based (vs. credentials-based) justification process. Subsequently increasing the vice component of the vice-virtue bundle increases (vs. decreases) bundle attractiveness under low (vs. high) payoff comparability.
6-J: Vulnerable or Agentic?  
Medicalized Consumption and its Impact on Consumer Identity  
Richard Kedzior, Bucknell University, USA

Over the last few decades the notions of masculinity have undergone significant changes. Traditional masculinity which is associated with the pursuit of agentic goals such as physical strength, domination and resourcefulness had to be renegotiated to accommodate new emerging male identities. This paper investigates the impact of medicalization on consumer notions of masculinity.

2-G: Brand Activism in the Age of Resistance: What Does it Mean?  
Joya A. Kemper, University of Canterbury, New Zealand  
Paul W. Ballantine, University of Canterbury, New Zealand

With protests becoming mainstream increased skepticism of key institutions and overall the re-emergence of populism brands have also decided to raise their voices in protest. What brand activism is and how it can be implemented is discussed.

12-H: Understanding the Motivation to Help Under Mortality Salience:  
Self-Worth Account Versus Cultural Standards Account  
Sara Kim, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong  
Youngsoo Kim, LSR/UX Lab, LG Electronics, South Korea  
Soraya Lambotte, AbbVie, UK  
Minhi Hahn, Korean Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, South Korea

Our research teases apart two accounts underlying the effect of mortality salience on prosocial behavior in prior work: self-worth enhancement and cultural standards reinforcement. We develop a framework for understanding which account primarily drives helping behavior under what circumstances and provide direct empirical evidence that these two accounts are distinct.

1-I: The Effect of Color Saturation on Satiation:  
High Saturation Increases Satiation of the Product  
Hakkyun Kim, Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea  
Eunmi Jeon, Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea  
Jungyun Kang, National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan

This research investigated how color saturation influences consumer behavior. In other words consumers can expect to become quickly satiated when they use products with high saturation than when they use products with low saturation of a color. Thus we demonstrated a mediating role of expected satiation between product colors and purchase intentions.

16-E: Gift Cards vs. Cash: The Effects of Money Perception on  
Asymmetric Preferences for Gift Cards between Gift Givers and Receivers  
Min Jung Kim, Manhattan College, USA

The current research suggests that individuals will have different preferences for gift cards vs. cash that offer the same exchange value depending on their roles (i.e. givers vs. receivers) and money perceptions (i.e. whether they focus on the exchange value of money or the additional meaning of money).
14-H: Narrative Advertising Effectiveness: The Role of Ad Relevance, Ad Vividness, and Ad Message Explicitness

Eunjin (Anna) Kim, Southern Methodist University, USA
Eunseon (Penny) Kwon, Texas Christian University, USA

While prior literature has focused on the positive aspects of narrative vs. non-narrative ads we investigate a framework for narrative-advertising effectiveness. A study with 40 commercials (440 participants) confirms that ad relevance ad vividness message explicitness goal engagement emotional engagement and ad skepticism contribute to the persuasiveness of narrative advertising.

5-S: The Joint Effect of Affect and Information-processing Style on Price Judgment

Kaeun Kim, University of Massachusetts, USA
Elizabeth Miller, University of Massachusetts, USA

The present research shows that affective states influence consumers’ price judgment depending on the currently accessible mode of processing. Findings from two experiments suggest that positive affect increases price-as-quality judgments only when global processing is salient whereas negative affect facilitates price-quality perception when local processing is dominant.

3-A: “Mannequin and I”: How Social Distance from Mannequins and Self-Construals of Shoppers Affect Product Evaluation

Pielah Kim, Philadelphia University, USA
Xiaoyan Deng, Ohio State University, USA

This research investigates the effect of mannequin design on consumer’s product evaluation. We find that interdependents but not independents perceive a closer social distance from abstract (vs. realistic) mannequins and evaluate the products wore by abstract (vs. realistic) mannequins more positively. Moreover perceived social distance mediates product evaluation.

16-G: Receiving Less for More: Inequality Aversion in Crowdfunding

Joonkyung Kim, University of Toronto, Canada

When a beneficiary has a lower economic standing than the benefactor the benefactor is more likely to give the money to the beneficiary if the beneficiary promises a low-cost token of appreciation rather than a high-cost token of appreciation. It is because the low-cost token better restores equality.

5-U: When Do People Make Affectively Negative Self-Presentation?

Dan King, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, USA
Sumitra Auschaitrakul, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, Thailand
Zachary Mendenhall, McGill University, Canada

Our research identifies conditions under which consumers prefer negative branding –imagery and words that elicit negative emotional responses. We argue that this phenomenon is underpinned by a reflexive brain process we share with mammals called “dominance signaling” –a response that emerges when humans compete with intrasexual rivals for mating opportunities.

10-O: Sequence Fluency Effects on Consumers’ Judgments of Truth

Dan King, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, USA
Sumitra Auschaitrakul, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, Thailand

Brand claims come in the form of “X causes Y” in which X is the brand and Y is the purported effect. Experiments using subliminal and supraliminal manipulations show that brand claims will be judged as more truthful if they conform to symbolic sequences that are stored in the mind.
13-C: Creating Brand Reputation: How Employees Express Their Brand in Social Media Networks

Stephanie Kogler, University of Innsbruck, Austria
Joonas Rokka, EMLYON Business School, France
Andrea Hemetsberger, University of Innsbruck, Austria

This study compares the official Instagram account of the fashion brand Hollister with the private Instagram accounts of its employees. The analysis reveals that employees stabilize brand image by mimicking the brands’ visual language in terms of style postures gestures and themes.

10-K: Free to Choose: Belief in Free Will and Indecisiveness

Michail D. Kokkoris, Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria
Roy Baumeister, University of Queensland, Australia
Ulrich Kühnen, Jacobs University, Germany

We explore consequences of belief in free will for consumer decision making. Studies 1 and 2 suggest that stronger free will belief is associated with reduced indecisiveness. Studies 3 and 4 show that this beneficial effect of free will belief is limited to consumers with high (vs. low) self-concept clarity.

12-G: Too Much of a Fun Thing: When Many Fun Activities Lead to Productivity

Kate Kooi, University of Miami, USA
William Nowlan, University of Miami, USA
Juliano Laran, University of Miami, USA

Research on goal pursuit often focuses on regulatory goals but the current research focuses on an indulgence goal—specifically having fun. We show that consumers who generate many (vs. few) means to have fun find themselves feeling productive and are therefore less likely to pursue the goal of having fun.

20-B: Investigating Online Reviews: The Moderating Role of Scarcity Appeal

Elika Kordrostami, Humboldt State University, USA
Yuping Liu-Thompkins, Old Dominion University, USA
Vahid Rahmani, Old Dominion University, USA

Using Amazon.com data we found that scarcity appeals make consumers pay more attention to the average rating for the item on Amazon.com. Per the results of the OLS regression buyers on Amazon.com use the average rating of reviews as a heuristic in their purchase decision-making when scarcity appeals are present.

14-E: Do We Always Appreciate Creative Ads? Unlocking the Meaning of Highly Novel Ads

Afra Koulaei, University College of Southeast Norway, Norway

Consumers appreciate creativity but at the same time when experience uncertainty they form negative associations with novelty an attribute that makes an ad creative in the first place. This research suggests that the negative associations appraised from uncertainty can be mitigated by unlocking the meaning of the highly novel ads.
12-E: The Impact of Purchase Motivation on Happiness: Experiential and Material Purchases

Sofia Kousi, Athens University of Economics & Business, Greece
Flora Kokkinaki, Athens University of Economics & Business, Greece
Stavros Drakopoulos, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

The experience recommendation posits that experiential purchases make people happier than material purchases. The present research aims to demonstrate that this is partly due to the different underlying goals that motivate these two disposable income purchase types. To this end the results of three experiments are described.

14-R: Leaving the Lab: Can Mobile fNIRS Enhance Consumer Research?

Caspar Krampe, Heinrich-Heine-Universität, Germany
Nadine Gier, Heinrich-Heine-Universität, Germany
Enrique Strelow, Justus Liebig Universität, Germany
Peter Kenning, Heinrich-Heine-Universität, Germany

This work aims to demonstrate that mobile fNIRS is an appropriate neuroimaging method for measuring consumers’ prefrontal neural reaction to brand related information. To achieve this we replicated the neural ‘winner-take-it-all’ effect of consumers’ first-choice-brand indicating the utility of applying mobile fNIRS in consumer research.

13-D: Extending the Herding Effect to the Consumption Experience: The Case of Online Music

Zachary Krastel, Concordia University, Canada
H. Onur Bodur, Concordia University, Canada

Others’ opinions can act as a heuristic when deciding what to consume. However we show the “herding effect” also affects preferences during consumption. We find social information is more important for some individuals and for some music types and can have strong negative effects on song preferences in online environments.

16-M: Bridging the Chasm for Materialists: The Case of Renting Luxury

Goedele Krekels, HEC Lausanne, Switzerland
Bruno Kocher, HEC Lausanne, Switzerland
Sandor Czellar, HEC Lausanne, Switzerland
Brigitte Muller, IAE de Toulon, France

Though literature would predict that materialistic people dislike renting luxury giving them less control over the product in two studies we show that for high materialists renting luxury leads to similar self-image and product perceptions as buying. For low materialists we only find positive effects for buying luxury not renting.

17-Q: When Saying Less Tells Me More: The Relation Between Socio-economic Status (SES) and Luxury Justification

Goedele Krekels, HEC Lausanne, Switzerland
Sandor Czellar, HEC Lausanne, Switzerland
David Dubois, INSEAD, France
Gilles Laurent, INSEEC Business School, France
Bruno Kocher, HEC Lausanne, Switzerland

This research examines whether luxury signalers justify their consumption and how this influences the receiver’s perceptions. We show that high SES people justify their luxury consumption less and that a lack of justification is perceived as indicating higher SES. However this can lead to negative product and personality perceptions.
20-F: How People Compose and Detect Insincere Product Reviews: Combining Experimental and Automated-Text-Analysis Approaches

Ann Kronrod, University of Massachusetts - Lowell, USA
Jeff Lee, New York University, Shanghai, China
Ivan Gordeliy, École Normale Supérieure, France

We explore how consumers compose and read true/fake reviews. We confirm predictions regarding the linguistic aspects of insincere reviews using automatic text analysis. We also find that awareness of these aspects does not improve fake review composition or detection suggesting these aspects are outcomes of deep psychological processes of lying.

2-D: A Brand Community’s Response to the Brand’s Transgression: The Role of Collective Psychological Ownership

Christina Kuchmaner, Kent State University, USA
Jennifer Wiggins, Kent State University, USA
Pamela Grimm, Kent State University, USA

We show that brand community members who perceive collective psychological ownership of the brand particularly those with high status within the community are less likely to engage in destructive actions in response to a brand transgression. Rather these consumers view themselves as partially responsible for helping the brand recover.

17-F: A Little Knowledge is a Dangerous Thing: When Co-Production Leads Consumers to Abandon a Firm for a Do-It-Yourself Alternative

Christina Kuchmaner, Kent State University, USA
Jennifer Wiggins, Kent State University, USA
Colin Campbell, Kent State University, USA

Co-production research has primarily focused on the benefits of co-production to firms. We suggest that consumers who attribute a successful co-production experience to themselves are more likely to leave the firm for a do-it-yourself alternative. Firms can mitigate this effect by manipulating the type of employee feedback given to consumers.

2-P: How Mortality Salience Impacts Consumers’ Preference for Brands

Polina Landgraf, IE University, Spain
Antonios Stamatogiannakis, IE University, Spain
Haiyang Yang, Johns Hopkins University, USA

We demonstrate in field and lab studies that mortality salience can dampen consumers’ preference for brands with exciting personalities but not for those with other brand personalities (e.g. sincerity). We explore potential mechanisms underlying this phenomenon. Our findings add to terror management and brand personality theories and offer managerial insights.

2-O: Environmental Threats and the Brand Incumbency Advantage

Even Lanseng, Norwegian School of Management, Norway

The idea that the incumbency advantage is limited to certain environmental threats is examined. Two studies demonstrate the incumbency advantage in the presence of pathogen threat cues and two studies show a diminished incumbency advantage in the presence of social exclusion and mating cues.
17-N: The Dissimilarity Magnifying Bias

Negin Latifi Kasani, ESSEC Business School, France
Claudiu Dimofte, San Diego State, USA

We introduce and examine a dissimilarity magnifying bias in social perception according to which others are considered first as exemplars of the least favorably perceived group to which they belong even when they are simultaneously members of more favorably perceived groups. The bias and its implications are assessed in the context of brand user group membership.

1-E: Exploring the Concept of Beauty in Consumer Research: A Multidisciplinary Framework and Research Agenda

Marina Leban, ESCP Europe, France
Benjamin Voyer, ESCP Europe, France

This research lays the foundations of an interdisciplinary conceptual framework and research agenda for studying and understanding beauty consumer behavior. We integrate findings from evolutionary cognitive and cultural psychology and identify: i) the mechanisms behind beauty perceptions and ii) the role of beauty in consumers’ perceptions of products.

1-C: Differential Preference toward Aesthetic Design Elements of Airline Livery: An Examination of Design-Activity Congruency

Jeongmin Lee, Gachon University, South Korea
Wujin Chu, Seoul National University, South Korea
Dawon Kang, Seoul National University, South Korea
Jisu Yi, Seoul National University, South Korea

Consumers seek congruency between aesthetic design and the activity being performed. As such we show that business travelers prefer airline livery designs that use darker tones primary colors and geometric lines. On the other hand vacation travelers’ design preference is split between toned-down designs and colorful designs.


Shinhyoung Lee, Seoul National University, South Korea
Youjae Yi, Seoul National University, South Korea

This research examines the effect of promotion framing on consumer product returns hypothesizing that framing a promotion as a free gift (vs. bundle no-promotion) reduces product return intention by making consumers perceive more loss in giving up a “freebie”-with-purchase.

13-E: I Want to Share My Information!: The Effects of Social Exclusion on Consumers’ Information Disclosure Intentions

Jiyoung Lee, University of Texas at Austin, USA
Andrew Gershoff, University of Texas at Austin, USA

The current paper proposes that social exclusion heightens consumers’ willingness to disclose personal information to brands. Four studies demonstrate the proposed effect of social exclusion on information disclosure intentions which is driven by the desire for social connection. Two boundary conditions (i.e. brand benefit relationship likelihood) are also tested.
12-C: Missing, not Empty: 
Effects of Absence of Expected Objects in a Space on Motivation and Performance

Jaewoo Lee, Boston University, USA
Kyeongheui Kim, Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea
Minjung Koo, Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea
Eunyoung Song, University of Florida, USA

We examine how the absence of expected objects in a space (e.g. bookshelves without books no dumbbells in the rack) impairs individuals’ general motivation to work and performance. We propose that such effects occur because exposure to spatial absence causes depletion of psychological resources or energy.

11-B: Donor Social Class Influences Appreciation of Donation

Jacob Lee, UNIST, South Korea
Christine Kang, California State University Long Beach, USA
Kate Min, Cornell University, USA

This research finds that charitable gift recipients appreciate gifts from lower (vs. upper) social class donors more because they incurred greater self-cost to give. We identify a boundary condition for this effect and find that the amount of the charitable gift (small vs. large) matters.

9-P: My Meal and My Recipe: Social Media Intervention in Rural Food Consumption

Eric Li, University of British Columbia, Canada
Cristalle Smith, University of British Columbia, Canada
Xin Zhao, Lancaster University, UK
Sarah Weseen, University of British Columbia, Canada

This paper employed a social media intervention approach to examine how residents in rural communities share healthy food information through the “My Meal My Recipe” social media campaign. Our findings identify key factors to promote healthy eating in rural communities that constantly facing challenges on food security and healthy living.

4-B: Beyond Lei Feng!
Global Fashion Brands and Modern Girl Archetypes in Emerging Chinese Market

Eric Li, University of British Columbia, Canada
Xin Zhao, Lancaster University, UK
Fiona Li, Independent Researcher, China
Magnum Lam, Hong Kong Design Institute, Hong Kong
Wing-sun Liu, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

This paper examines the role of global fashion brands in the construction of “modern girl” archetypes in China. Through a semiotic analysis of printed advertisements published in popular fashion magazines we identified four “modern girl” archetypes and presented the dialogical relationship between brand-created imageries and local cultural imagination.

13-B: Competitive or Complementary? An Empirical Look at Interactions between Reselling and Agency Selling in Platform-Based Retailing

Qi Li, Nanjing University, China
Quansheng Wang, Nanjing University, China
Peijian Song, Nanjing University, China

Online platforms have become increasingly ubiquitous in retailing. We use empirical evidences to indicate the interactions between reselling and agent selling. Additionally we also recognize how the spillovers and the popularity of agent selling impact such interact relationship in a platform. Our findings provide important theoretical contributions and managerial implications.
11-O: The Influences of Morality-Irrelevant Inspiration on the Two Faces of Morality Behavior

Jianping Liang, Sun Yat-sen University, China
Zengxiang Chen, Nankai University, China
Jing Lei, University of Melbourne, Australia

We propose a common antecedent for both faces of morality and found that morality-irrelevant inspirational experiences could decrease proscriptive morality and increase prescriptive morality via emotional and cognitive transcendence. This is the first paper to explore the roles played by transcendence resulted from inspiration and its consequences on source-irrelevant issues.

10-P: Solving the Paradox of a Large Assortment: The Moderating Role of Choice Mode

Mikyoung Lim, Sogang University, Republic of Korea
Young-Won Ha, Sogang University, Republic of Korea

Prior research on the effect of assortment size on purchase behavior revealed that consumers prefer a large (vs. small) assortment but are less satisfied with the selected product from a large (vs. small) assortment. We demonstrate that the moderating effect of choice mode (instrumental vs. experiential) can explain this paradox.

5-T: The Silver Lining of Envy on Social Media? – The Relationships Between Post Content, Envy Type, and Purchase Intention

Ruoyun Lin, Leibniz-Institut für Wissensmedien, Germany

Three studies were conducted to examine the relationships between post content (experiential vs. material purchases) envy type (benign vs. malicious envy) and purchase intention (same vs. similar object). Results indicated that post content did not predict envy type but benign/malicious envy predicted purchase intention of a same/similar product respectively.

13-I: The Development and Validation of a Scale for Virtual Identity versus Actual Identity

Chia-Wei Joy Lin, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, USA
Yinlong Zhang, University of Texas at San Antonio, USA

This research aimed at developing a theory-based scale for virtual identity. Five studies were conducted to examine refine and validate the proposed virtual identity scale. We demonstrated that this newly developed scale is a reliable and valid measure that captures the centrality meaning affect and behavior dimensions of virtual identity.

14-T: On the Proliferation of Latent Construct in Consumer Research: A Historical Perspective

Shan Lin, Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, Norway

The paper reviews constructs used in JCR papers published between 1974 and 2013 and analyzes them by network analysis. Authors visualize the state of the field together with how knowledge accumulates propose the approaches of construct development and call for attention for the usage of several problematic constructs.

20-P: Trust is Good, Control is Effort – The Paradoxical Role of Privacy Concerns in Customer Loyalty Programs

Helena M. Lischka, Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf, Germany
Verena Bergers, Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf, Germany
Peter Kenning, Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf, Germany

Consumers’ rising concerns about data safety and privacy threats may also affect consumer behavior particularly in the context of customer loyalty card programs. Using structural equation modeling our work provides insights into the role of trustworthiness and risk beliefs investigating why consumers seldom translate their privacy concerns into actual behavior.
15-D: Product Touch and Consumers’ Online and Offline Buying: The Moderation Effect of Mental Representation

Wumei Liu, Lanzhou University, China
Rajeev Batra, University of Michigan, USA
Haizhong Wang, Sun Yat-Sen University, China

Prior research displays inconsistency on whether product touch increases consumers’ purchase intention (PI) of the product. We show that the effect of touch on PI is evident when consumers’ mental representation of a product is concrete but not when abstract. Mediators of the moderation effect of mental representation are tested.

14-C: Claiming to be Good in Parts or in Whole? The Joint Effect of Ad Headline and Body Copy on Ad Effectiveness

Xuefeng Liu, Loyola University Maryland, USA
Jason Zhang, Loyola University Maryland, USA
Jibo He, Wichita State University, USA

This study considers ad headline and body copy as two distinct components of an ad and shows that their effects are interactive rather than additive in terms of delivering product information. It also extends the classic hypothesis-testing framework by showing that hypotheses could be formed and tested within an ad.

7-B: Bad Experiences Increase Social Closeness Over Time

Kailuo Liu, University of Toronto, Canada
Cindy Chan, University of Toronto, Canada

The paper explores how shared bad consumption experiences influence consumer relationships. Although past research shows bad experiences generate lasting personal unhappiness we find that bad experiences can benefits consumers in a new dimension – strengthening social relationships with others who shared the experiences.

2-C: “We are Breaking Up”: The Direct and Mediating Effects of Conceptual Metaphors on Brand Relationships

Alberto Lopez, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico
Martin Reimann, University of Arizona, USA
Raquel Castaño, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico

Across three experiments this research investigates the effects of relationship metaphors (e.g. “breaking-up”) on brand relationship strength. Drawing on conceptual metaphor theory this work demonstrates that consumers who break a pencil (vs. put together a puzzle) have a weaker (vs. stronger) brand relationship. These effects are mediated by persuasion.

10-J: Fluency Leads to Overconfidence in Decision Making

Fang-Chi Lu, Korea University, South Korea
Jinfeng (Jenny) Jiao, State University of New York at Binghamton, USA

In this paper we explore an antecedence of overconfidence: perceptual fluency. Across our three studies we demonstrate that perceptual fluency leads to a greater overconfidence bias and that the metacognitive experience of feeling right in information processing underlies this fluency effect.
14-D: Consumer Reactance to Persuasive Messages: How Personal Preferences Influence Attitude and Attitude Change

Sabrina Lucke, Technical University of Munich, Germany
Joerg Koenigstorfer, Technical University of Munich, Germany
Angela Y. Lee, Northwestern University, USA

Consumer preferences that is in our study consumers’ affiliation with the sender of a message drive not only immediate reactance to persuasion when there is a mismatch between the sender and own preferences but also a delayed increase in attitude. Negative (partly positive) emotions mediate the process.

19-M: The Impact of the Maximizing Mindset on Variety Seeking Behaviors

Jingjing Ma, Peking University, China

When consumers are making choices among a diverse portfolio of options for future consumption they tend to choose too many varieties that are inconsistent with their preferences at the time of consumption. This research shows that activating a maximizing mindset can reduce this variety seeking tendency especially for familiar products.

10-S: The Effect of Maximizing on Consumer Response to Features and Price

Zhenfeng Ma, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada
Jingjing Ma, Peking University, China

This research shows that the activation of a maximizing mindset elevates consumers’ tendency to choose feature-rich products even when these features are nonessential and these products more expensive. We argue that the reason maximizers are more feature focused is because maximizing makes consumers more promotion focused and less prevention focused.

7-E: Emotional Cocktails: Mixed Emotions, Gratifications, and the Enjoyment of Various Types of Movie Genre

Robert Madrigal, California State University at Chico, USA
Colleen Bee, Oregon State University, USA
Brandon Reich, University of Oregon, USA
Troy Campbell, University of Oregon, USA
Nathan Warren, University of Oregon, USA

This research examines the role of mixed emotions in the enjoyment of entertainment experiences. The present study shows that a mix of co-occurring opposite-valence emotions predicts overall enjoyment for films across three genres (bittersweet low-brow comedy and suspense) mediated by genre-specific gratifications.


Olga Martin, University of Washington, USA
Shailendra P. Jain, University of Washington, USA

Most explanations of addictive behaviors posit emotion regulation as the primary motivation for such behaviors. We develop a framework to understand why emotion regulation may lead to addictive consumption when this influence occurs and how it operates. We find perceived powerlessness mediates the relationship between emotion regulation and addictive consumption.
4-K: Methods to Improve Construct Measurement Equivalency in Cross-Cultural Consumer Research
Veronica Martin Ruiz, Iowa State University, USA
Jose A. Rosa, Iowa State University, USA

The Construct Measurement Equivalency Method is a theory-grounded approach to research instrument translation in cross-cultural inquiry. It can enhance cross-cultural research validity and reliability by making target population instruments more culturally and linguistically relevant, attenuating the loss of linguistic and cultural nuances and making possible a more natural response flow.

15-H: The Sophisticated Brand Scent: The Effects of Scent Type on Brand Sophistication
Márcia Maurer Herter, ESPM Business School, Brazil
Diego Costa Pinto, ESPM Business School, Brazil
Mellina Terres, UFCSPA, Brazil
Leonardo Nicolao, UFRGS, Brazil

This research examines the effects of scent type on brand sophistication. In two studies we show that woody (vs. floral) scent enhances brand sophistication. In addition, findings suggest that brand sophistication mediates the effect of scent type (woody vs. floral) on consumer’s willingness to pay.

4-D: Decomposing Cultural Effects in the Valuation of Time: Orientation, End and Progress
Yan Meng, Grenoble Ecole de Management, France
Ana Valenzuela, Baruch College, CUNY, USA & ESADE, Spain

Individuals of Western cultural identity assign a higher monetary value to the future and are willing to wait a longer time for a larger amount of money than Easterners because of East Asians’ past orientation, future ambiguity, and belief that time-related events progress following trends that may reverse.

15-E: Putting Scent Where It Belongs: The Effects of Scent Intensity and Presentation Order on Scented Product Evaluation
Hua (Meg) Meng, Longwood University, USA
Cesar Zamudio, Kent State University, USA
Robert D. Jewell, Kent State University, USA

This research investigates how to effectively promote a new scented product and how to sequence its presentation alongside other scented products. This study examines the interactive effects of presentation order and scent intensity on the focal scent’s evaluation and suggests the optimal placement of the focal scent.

17-B: Every Crowd Has a Silver Lining: Threat Unleashes the Positive Aspects of Social Density
Uwe Messer, University of Bamberg, Germany
Alexander Leischning, University of Bamberg, Germany
Elisabeth Distler, University of Bamberg, Germany

Does activation of the self-protection system change consumer reactions to the social store environment? Drawing from evolutionary psychology theory we show that an activated self-protection motive increases approach of socially dense retail environments. This effect is contingent on people’s general concern about interpersonal danger.
6-D: On Biological Origins of Materialism

Uwe Messer, University of Bamberg, Germany
Alexander Leischning, University of Bamberg, Germany
Elisabeth Distler, University of Bamberg, Germany

Drawing from biological research on prenatal testosterone and status drive we examine the relationship between digit ratio (a proxy of prenatal testosterone exposure) and materialism showing that higher exposure is linked to higher materialism in men. A potential reason is that men are more strongly predisposed to focus on possessions.

14-S: Liminality in Consumer Research

Laetitia Mimoun, HEC Paris, France
Fleura Bardhi, City University of London, UK

This article integrates disparate consumer research on liminality a transitional state of betwixt and between. It introduces a theory of consumer liminality including a theoretical framework explaining what liminality is and what structures it and the concept of liminal consumer performances which captures how consumers do liminality.

20-H: Perseverance of the Underdog Effect in the Face of Negative Reviews

Dong-Jun Min, University of New Orleans, USA
Anja Luethi, University of New Orleans, USA
Kyeong Sam Min, University of New Orleans, USA

People like rooting for underdogs. However it is questionable whether their support for an underdog’s brand continues even after they hear something negative about the brand. In this research we examine when and why negative reviews are more detrimental for a top dog’s brand compared to an underdog’s brand.

1-H: The Effect of Abstract Versus Representational Art Imagery on Product Luxuriousness Perception And Evaluation

Tingting Mo, Zhongnan University of Economics and Law, China
Xiaoyan Deng, Ohio State University, USA

This research demonstrates that applying abstract (vs. representational) art imagery to product design increased consumers’ perceptions of product luxuriousness and enhanced purchase intention (experiments 1 & 3). However this “luxury infusion” effect is much reduced for higher (vs. lower) value products (experiment 2).

4-O: Tension and Trust: Crossing the Border Between Hybrid Economies and Home

Michael Moorhouse, Western University, Canada
June Cotte, Western University, Canada

Research into sharing (Belk 2010 2014) and hybrid economies (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012; Scaraboto 2015) has blossomed. We outline a conceptual framework to organize theory and research on the trust required and tension inherent in sharing exchanges in one’s home.

8-B: Eliminating the Paper Trail: Consumers Prefer Using Cash over Cards for More Painful Purchases

Joshua Morris, Stanford University, USA
Szu-chi Huang, Stanford University, USA

We propose that when consumers make more painful purchases (e.g. due to guilt or low transaction utility) they will be more likely to use cash than a debit or credit card in order to reduce their “paper trail” and the likelihood of recalling their painful financial activity in the future.
16-B: Consumer Benevolence and Risk Taking: Is Altruism Perilous?
Sudipta Mukherjee, Virginia Tech, USA
Sam Bond, Georgia Tech, USA
Mario Pandelaere, Virginia Tech, USA

Our research examines the relationship between consumer benevolence and risk taking. We find across three studies that at both trait and situational levels benevolence is related to increased risk taking. Specifically we find that behaving benevolently results in decreased risk perception and subsequently increased risk taking.

10-I: Do Deals Really Help Save Money: Deal Salience Results in Increased Consumer Spending
Sudipta Mukherjee, Virginia Tech, USA
Mario Pandelaere, Virginia Tech, USA

Consumers have the lay belief that looking for deals helps in saving money. In this paper over a series of experiments we test this lay belief and find results that indicate to the contrary. We find that deal salience decreases self-control and increases consumer spending.

11-F: Looking a Free Gift in The Mouth: The Effect of Free Gifts on Charitable Behavior
Ashesh Mukherjee, McGill University, Canada
Raj Raghunathan, University of Texas at Austin, USA
Sumitra Auschaitrakul, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, Thailand

Charities often include free gifts such as cards stickers pens calendars and memory sticks in their donation appeals. Using the theoretical perspective of fit this research identifies gift origin as a new moderator of the effect of free gifts on charitable behavior.

5-H: I’m Scared, Want to Listen? Incidental Fear’s Influence on Self-Disclosure to Brands
Anupama Mukund Bharadwaj, University of Washington, USA
Lea Dunn, University of Washington, USA

Self-disclosure is an increasingly popular topic within marketing yet scant literature has considered emotional impact on whether one divulges information to others. We examine the impact of fear on self-disclosure showing that people who experience a frightening event alone are more likely to self-disclose even when the act is risky.

5-E: Fight or Flight? Consumers’ Implicit and Explicit Emotional Reactions to Looming Threat
Lana Mulier, Ghent University, Belgium
Hendrik Slabbinck, Ghent University, Belgium
Iris Vermeir, Ghent University, Belgium

We used face reading technology to examine the emotional effects of the looming bias. We find evidence that looming stimuli elicit more negative emotions in consumers compared to receding stimuli and that animal threat leads to more negative emotions than human facial threat but only when it’s looming.

18-D: Me First, Then the Environment: Pro-Environmental Behavior in Communal vs. Agentic Narcissists
Iman Naderi, Fairfield University, USA

Across two experiments and following a new formulation of narcissism (i.e. the agency-communion model) this research investigates whether agentic and communal narcissists differ in their likelihood to engage in various forms of pro-environmental behavior. Supporting this proposition this study also shows that perceived self-sacrifice and perceived social-benefits could influence these two groups of consumers’ decision to purchase eco-friendly products.
5-C: Do Consumers Get What They Want? How Desires Influence Consumer Happiness
Leonardo Nicolao, UFRGS, Brazil
Vinicius Brei, UFRGS, Brazil

This research shows that the intensity of consumption desires predicts expected happiness for both material and experiential purchases. However, this pattern does not hold for experienced happiness with past purchases. Past happiness increases with the intensity of desires for material purchases but not for experiences.

8-D: How Price Path Characteristics Shape Investment Behavior
Sven Nolte, University of Muenster, Germany
Judith Schneider, University of Muenster, Germany

Consumers making financial decisions are confronted with price charts. In a laboratory experiment we strip charts of their information content by providing participants with full information via a different channel. Participants are influenced even by informationally irrelevant paths. We identify four important visual characteristics of charts that bias consumer decisions.

10-H: Creativity in Real Life: How a Creative Mindset Affects Intertemporal Preferences
Luke Nowlan, University of Miami, USA
Carter Morgan, University of Miami, USA

This paper explores how thinking creatively affects consumers’ intertemporal preferences. We suggest that a creative mindset diminishes the vividness with which consumers perceive products and thus increases consumers’ patience for the product. We support this framework across two studies.

4-E: Domains of Consumer Tranquility and the “Tranquility Gap”
Hyewon Oh, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA
Cele Otnes, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA
Ravi Mehta, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA

How do consumers leverage the marketplace to experience tranquility? We find three domains of tranquility: “everyday home” “everyday marketplace” and “extraordinary marketplace” which are shaped by the interaction between consumers’ level of control in the domain and their need to comply with gatekeepers. Specific sources of “tranquility gap” are discussed.

9-M: Improving the Efficacy of Posted Calorie Information Through the Strategic Use of Provincial Norms
Ashley Otto, Baylor University, USA
Brennan Davis, California Polytechnic State University, USA
Kirk Wakefield, Baylor University, USA
Joshua Clarkson, University of Cincinnati, USA

This research addresses a critical issue in regard to how to improve the failed efficacy of the mandate requiring the posting of calorie information on restaurant menus. In response we propose a means by which to improve the efficacy of this mandate through the strategic use of provincial norms.

20-O: The Presence of Familiar Words Drive Social Media Likes, Comments, and Shares
Ethan Pancer, Saint Mary’s University, Canada
Vincent Chandler, Saint Mary’s University, Canada
Maxwell Poole, Saint Mary’s University, Canada

Consistent with a processing fluency account we find that online posts with a higher ratio of familiar words are associated with higher social media engagement. We analyzed Facebook posts and tweets from Humans of New York over a 3-year period to see how word familiarity shape these interactions.
14-L: The Effect of Stress on the Persuasiveness of (Central vs. Peripheral) Advertising Messages

Shirish Panchal, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada
Dr. Tripat Gill, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada
Dr. Zhenfeng Ma, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada

The present research is the first study to examine the effect of stress on the persuasiveness of two key types of advertising messages (central vs. peripheral). Contrary to the negative connotation of stress we show the beneficial effect of moderate stress on information processing and its downstream effect.

18-G: The Asymmetric Effect of Going Green versus Going Luxury

Jooyoung Park, Peking University, China

Brand/line extension research has failed to investigate how consumers evaluate products with the same attributes differently depending on the focal attribute of their parent brand. This study shows that a pro-environmental product extended by a luxury brand is better accepted than a luxury product extended by a pro-environmental brand.

10-L: Number-location Bias: Do Consumers Correctly Process the Number?

Jihye Park, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, South Korea
Yoon Jin Ma, Illinois State University, USA

This study investigated whether consumers process numeric information with spatial cues and whether a number-location bias is attenuated or strengthened by verticality of visual focus. Results of a series of experiments revealed that the verticality effect was stronger than the horizontality effect of numeric information on perceived magnitude.

6-I: The Impact of Mixed-Sex Competition on Women’s Choice of Androgynous Products

Jooyoung Park, Peking University, China
Fayrouz Souissi, Peking University, China

The simultaneous emergence of unisex dressing with women entering competitive environments makes it judicious to study the popularity of androgynous products in the context of mixed-sex competition. This study aims to fill a gap in the literature by investigating women’s choice of androgynous products in the context of mixed-sex competition.

11-G: Pride and Donation Behaviors

Sungjun (Steven) Park, Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST), South Korea
Yong J. Hyun, Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST), South Korea

By using the donation amount of real money results indicate that participants experiencing authentic pride placed a more lenient bar to them while requiring others a stricter moral bar. The results become insignificant to participants when experiencing hubristic pride.

14-F: Free But Suspicious Gift Promotion: the Influence of Product-gift Fit on Devaluing the Promoted Product

Yookyung Park, Seoul National University, Korea
Youjae Yi, Seoul National University, Korea

The present research demonstrates that when a low-fit gift (vs. a high-fit gift) is provided upon purchase consumers’ judgments on the promoted product’s value are undermined. This influence is mediated by perceived deceptiveness of the offer and moderated by consumer shopping orientation.
2-S: The Asymmetric Attribution toward Brands
(Underdog vs. Top-dog) upon Brand Crisis (External vs. Internal)
Kiwan Park, Seoul National University, Republic of Korea
Yaeri Kim, Seoul National University, Republic of Korea
Seojin Stacey Lee, Seoul National University, Republic of Korea

We identify that in service domain where perceived warmth from the brand is particularly important service failure especially caused by the underdog brand is considered more serious. However in product context where brands’ competence is more important than warmth people express less forgiveness intention on top-dog brands’ crisis.

1-J: The Effect of Incidental Disgust on Aesthetic Preference
Kiwan Park, Seoul National University, South Korea
Seojin Stacey Lee, Seoul National University, South Korea
Joonkyung Kim, University of Toronto, Canada

Current work shows that an exposure to disease related stimuli will lead to a more favorable evaluation for simple designs and less favorable evaluation for designs visually complex. This research contributes to the emotion and art literature by showing how avoidance tendency triggered by disgust can influence aesthetic evaluation.

19-H: An Individual Choice vs. A Bundle Choice:
The Effect of Choice Mechanics on Diversification Bias
Jihye Park, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, South Korea

To the extension of Mittelman et al. (2014) this study examined how choice mechanics influence variety seeking in the multiple product choice context. The expected satiety drove variety seeking in the individual choice mechanics whereas relationships of items were more likely to be considered when consumers chose a bundle.

13-F: Location-based Services Effect on Online Purchase Intention
Jean-Eric Pelet, ESCE International Business School, France
Jashim Khan, University of Surrey, UK
Kelly Cowart, University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee, USA

This paper presents an empirically tested model explaining the relationship between social media location-based services (LBS) user emotion and online purchase intention.

14-G: Incorporating Vanity into a Luxury Value-Attitude-Behavior Model-
Evidence from Luxury Restaurant Consumers
Norman Peng, University of Westminster, UK
Annie Chen, University of West London, UK
Li-Wei Mai, University of Westminster, UK
Stella Kladou, Sheffield Hallam University, UK

Existing theories of the effect of luxury value on consumers may require adjustment when applied to service-based products. To contribute to the literature this study incorporates a “vanity” variable into a luxury value-attitude-behavior model. A total of 150 participants from the UK completed questionnaires. All hypotheses are supported.
3-B: Can Implicit Theory Influence Construal Level?
Sara Penner, University of Manitoba, Canada
Olya Bullard, University of Winnipeg, Canada
Kelley J. Main, University of Manitoba, Canada

This research examines the relationship between implicit theory and construal level. Three studies show that holding an incremental (vs. entity) theory is associated with abstract (vs. concrete) information processing. The likely underlying mechanism is positivity shift that results from holding an implicit (vs. entity) theory.

16-L: When is More Better? Will How Many People Ask Affect the Outcome?
Sara Penner, University of Manitoba, Canada
Kelley Main, University of Manitoba, Canada
Jennifer Argo, University of Alberta, Canada

Why do many non-profits use multiple solicitors in their donation requests with the belief it will improve their fundraising results? We explore this through the lens of attitude and discover that men and women have very different reactions related to the gender and number of people asking for the gift.

11-M: Puritan Peers or Egoistic Entrepreneurs?
An Examination of Moral Identity in Collaborative Consumption
Rebeca Perren, California State University San Marcos, USA
Kristin Stewart, California State University San Marcos, USA

Despite proponents of collaborative consumption portraying peers as moral citizens of society recent findings suggest that egoistic motives drive participation. Platform-providing firms rely on users’ cooperative behaviors; thus this research examines how prolonged participation diminishes moral identity. Findings reveal important implications for the success of emerging peer exchange business models.

18-F: Redeeming Guilty Pleasures - Sustainable Consumption Across Vice and Virtue Categories
Anne Odile Peschel, Aarhus University, Denmark
Jessica Aschemann-Witzel, Aarhus University, Denmark

The trend of upcycling is observable in different areas of consumption – including in the food industry as ‘waste to food’. While consumers avoided upcycling in virtue categories it seemed to offset the guilty pleasure of consuming vice products. Therefore it could be an alternative approach for marketing sustainable ingredients.

9-Y: Too Large to Eat it All:
How Package Size Impacts Anticipated Food Waste, Intentions and Preferences
Olivia Petit, INSEEC Business School, France
Renaud Lunardo, KEDGE Business School, France
Bradley J. Rickard, Cornell University, USA

Through three experiments we demonstrate that larger packages prompt anticipated food waste which then reduces purchase intentions. In addition results reveal that when being primed with food waste consumers are less likely to prefer large packages even if such packages are associated with a promotion.
9-U: Smell-o-Vision:  
Olfactory and Visual Store Atmospherics Prime Healthy Food Choices

Megan Phillips, Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand  
Sommer Kapitan, Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand

The present research investigates the ability of store atmospherics to nudge shoppers towards purchasing healthier foods. An observation study and an experimental study together demonstrate that store atmospherics can be tailored to create a message of healthfulness and act as a prime to persuade shoppers to purchase healthier foods.

5-I: Judgement and Decision-Making:  
The effect of induced emotional uncertainty on predicted utility and forecasting accuracy.

Athanasios Polyportis, Athens University of Economics & Business, Greece  
Flora Kokkinaki, Athens University of Economics & Business, Greece

The purpose of the research is to explore the effects of the certainty-uncertainty appraisal dimension of incidental emotions on predicted utility and affective forecasting accuracy. Emotions associated with uncertainty seem to result in smaller forecasting error and utility overprediction. To this end the results of two experiments are described.

6-F: The Red Derogation Effect

Nicolas Pontes, Queensland University of Technology, Australia  
JoAndrea Hoegg, University of British Columbia, Canada

This research demonstrates that the red-attractiveness effect of women viewing men is moderated by mate retention goals and that the effect is mediated by perceived threat. Additionally we show that the red-threat link is moderated by self-control strength such that the effect dissipates when self-control resources have been depleted.

11-H: Being Good Versus Being the Better:  
Consumer Responses to Preferential Treatment.

Vivian Pontes, Queensland University of Technology, Australia  
Nicolas Pontes, Queensland University of Technology, Australia  
Dominique Greer, Queensland University of Technology, Australia

This research shows that extent to which preferential treatment can lead to negative versus positive emotions. In particular when a benefit given causes some harm to others the positive effects of being advantaged are mitigated by the arousal of negative moral emotions which in turn decreasing customer satisfaction.

5-K: Pride and Shame Moderate the Effect of Regulatory Focus on Risk Taking Propensity

Aylar Pour Mohammad, Bocconi University, Italy  
Gulen Sarial Abi, Bocconi University, Italy

How self-conscious emotions affect risk taking behavior? Prior literature has indicated that promotion (prevention) focus is associated with risk seeking (risk avoiding) propensity (Bryant and Dunford 2008). Two experiments demonstrate that positive (negative) self-conscious emotions may attenuate the effect of promotion (prevention) focus on risk taking propensity.

7-J: Making Money Meaningful:  
Fostering Meaningful Lives Through Growth-Based Experiential Purchases

Emily Powell, New York University, USA  
Adam Alter, New York University, USA

As consumers strive for “the good life” they must search for both happiness and meaning. Across two studies we show that consumers who spend more money on growth-based experiences (as opposed to purely enjoyment-based experiences) derive greater meaning from those experiences and in their lives as a whole.
20-Q: Understanding Word-of-Mouth Transmission
Ashleigh E. Powell, RMIT University, Australia
Adrian R. Camilleri, RMIT University, Australia
Angela R. Dobele, RMIT University, Australia
Constantino Stavros, RMIT University, Australia

We integrate emergent consumer psychology findings regarding emotional arousal self-enhancement and communication context by examining how these factors interact to influence word-of-mouth transmission.

17-L: Social TV and Viewing Experience
Emily Powell, New York University, USA
Alixandra Barasch, New York University, USA

We examine the effect of social TV on viewers’ likelihood to watch a show again. We find that social TV increases repeat viewing when viewers are alone (but not in a group) and when they create content related to the show (but not unrelated content).

9-S: Presentation Style Affects Decision Processes: A Dietary Choice Study
Mona Prakash, Duke University, USA
Jonathan Winkle, Duke University, USA
Nicolette Sullivan, Duke University, USA
Gavan Fitzsimons, Duke University, USA
John Pearson, Duke University, USA
Scott Huettel, Duke University, USA

When making decisions the available options can often take a variety of forms. For example menus can have some options that have images while others are described in words. This paper explores how the visual form in which an option is presented can bias decision processing.

11-Q: The Viciousness and Caring of Sharing: Morality and Motivations of Online Shamers
Chen Pundak, Tel Aviv University, Israel
Yael Steinhart, Tel Aviv University, Israel
Jacob Goldenberg, Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, Israel

We focus on public shaming in online social networks. Shaming entails two contradictory outcomes: informal enforcement against deviant behavior and a violation of privacy rights. A set of studies shows the duality of shaming and that identification of the wrongdoer moderates the effect of morality on participation in public shaming.

15-B: It ‘Sounds’ Healthy to Me! The Influence of Sound on Food Choice.
Eduardo Rech, UFRGS, Brazil
Cristiane Pizzutti, UFRGS, Brazil
Eric Yorkston, Texas Christian University, USA

Studies on sensory stimulation has given little attention to sound influencing consumers’ choice. One of our purposes is to contribute with transformative research by exploring a way to increase consumption of healthy food. Our first results are encouraging since it is showing significant associations between sound and choice for food.
7-I: Is a Smartwatch a Fashion Item or an IT Device?:
Moderating Effect of Category Frame in Smartwatch Adoption

Jong-Youn Rha, Seoul National University, Korea
Jin-Myong Lee, Chungnam National University, Korea
Sunny Park, Seoul National University, Korea
Eunsun Cho, Seoul National University, Korea
Bo Han Lee, Seoul National University, Korea

A smartwatch is an innovative product that has both IT and fashion product attributes. Based on previous studies that suggest consumers develop knowledge schema for new products using prior knowledge of existing product categories we investigated the moderating effect of the category frame on consumers’ intention to adopt smartwatches.

10-U: To Search or Not to Search? Exploring Consumer’s Sensitivity to Task Importance

Yefim Roth, Israel Institute of Technology, Israel
Kinneret Teodorescu, Israel Institute of Technology, Israel

Previous search literature suggests that consumers “do not search much”. We show that in certain settings consumers search extensively. Furthermore they often do not allocate their search effort effectively searching equal amount of time or even longer in situations with minor or even negligible benefit for their effort.

9-DD: “Works With/For You!” How Framing Health-Related Products as Partners Versus Servants Impacts the Consumption of Indulgences

Caroline Roux, Concordia University, Canada
Kelly Goldsmith, Vanderbilt University, USA
Kamila Sobol, Concordia University, Canada
Laura Goodyear, Concordia University, Canada

We investigate the impact of engaging with a health-related product that is framed as either a partner (co-producer of the benefit) or servant (provider of the benefit) on goal-conflicting behavior. Specifically we find that framing a health-related product as a servant (vs. partner) increases enjoyment from and desire for indulgences.

2-M: Distancing from the Envied Person:
How Envy, Personal Distance and Framing Brand Availability Affects Brand Evaluations

Rajat Roy, Bond University, Australia
Subimal Chatterjee, State University of New York at Binghamton, USA

Feeling malicious (relative to benign) envy engenders more distancing from the envied person making a brand that is not preferred by the envied person more attractive than the brand that is and this effect is exaggerated if the brands are in limited supply rather than in excess demand.

9-F: Destigmatizing the Overweight Consumers: A Communal Perspective

Nada Sayarh, University of Geneva, Switzerland

While stigma is socially detrimental consumer researchers have little to say about how it relates to consumption. Also this concept has been mainly investigated from an individual perspective. In this paper we indicate how consumption communities have the potential to transform the stigmatized reduce their stigma and improve their well-being.
**14-N: The Effect of Public Commitment in Consumers’ Satisfaction**  
Fernanda Scherer, UFRGS, Brazil  
Cristiane Pizzutti, UFRGS, Brazil  
Clara Koetz, Rennes School of Business, France

Our study demonstrates that public commitment with an imminent consumption experience (e.g. check-in in social media) increases customers’ expectations which negatively impacts on their subsequent satisfaction with the product. This mediation of the expectation showed to be total when the performance was high but partial when the performance was low.

**11-A: “Doing Good and Having Fun” - The Role of Moral Obligation and Perceived Enjoyment For Explaining Foodsharing Intention**  
Nadine Schreiner, Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf, Germany  
Sarah Blümle, Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf, Germany  
Peter Kenning, Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf, Germany

This research focus on a combination of morality and hedonism to explain foodsharing behavior. A modified version of field theory was applied to differentiate the consumer’s and provider’s perspective. Results confirmed that foodsharing can be explained by moral obligation and perceived enjoyment even though the latter is comparatively weak.

**19-E: Surprise me! How Uncertainty Labels Affect Product Consumption**  
Anika Schumacher, Maastricht University, The Netherlands  
Caroline Goukens, Maastricht University, The Netherlands  
Kelly Geyskens, Maastricht University, The Netherlands  
Martin Reimann, University of Arizona, USA

Uncertainty labels such as “mystery” or “surprise” are frequently used to encourage product choice e.g. “surprise sale” Kinder Surprise®. Yet the actual consumption consequences of these labels are poorly understood. Across five studies we show that labels of uncertainty increase indulgent consumption holding the actual level of uncertainty constant.

**18-C: Let Market Know How Your Firm is Implementing Corporate Social Responsibility**  
Junhee Seok, Seoul National University, Korea  
Sarang Go, Seoul National University, Korea  
Youseok Lee, Seoul National University, Korea  
Byungdo Kim, Seoul National University, Korea

So far many studies examined the effect of CSR on firm value but the results have been contradictory. According to our findings publicizing CSR is the key variable that affects firm value and the corporate reputation mediate this relationship. Furthermore the effect of CSR varies depending on the firm size.

**4-R: Transnational Consumption**  
Zahra Sharifonnasabi, University of London, UK  
Fleura Bardhi, University of London, UK

We examine transnational lifestyle to identify the nature of consumption when consumers inhabit multiple countries simultaneously. A distinct notion of home emerged: fragmented transnational home anchored in various localities. We conceptualize transnational consumption as fragmented and localized where specific consumption goals are appointed and practices are associated in each locality.
2-Z: When Not to Surprise? The Role of Rewards and Communal Mindset on Perceptions of Brand Value

Sirajul Shibly, State University of New York at Binghamton, USA
Subimal Chatterjee, State University of New York at Binghamton, USA

We show that surprise relative to certain rewards positively impact brand-value perceptions among consumers who see the rewards as a signal of building a communal relationship. Surprise hurts value perceptions of consumers with less communal mindset particularly for cash rewards (relative to gift cards).

14-B: Can’t Switch Off: The Impact of an Attentional Bias on Attitudes

Sunaina Shrivastava, University of Iowa, USA
Gaurav Jain, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, USA
Dhananjay Nayakankuppam, University of Iowa, USA
Gary Gaeth, University of Iowa, USA

We show that individuals’ attention gets chained in incomplete events even when that attention is normatively unwarranted i.e when the outcomes are known and no further action is needed. We show that such a non-normative chaining of attention leads to negative attitudes towards entities associated with the event.

17-H: Publicity as Justification

Kao Si, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, China
Xianchi Dai, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, China

Whereas public displays of negative conducts are undesirable we show a counter-intuitive positive effect of publicity on people’s inference and evaluation of negative conducts. Observers evaluate an apparently negative behavior more favorably when it is done publicly than privately. Evidence supports an inference mechanism of the current effect.

19-G: Hot Streak! Consumer Inferences from Streaks of Virtuous Choices

Jackie Silverman, University of Pennsylvania, USA
Alixandra Barasch, New York University, USA
Deborah Small, University of Pennsylvania, USA

In three studies we demonstrate that people infer that others are more likely to choose a virtuous option over a vice option after a recent streak compared to other patterns of choices even when holding the base rate of choosing virtue constant. This effect is driven by higher perceived commitment to the virtuous behavior.


Anirban Som, IIM Trichy, India

Moral licensing theory argues that individuals who initially exhibit moral behaviors subsequently resort to immoral behaviors. Literature in the context of moral licensing predominantly highlights the negative consequences of this phenomenon. The current research contributes to this literature by highlighting the positive effects of moral licensing on individuals’ behaviors.

1-D: Effects of Logo Colorfulness on Consumer Judgments

Jiaqi Song, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
Yuwei Jiang, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
Gerald J. Gorn, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

Consumers have more favorable attitudes toward a brand when its logo contains multiple colors than a single color. This effect is driven by an increase of the perceived product variety of the company and moderated by brand positioning and the external attribution of the logo colorfulness.
9-Q: Packaging Glossiness Thwarts Perceived Food Healthiness
Jiaqi Song, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
Yuwei Jiang, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
Anish Nagpal, University of Melbourne, Australia
Gerald J. Gorn, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

Two studies demonstrate that consumers judge food and beverages with glossy exterior packages as less healthy than those in matte packages. This effect is driven by the belief that food and beverages in glossy packaging are more processed and moderated by the stereotyped perceived healthiness of the food category.

1-K: The Impact of Visual Glossiness on Psychological Newness and Product Judgment
Jiaqi Song, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
Yuwei Jiang, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
Gerald J. Gorn, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

Two studies in this research show that consumers have more favorable evaluations of products with a glossy as opposed to a matte surface. In addition this effect is found to be driven by the heightened psychological newness of products with a glossy appearance.

7-N: “You Grin At Each Other, You Celebrate Together, You Hug Strangers”: Consequences of Shared Identity Within Crowds at Sporting and Music Events
Maximilian Stieler, University of Bayreuth, Germany
Fergus G. Neville, University of St. Andrews, UK
Claas Christian Germelmann, University of Bayreuth, Germany

Building on contemporary crowd psychology this paper investigates if and how individuals experience a shared identity with strangers at diverse crowd events. We conducted qualitative semi-structured interviews with crowd participants in three different crowd contexts. Findings suggest that shared identity led to increased intimacy with strangers and intense positive feelings.

3-E: Neurological Evidence for an Interrelation Between Imagery, Psychological Distance, and Construal
Paul E. Stillman, Ohio State University, USA
Hyojin Lee, San Jose State University, USA
Xiaoyan Deng, Ohio State University, USA
Rao Unnava, University of California Davis, USA
Kentaro Fujita, Ohio State University, USA

While many researchers have investigated the effects of visualization in marketing limited research has directly explored the nature of mental images due to methodological limitations. In the present research we employ fMRI technique to investigate consumers’ mental imagery. We found a fundamental relationship between mental imagery psychological distance and construal.

16-O: I Am What I Borrow: Trait Transfer in Borrowed and Rented Products
Rusty Stough, University of Wisconsin, USA
Page Moreau, University of Wisconsin, USA

We extend work on identity by examining how consumers view themselves through products they either rent or borrow. We found an increase in satisfaction with rented products from an anonymous source than from borrowed products and evidence for trait transfer when products are borrowed.
5-L: Psychological Drivers of Customer Compliance: Self-Identity Threats and Discrete Emotions
Kristina Stuhler, Old Dominion University, USA
Chuanyi Tang, Old Dominion University, USA
Mahesh Gopinath, Old Dominion University, USA

This research develops and tests a theoretical framework on consumer compliance by incorporating self-identity theory and cognitive-emotion theory. We propose self-identity threats and discrete emotions influence customer compliance. A qualitative study will be conducted first to develop and refine the theoretical framework which will then be tested by experimental design.

Daniel Sun, University of Calgary, Canada
Mehdi Mourali, University of Calgary, Canada

We all have possessions but not all of our possessions are valued equally. The initial choice of ownership may trigger subsequent differential connections to a particular possession. This research investigates the effect of choice on product ownership in terms of both pricing and evaluation.

19-F: Vegas it Up to Boost Your Performance!
Arash Talebi, ESSEC Business School, France
Sonja Prokopec, ESSEC Business School, France

Two pilots and one lab study show that using uncertain price promotions leads to desirable placebo effects. This research expands the scope of marketing placebo effects to desirable placebo effects in promotional settings. Moreover we propose that the effect is mediated by enhanced feelings of empowerment due to heightened self-attribution.

4-A: Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder: Young Girl’s Perception of Female Attractiveness in New Zealand, India, and Fiji
Tabitha Thomas, University of Otago, New Zealand
Kirsten Robertson, University of Otago, New Zealand
Maree Thyne, University of Otago, New Zealand

This research investigates 6-12-year-old girls’ perception of female attractiveness in three countries. The findings underscore the importance of understanding how the beauty ideals and stereotypes prevailing in the society influences young girls’ notion of what constitutes beauty and the impact it can have on their well-being.

4-I: Good Looks, Possessions, and Stereotypes: The Relationship Between Physical Attractiveness and Materialism
Tabitha Thomas, University of Otago, New Zealand
Kirsten Robertson, University of Otago, New Zealand
Maree Thyne, University of Otago, New Zealand

Prior research has shown that internalizing materialism and appearance related ideals negatively impact adults’ well-being however little is known whether young children also internalize similar ideals. Thus in the present research using Dittmar’s (2008) framework we examine the ages at which children start perceiving links between physical attractiveness and materialism.
9-N: Medicalization in Finnish Functional Foods: The Normalization of Medical Disorders

Jack Tillotson, Aalto University, Finland

I examine the normalization of medical disorders as consumers organize around discourses surrounding the functional food market. Medicalization – the definition and treatment of social problems as medical issues - is a widespread phenomenon but understudied in consumer research. This paper looks at functional foods as a form of medicalization.

2-F: Are the Eyes the Mirror to the Soul?: The Influence of Eye Gaze Direction on Narrative Transportation and Self-Brand Connection

Ngoc (Rita) To, University of Houston, USA
Vanessa Patrick, University of Houston, USA

We aim to demonstrate the influence of ad model’s gaze direction (direct versus averted) on consumer self-brand connection. With two studies we demonstrate that averted (versus direct) gaze enhances narrative transportation which drives self-brand connection. We also examine the moderating role of rational (vs. emotional) appeals on this relationship.

7-A: Assembling the Ritual: Consumer Experiences in a Diverse Network

Omer Torlak, Turkish Competition Authority, Turkey
Mujdat Ozmen, Eskisehir Osmangazi University, Turkey
Muhammet Ali Tiltay, Eskisehir Osmangazi University, Turkey
Mahmut Sami Islek, Anadolu University, Turkey
Ufuk Ay, KTO Karatay University, Turkey

We investigate the formation of consumer’s consumption ritual parts and discourses associated with Feast of Sacrifice. This study contributes to the literature on religious rituals and practices because of viewing ritual as an assemblage including material and expressive features as well as human and non-human actors.

15-A: Does it Sound Crowded to You?
A Proposed Multisensorial Approach to Crowding Research

Fernanda Trindade Deyl, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil
Lélis Balestrin Espartel, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Research regarding crowding is broad in academia; however few studies focus on its auditory perspective. The present study proposes a broader approach to crowding research by putting emphasis on the auditory variables present in retail environments which may contribute to the perception of density and consequent perception of crowding.

14-K: The Effect of Service Providers’ Attractiveness on Consumers’ Preferences for Status Quo

Natalie Truong, Nanyang Technological University, China
Jennifer Argo, University of Alberta, Canada
George Christopoulos, Nanyang Technological University, China

How does beauty influence the consumer’s decision process and choices? In two studies we found that with exposure to attractive (vs. unattractive) female salespersons female participants were more likely to prefer the traditional over the innovative products (study 1) and demonstrated higher preference for status quo (study 2).
5-W: Why Firms Should Be Thankful for Thankful Customers:  
Incidental Gratitude Increases Satisfaction with Consumption Experiences

Arianna Uhalde, University of Southern California, USA  
Valerie Folkes, University of Southern California, USA

Three studies demonstrate incidental gratitude influences consumers’ reactions to product failure experiences. Incidental gratitude (vs. non-emotionally infused thoughts about others incidental pride in oneself and incidental admiration of others) 1) increases satisfaction by fostering compassion and 2) reduces behaviors like spreading negative WOM and grudge-holding against the firm.

4-P: The Emancipatory Alliance for Social Activism:  
The Symbiotic Interplay between Subcultures and Social Movements

Emre Ulusoy, Youngstown State University, USA

While subcultures mold potentially destructive youth rebellion into constructive activism and mobilize individuals to social movements social movements imbue subcultures with a radical political edge the two working together to seek meaningful social and cultural change.

20-D: False Positives:  
How Double-sided Review Systems Affect Consumers’ Rating Valence

Bryan Usrey, University of East Anglia, UK  
Antje Graul, Leeds University, UK

Drawing on reciprocity literature three studies demonstrate that double-sided review systems in peer-to-peer service schemes positively affect consumers’ rating valence due to activating their psychological perception of “pre-ciprocity” of the review – leading to false positives. The effect is strengthened in a socially distant and attenuated in a private review scenario.

10-Q: The Compromise Effect in Post-Purchase Consumption Behavior:  
Evidences from Field Experiments.

Veronica Valli, University of Mannheim, Germany  
Florian Stahl, University of Mannheim, Germany  
Elisa Montaguti, University of Bologna, Italy

This paper investigates the impact of the compromise effect (Simonson 1989) on post-purchase consumption. Results of a field experiment suggest that the selection of an intermediate option vs. an extreme one in a choice set leads to an increase in the number of (complementary) items purchased after the first choice.

17-E: Glass Houses: Disability Perceptions in the Consumption Environment

Helen van der Sluis, Arizona State University, USA  
Adriana Samper, Arizona State University, USA  
Kirk Kristofferson, Arizona State University, USA

While marketing and public policy decision-makers express heightened sensitivity to stigmatized groups such as people with disabilities little research has examined their impact on the consumption environment. We find that people view disabled individuals higher in moral character but also punish them more harshly when they engage in moral violations.
9-D: Bring Back My Childhood!  
Nostalgia as Mediator of Retro-Food and Consumer Based Brand Equity  
Caty Velez, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico  
Miriam C. Flores, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico  
This research will expand the field/area of retro-branding by recognizing the effect of nostalgia as well as authenticity in the relationship between a retro-food product and Consumer Based Brand Equity (CBBE). A mixed methodology that includes a netnography and two quantitative studies will be used.

11-W: The Impact of Perceived Temperature on Responses to PSA ads  
Akshaya Vijayalakshmi, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, India  
Meng-Hsien (Jenny) Lin, California State University Monterey Bay, USA  
Melika Kordrostami, California State University San Bernadino, USA  
This working paper finds that the affiliative sensations triggered through priming of warm/cold touch can increase the effectiveness of public service announcement (PSA) by increasing empathy threat perceptions and donations to the cause. However this is likely to be true only for high need for touch participants.

19-I: How Brand Preference Similarity Influences Married Couples’ Brand Variety Seeking Over Time  
Anna Vredenbeld, Berry College, USA  
Selcan Kara, University of Massachusetts - Dartmouth, USA  
This research examines how married consumers’ brand preference similarity influences brand variety seeking behavior. Findings contribute to extant work on shared brand consumption and variety seeking by illustrating how romantic relationship partners engage in purposeful brand variety seeking as a part of their relationships.

12-D: The Impact of Brand Exposure on Perceived Goal Progress and Goal Satiation  
Darlene Walsh, Concordia University, Canada  
Francis Jarry, Concordia University, Canada  
Though prior research finds that exposure to a brand can activate brand-related goals we show that brand exposure can satiate brand-related goals. Further we show that goal satiation occurs because consumers who are susceptible to goal satiation also experience perceived progress towards achieving the brand-related goal.

9-I: Eating with Friends: Preference for Handmade Foods  
Xin Wang, Nanjing University, China  
Chunqu Xiao, Nanjing University, China  
Hong Zhu, Nanjing University, China  
What people choose to eat varies as a function of relationships with co-eater(s). When eating with friends consumers prefer handmade foods relative to manufactured foods. They prefer manufactured foods when with new acquaintance. When they try to strengthen social relations they choose handmade foods.

17-C: Fluid Compensation: The Role of the Interdependent Self  
Qin Wang, Arizona State University, USA  
Monika Lisjak, Arizona State University, USA  
Naomi Mandel, Arizona State University, USA  
When consumers experience a threat to the self they may cope by engaging in fluid compensation—affirming the self in important domains that are unrelated to the threat. Three experiments show that people with an interdependent (vs. independent) self are more likely to engage in fluid compensation to offset self-threat.
4-F: Essentialism Increases Status Consumption of High-Class (not Low-Class) Consumers

Xue Wang, Chinese University of Hong Kong, China
Ying-Yi Hong, Chinese University of Hong Kong, China
Robert S. Wyer, Chinese University of Hong Kong, China

We proposed that essentialist beliefs of social class (i.e. social class is immutable and biological-based) would increase status consumption of high- but not low-class people. With both measuring and manipulating essentialism four studies consistently supported the hypothesis. We further found that entitlement could explain the relationship.

19-J: Show Me More! Powerlessness Drives Variety Seeking

Wangshuai Wang, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China

This research investigates the impact of power on variety seeking behavior. Results from four studies provide convergent support that feeling powerless relative to feeling powerful nudges individuals toward variety seeking. Additionally we reveal that perceived autonomy mediates this relationship.

5-G: How Notifications of Product Changes Influence Consumer Ambivalence

Yiru Wang, Kent State University, USA
Jennifer Wiggins, Kent State University, USA
César Zamudio, Kent State University, USA

Notifications of product changes could increase consumer ambivalence towards the product. We find that this will be mitigated when the notification is framed to be consistent with the timing of the notification. Specifically when the change is in the distal (proximal) future the notification should be framed abstractly (concretely).

10-V: Truncated Text, Truncated Thought

Adrian Ward, University of Texas at Austin, USA
Noah Castelo, Columbia University, USA
Kurt Gray, University of North Carolina, USA

We show that frequency of text messaging is negatively associated with the ability to understand logic and meaning in context. Frequently engaging in the kind of truncated thought characteristic of text messaging appears to cause a similarly truncated style of thinking.

19-C: Keeping the Streak Alive!

Danny Weathers, Clemson University, USA
T. Andrew Poehlman, Clemson University, USA

Consider a man who has eaten a Big Mac daily since 1972 or a runner who’s run a mile 2034 straight days. What motivates people to engage in ‘streaks’? Our research suggests streaks serve to motivate people in identity relevant domains and temporal specificity is a cue for continuance.

9-B: A Nuanced Nutritional System Facilitates the Recognition of Healthy Options, Increases Sales and Choice of Healthy Foods: A Comparison Between 3-Colors and 5-Colors Traffic-Lights Systems

Carolina O.C. Werle, Grenoble Ecole de Management, France
Kévin Roche, Grenoble Ecole de Management, France
Olivier Trendel, Grenoble Ecole de Management, France
Amanda Yamim, Grenoble Ecole de Management, France

Simplified nutritional-labeling systems provide single indicators of nutritional quality. Four studies compared two nutrition-labeling systems varying in complexity. A more subtle system (traffic-light with five colors instead of three) increases healthy choice and purchase. The 5-color system facilitates nutritional information processing and this influences healthiness perception of food products.
Moderately Simple Fbdg Work Better than Complex or Oversimplified Recommendations to Influence Food Consumption in a Real Setting

Carolina O.C. Werle, Grenoble Ecole de Management, France
Kévin Roche, Grenoble Ecole de Management, France
Olivier Corneille, Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgique
Caroline Roux, Grenoble Ecole de Management, France

Food based dietary guidelines (FBDG) are regularly updated by governments but their efficacy is questioned. Previous research suggested that simple actionable guidelines can change behavior but evidence confirming their efficacy is still scarce. Patrons of a restaurant received tray-sets containing FBDG varying in complexity. Moderately simple FBDG influenced food consumption.

2-B: “Reclaiming the News”: Episodes of Contention in the News Field

Verena E. Wieser, University of Innsbruck, Austria

This study adopts a field-theoretical lens to investigate how incumbents and challengers negotiate power relations in the news field in the digital age. Interviews with market experts in German-speaking countries reveal how traditional newspaper brands navigate episodes of contention through collective attribution of threats and organizational appropriation.

4-N: Perspective Flexibility Matters: The Influence of Cultural Syndromes on Attribution of Service Failures

Vincent Chi Wong, Lingnan University, Hong Kong, China
Feifei Huang, Chinese University of Hong Kong, China

Customers with a collectivistic (vs. individualistic) orientation or a long-term (vs. short-term) orientation are likely to attribute a service failure more to service provider’s contextual factors and less to service provider’s dispositional factors. These effects are mediated by the flexibility of perspectives customers take when making a judgment.

14-Q: Trend versus End State: The Role of Implicit Theories in Interpreting Communications Conveying a Partial Reduction in Negative Product Attributes

Vincent Chi Wong, Lingnan University, Hong Kong, China
Lei Su, Hong Kong Baptist University, China
Howard Pong-Yuen Lam, Chinese University of Hong Kong, China

The results of four experiments show that the communication of partially reduced negativity of a product attribute will lead to higher (lower) product evaluations among consumers who are incremental (entity) theorists. This communication effect is mediated by consumers’ trend-based versus end-state-based interpretation of the reduced-negativity communication.

6-B: How Scarcity Influences Mate Preference in Romantic Relationship and Subsequent Mating Strategy?

Yinghao Wu, Renmin University, China
Jing Jiang, Renmin University, China

The current research proposes that perceived general scarcity which includes but far beyond a scarce mate pool will polarize people’s mate preference for romantic partners that such selectivity differs across gender and mate-value and that those with relatively low mate value will adopt collective strategies to enhance their attractiveness.
5-J: Partner or Servant: How Anthropomorphized Brand Role Releases the Negative Effect of Social Exclusion

Yinghao Wu, Renmin University, China
Jing Jiang, Renmin University, China

The current research shows that socially excluded (vs. included) consumers are willing to pay more for anthropomorphized brands. More importantly, when brand plays a servant role people with high (vs. low) self-esteem are likely to pay more but such a discrepancy disappears when brand plays a partner role. The need for control recovery mediates the above relationship.

16-K: The Impact of CSR Transgressions on Consumer Support for Non-profits: The Role of Negative Moral Emotions and Political Identity

Chunyan Xie, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway
Richard P. Bagozzi, University of Michigan, USA
Silvia Mari, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

We develop and test new psychological mechanisms underlying consumer support for nonprofits as a function of perception of CSR transgressions. Results showed that the moral emotion of contempt mediates the relationship between perceived corporate community transgressions and consumer support. Further, political identity moderates the effects of transgressions on contempt.

11-L: Prosocial Consequences of Corporate Social Irresponsible Actions: The Role of Negative Moral Emotion, Moral Identity, and Empathy

Chunyan Xie, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway
Richard P. Bagozzi, University of Michigan, USA
Silvia Mari, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

We add to extant CSR research by addressing prosocial consequences of corporate social irresponsible actions and providing a psychological mechanism underlying such a novel effect. Results showed that contempt mediates the relationship between corporate community transgressions and consumer support for nonprofits. Further, moral identity and empathy moderate the effects.

9-G: Diets with Cheat Days: The Effect of Implicit Self-Theories on Recovery from Goal-Inconsistent Behavior

Yi Xie, Arizona State University, USA
Naomi Mandel, Arizona State University, USA
Meryl Gardner, University of Delaware, USA

Dieters fall into two types: Abstainers who completely avoid temptations and moderators who occasionally break the rules. We show that lay beliefs about the renewability of self-control determine which approach people choose. Our results suggest that there is no “best” strategy: dieters are more successful when they follow their beliefs.

9-H: Does Larger Portion Sizes ⇒ Lower Calories? How Healthiness Beliefs Impact Calorie Estimation

Jieru Xie, Virginia Tech, USA
Fengyan Cai, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China
Rajesh Bagchi, Virginia Tech, USA

We demonstrate a paradoxical relationship between portion size and caloric content where a larger- (vs. smaller-) sized healthy food item is judged as containing lower calories. This occurs because of a misguided notion that if a food-item is healthy then more of it is healthier.
5-R: The Feeling of Being Moved

Ji (Jill) Xiong, National University of Singapore, Singapore
Leonard Lee, National University of Singapore, Singapore
Yih Hwai Lee, National University of Singapore, Singapore

We propose and demonstrate that being moved is a mixed emotion that connects with self-transcendence core value(s) of perceived personal importance. Thus marketing communications such as advertisements that elicit the feeling of being moved increase brand affiliation by highlighting the core value that consumers share with the focal brand.

6-G: Wearing V Neck, Getting More Trust:
An Evolutionary Psychology Approach to Examine the Effect of Collar Style on Trust

Jialiang Xu, University of Manitoba, Canada
Fang Wan, University of Manitoba, Canada
Chenbo Zhong, University of Toronto, Canada

“What a strange power there is in clothing” ---- Isaac Bashevis Singer. Adopting evolutionary psychology perspectives we conducted two experiments and found that one’s sweater Collar styles (V neck vs turtleneck) can affect others’ trust of him and interaction with him.

11-R: Two Faces of Moral Identity Internalization: The Interactive Effect of Lighting, Moral Identity Internalization and Recipient’s Cost on Prosocial Behavior

Jun Yan, University of Manitoba, Canada
Fang Wan, University of Manitoba, Canada
Luke Zhu, University of Manitoba, Canada
Aaron Stone, University of Manitoba, Canada

This paper tests an interactive effect of lighting and moral identity on prosocial behavior. Individuals low in Moral Identity Internalization are more likely to help when the surrounding is bright and the recipient’s cost is low. In contrast individuals high in MII help regardless of lighting and the recipient’s cost.

5-V: When Sadness Comes Alive, Will It Be Less Painful?
The Effects of Anthropomorphism on Sadness Regulation

Li Yang, Tsinghua University, China
Fangyuan Chen, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
Rocky Peng Chen, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong

Can anthropomorphism contribute to the regulation of sadness? In three studies we demonstrated that anthropomorphic (vs. neutral) thinking decreased the intensity of sadness experience. We suggest that psychological detachment explains this effect. This result offers fresh insights to research on emotions and anthropomorphism and has implications for consumer well-being.

6-E: The Effects of Different Parenting Cues on Consumer’s Regulatory Focus: A Parental Investment Perspective

Chun-Ming Yang, Ming Chuan University, Taiwan

With two studies this research examined the idea that cues emphasizing different aspects of parental investment could lead to different regulatory focus. Specifically cues about prevention (promotion) parental investment (e.g. providing foods) can activate prevention (promotion) focus. We also observed a regulatory fit effect in a marketing communication context.
16-C: Craving for Hope: Scarcity Cues and Their Influences on Persuasiveness of Hope-Appeal Advertising

Chun-Ming Yang, Ming Chuan University, Taiwan
Tzu-Yun Yang, Ming Chuan University, Taiwan
Shu-Ni Hsu, National Taiwan University of Science and Technonology, Taiwan

Three studies examined the idea that the salience of resource scarcity decreases consumers’ prosocial behaviors (e.g., intention to donate and willingness to pay for fair-trade products) and this effect is mediated by consumers’ sense of control. The authors also argue that the presence of hope appeal may reverse this relationship.

11-V: Roughness Increases Prosocial Behavior When People Believe the World Is Fair

Ning Ye, Temple University, USA
Maureen Morrin, Temple University, USA

Our research shows that people with higher belief in a just world (BJW) are more likely to help after being exposed to rough (vs. smooth) haptic image. However, for people with lower BJW roughness makes no difference in the helping intention.

15-C: Now It’s Personal: The Influence of Touch on the Construction of Preferences

John Yi, University of Arizona, USA
Jesper Nielsen, University of Arizona, USA

Using a tablet versus a mouse when shopping online has shown to increase a shopper’s preference for the chosen item. Further study demonstrates that the physical motions relevant to forming a preference increase this preference effect and it is not the preexisting preferences that drive the effect.

11-C: Feature the Benefactor or the Victim? How Charity Advertisements with Different Protagonist Foci Affect Donation Behavior

Bingqing (Miranda) Yin, University of Kansas, USA
Jin Seok Pyone, University of Kansas, USA
Surendra Singh, University of Kansas, USA

We examine charity appeals with different protagonist foci and demonstrate that a charity appeal featuring an identified benefactor can promote more charitable donation compared with a comparable victim-focused charity appeal. Results are explored via moral elevation and charity attitude resulting from portraying a benefactor.

16-D: Don’t Appreciate Your Customer Too Much: Business Gift Giving and Verbal Acknowledgement

Yanfen You, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, USA
Massimiliano Ostinelli, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, USA
Xiaojing Yang, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, USA

We examine how verbal acknowledgment of customer value could make business gifts backfire. Business gifts increase customer attitude when customer value is not salient. However, their effects could be diminished or become negative when marketers highly acknowledge customer value.
20-I: Political Ideology and Review Evaluation

Sik Chuen Yu, University of Sydney, Australia
Donnel Briley, University of Sydney, Australia
Pennie Frow, University of Sydney, Australia

This research proposes that political ideology affects reviewer similarity’s influence on review evaluation. Those who are increasingly conservative tend to have stronger relational motivations. Consequently conservatives value reviews from similar reviewers more than dissimilar ones while liberals do not value reviews from similar and dissimilar reviewers.

20-A: A Taste of Discrimination: A Study on Consumer Reviews on Yelp

Chao Yu, Cornell University, USA
Drew Margolin, Cornell University, USA
Xian Wang, Tsinghua University, China

This paper reveals an asymmetric-discriminative pattern in consumers’ online evaluation-making mechanism. We examine how consumers from different social classes discriminate in evaluations on Yelp. A multi-level random-effect model shows discrimination exits in consumers’ favorable reviews to outgroups but this effect does not hold for negative evaluations.


Mariella C. Zavala, University of California Irvine, USA

Using Foucault’s notion of heterotopia (1986) this paper conceptualizes the “Stories” feature found in some social media platforms as cyber-heterotopias. Their ephemeral quality and an illusion of intimacy are presented as defining of their heterotopic distinction in an effort to contribute to our understanding of the consumer relations they affect.

20-C: Advice-Seeking Intention: The Interplay of Regulatory Focus and Problem Type

Xianfang Zeng, University of Calgary, Canada
Mehdi Mourali, University of Calgary, Canada

This research investigates how regulatory focus and problem type jointly affect advice-seeking intention. When faced with factual problems individuals with a prevention (vs. promotion) focus tend to seek accuracy-based advice; in contrast when presented with judgmental problems those with a promotion (vs. prevention) focus tend to solicit autonomy-based advice.

2-W: The Unofficial Name: Effects of Brand and Product Nicknames on Brand Perception

Zhe Zhang, University of Houston, USA
Vanessa Patrick, University of Houston, USA

We explore the effects of brand nickname (vs. formal name) use on brand perception. We show nicknames anthropomorphize the brand and transform the consumer-brand relationship from transactional to relational. This influences consumers’ self-brand connection and brand attachment which leads to enhanced willingness to purchase additional products from the brand.

2-H: Brand Hate

Chun Zhang, Concordia University, Canada
Michel Laroche, Concordia University, Canada

The grounded theory is applied to study the construct brand hate. Seventy-one hated brands are reported through twenty-five in-depth interviews. Three facets of associations of brand hate are presented: emotional cognitive and physical. Four facets of reasons are discovered and six different levels of consequences are obtained.
**20-N: The Effect of Uncertain Rewards on Customer Co-promotion Intention: An Exploration of Optimistic Bias**

Yuan Zhang, Xiamen University, China  
Zhaoyang Guo, Xiamen University, China  
Yirang Zhang, Xiamen University, China

Three studies suggest that uncertain rewards affect customers’ co-promotion intentions. Study 1 revealed that consumers receiving a lower uncertain reward showed more sharing intention of promotion information and the mechanism was optimistic bias. The controllability facilitated the uncertainty effect (Study 2) and the delay reward inhibited the effect (Study 3).

**9-J: Familiarity and Affiliation with Anglo Names Affect Purchase Decisions of Chinese Food**

Xian Zhao, University of Kansas, USA

For an unfamiliar Chinese dish attaching it to an Anglicized Chinese name increased Americans’ willingness to pay than attaching to an original Chinese name; for the familiar Chinese dish attaching it to an original Chinese name increased anti-multiculturalist Americans’ willingness to pay than attaching to an Anglicized Chinese name.

**20-M: The Dynamic Diverting Effects of User-generated Contents vs. Firm-generated Contents on Product Browse**

Yingnan Zhao, Nanjing University, China  
Xin Wang, Nanjing University, China  
Quansheng Wang, Nanjing University, China  
Peijian Song, Nanjing University, China

The research aims to identify the effects of visits to user-generated and firm-generated contents on visits to product in E-commerce. These effects are different in short- and long-term for new and existing users. Vector auto-regression model indicates that there’s difference between the effects of visits toward UGC and FGC.

**9-X: The Devil is in the Smile: Smiley Temptation and Motivated Calorie Estimation in Restrained Eaters**

Xiaoying Zheng, Nankai University, China

Using smileys in tempting food is a popular product design strategy in the marketplace. However little has been known about how consumers perceive such smiley temptations. Across two studies this research finds that restrained eaters perceive a smiley temptation as containing more calories than a non-smiley temptation.

**17-I: Relational Greeting: When and When not to Treat Your Consumers as Family**

Qichao Zhu, Tsinghua University, China  
Maggie Wenjing Liu, Tsinghua University, China  
Chuang Wei, Tsinghua University, China

This research explores effects of relational greeting on consumer purchase intentions. Compared to stranger greeting contact employees’ relational greeting towards consumers can lead to higher purchase intentions when consumers’ product knowledge is high while the reverse happens with low knowledge. Consumers’ feeling of control mediates the effect of relational greeting.
For standard (low fee; slow delivery) versus expedited (high fee; fast delivery) shipping we examine the dynamic that arises when standard shipping is free (vs. low fee). We show an interaction effect: making standard shipping free (vs. low fee) decreases sensitivity to changes in the fee charged for expedited shipping.
DataBlitz

Maximizing Utility but Minimizing Wellbeing:  
A Meta-Analysis on the Maximizers’ Paradox  
Alex Belli, University of Technology Sydney, Australia  
François Carrillat, University of Technology Sydney, Australia

In an attempt to settle the debate on the relationship between maximization and well-being a sub-group meta-analysis was conducted accounting for well-being dimension valence (positive or negative). Findings revealed maximization is detrimental to well-being regardless of the dimension valence but is moderated by the maximization scale and by long-term orientation.

Mental Stimulation and Cognitive Orientation:  
Implications for Children’s and Adults’ Food Choices  
Dipayan Biswas, University of South Florida, USA  
Annika Abell, University of South Florida, USA  
Courtney Szocs, Portland State University, USA

The results of two field experiments with children at a middle school cafeteria and two lab experiments with adults show that undertaking mental stimulation tasks (such as by solving math problems) before making a food choice leads to less indulgent food choices.

There Is No Such Thing as a Free Lunch:  
The Negative Effect of Zero Price on Consumer Demand  
Fengyan Cai, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China  
Xiaomeng Fan, Northwestern University, USA

Both intuition and empirical evidences indicate that people like cheap products and free products are particularly attractive. But we showed a backfiring effect of zero price on consumer demand and identified a moderator that could drive the effect of zero price on demand into either positive or negative direction.

The More Elongated, the More High-end:  
The Effect of Package Shape on Perceived Brand Status  
Huan Chen, Renmin University of China, China  
Jun Pang, Renmin University of China, China  
Minkyung Koo, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, USA

This research examines the effect of package shape on consumers’ perceived brand status. Results from three studies show that consumers perceive a product with tall & slim (vs. short & stout) shape to have a high brand status. Moreover perceived attractiveness is the mechanism underlying this effect on brand status perception.

Qian (Claire) Deng, University of Alberta, Canada  
Paul Messinger, University of Alberta, Canada

Little research attention is paid to the concept of weirdness because of the negative association of weirdness. This paper challenges this view not only by identifying the key antecedent (extreme incongruity) to the weirdness and the underlying mechanism (failed sense-making) but also by showing its marketing potential (generating more WOM).
When More is Not Merrier: The Effect of Feedback Frequency on Goal Performance
Isabel Ding, National University of Singapore, Singapore
Leonard Lee, National University of Singapore, Singapore

Consumers often receive feedback in goal pursuit. This article examines the effect of feedback frequency on consumers’ goal performance — does higher frequency feedback lead to higher goal performance? Four studies demonstrate that while consumers hold the lay belief that higher (vs. lower) frequency feedback leads to higher goal performance empirical results show that it leads to lower goal performance. This occurs because higher frequency feedback increases the level of perceived goal progress which reduces consumers’ tendency to continue pursuing the goal. This effect only holds when the feedback information is relevant to goal progress but is attenuated when the information is irrelevant. Furthermore this effect is attenuated when the goal is specific.

The More You Know the More You Search: Post-Decision Information Search and the Effect of Prior Knowledge and Maximizing Tendencies
Maura Ferreira, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil
Cristiane Pizzutti, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Previous literature argues that cognitive dissonance and feelings of regret or dissatisfaction increase the amount of information sought in post-decision timespan. We show that the knowledge individuals hold before the decision-making point predicts post-decision information search as well. Additionally we demonstrate that high levels of maximizing tendencies boost this effect.

The Motivating Effect of Expectation-Inconsistent Social Information
Katherine Flaschen, Stanford University, USA
Szu-chi Huang, Stanford University, USA

We explore the impact of expectations about social others on goal-directed behavior. Across four studies we find that people experience a motivational boost from witnessing another person’s expectation-inconsistent (versus expectation-consistent) behavior but only when such behavior is goal facilitative (e.g. observing an unfit person jogging).

Yuck! Feelings of Disgust, Self-threats and Compensatory Behaviors.
Elena Fumagalli, HEC Paris, France
L.J. Shrum, HEC Paris, France

Consumers frequently encounter disgusting images. We examine how physical and moral disgust differentially affect consumers’ identity and compensatory consumption. We show that physical disgust decreases consumers’ sense of power which prompts them to consume conspicuous goods. In contrast moral disgust decreases consumers’ self-esteem causing them to act prosocially.

The Effect of Information About Previous Donation Impact on Recurring Donations
Zohar Gilad, Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, Israel
Liat Levontin, Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, Israel

Nonprofits experience around 90% donor attrition rates. Our aim is to understand the antecedents of recurring donations and develop strategies to cope with attrition. As donors are seldom informed about their donations’ impact we suggest and find that informing donors about the positive impact of their donation increases subsequent donations.

The Psychophysiology of Touch-Sensitive Interfaces: Somatosensory Encoding of Intensity, Pleasantness, and Technology-Induced Affect-Regulation
Christian Hildebrand, University of Geneva, Switzerland

Building on the segregation of affective touch in the somatosensory cortex we hypothesize and show that touch-sensitive interfaces cause a substantial increase in consumers’ arousal relative to valence perceptions (using both objective and subjective measures of affect) ultimately promoting a greater impulse to purchase and willingness-to-pay for a focal product.
Choosing None versus Choosing “None of the Above”:  
The Effect of No-Choice Decision Expression on Choice Outcomes

Seung Eun (Sonia) Kim, Seoul National University, South Korea  
Sung J. Jung, INSEAD, Singapore  
Jin M. Kim, Yale University, USA  
Kyoungmi Lee, Seoul National University, South Korea

When a ballot does not provide a selectable “none of the above” option voters will cast blank ballots if none of the candidates are desirable – or will they? In this research we investigate whether the choice context in which people must express their no-choice decision alters their choice outcomes.

Friends Without Benefits? How the Costs of Having a Relationship Influence Risk-taking

Jennifer K. Lee, University of Southern California, USA  
Lisa A. Cavanaugh, University of British Columbia, Canada

While having close relationships is known to increase risk-taking we identify conditions leading to reduced risk-taking. When consumers focus on the costs (rather than benefits) of having a relationship and when the risk consequence affects both relationship partners risk-taking decreases. However when individuals lack these close relationships risk-taking behavior increases.

Inspired to Speak Up: Role of Inspiration on Minority Opinion Expression

Xingbo Li, University of Louisville, USA  
Zengxiang Chen, Sun Yat-sen University, China

Expressing unpopular or minority opinions has consequences even though the opinion holders may have their groups’ best interest at heart. The current research examines when and why inspiration prompts people to express minority opinions.

Effects of Implicit Theories on Customers’ Satisfaction with Service Recovery:  
The Value of Process

Xiaoyan Liu, Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, China  
Shaobo Li, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore  
Elison Lim, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Three studies examine how implicit theories impact customers’ satisfaction with service recovery. We find that compared to entity theorists incremental theorists express higher satisfaction and are more likely to revisit the firm when the recovery is high in interactional justice regardless of whether or not an appealing compensation is provided.

Incentive Design with Uncertainty: Keep the Hope Alive

Xiyuyao Luo, Chinese University of Hong Kong, China  
Luxi Shen, Chinese University of Hong Kong, China

Shen et al. (2015) shows consumers work harder for uncertain rewards than for certain rewards. How can marketers design an effort-score-payoff system with uncertainty? We find that to boost effort investment within in a time limit adding uncertainty to the score-payoff part is more effective than the effort-score part.

When Compensatory Consumption Backfires:  
The Pain and Pleasure of Experiential Purchases

Zichuan Mo, Peking University, China  
Jingjing Ma, Peking University, China

Prior research has shown that self-threats can evoke consumption that signals accomplishments in the domain of the threat. However we show that this within-domain compensation is likely to backfire especially when consumers compensate with experiential rather than material purchases. Identity relevance of experiential purchases could be the mechanism.
Appetite for Destruction: Attractive Faces Alter People’s Food Choices

Tobias Otterbring, Aarhus University, Denmark, & Karlstad University, Sweden

Directly contradictory to the predictions made by marketing professors exposure to attractive (vs. unattractive) opposite-sex faces made people choose unhealthy rather than healthy foods. This effect primarily influenced people who rated themselves as inferior on self-view-relevant attributes but did not generalize to attractive (vs. unattractive) same-sex faces.

Emoji and Brand Engagement on Social Media

Ethan Pancer, Saint Mary’s University, Canada
Lindsay McShane, Carleton University, Canada
Maxwell Poole, Saint Mary’s University, Canada

Brands both human and corporate are increasingly communicating with their social media audience using emoji. The current work examines whether emoji use shapes online engagement (likes & retweets). Two field studies demonstrate that emoji presence increases engagement with brands. Facial emoji were particularly effective at increasing engagement with organizations.

The Effect of Competitive Rivalry Associations on Brand Extensions

Nicolas Pontes, Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Vivian Pontes, Queensland University of Technology, Australia

This research demonstrates the extent brands benefits from existing competitive rivalry associations. In particular it shows that market leaders (but not challenger brands) benefit from a second mover advantage even when facing established well-known brands in the extension category. Further we show that a low category fit hinders these effects.

Feeling Flattered or Flawed? The Effects of Consumer Embarrassment on Self-perception

Tracy Rank-Christman, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, USA
Danielle Warren, Rutgers University, USA

In a sequence of studies we find that embarrassment stemming from personal mistakes (negative trigger) and special treatment (positive trigger) has a negative impact on consumers’ self-perceptions. These effects are augmented by emotional contagion and mediated by feelings of social rejection.

Triangulating the Breadth of Explanatory Depth

Scott Roeder, Washington University in St. Louis, USA
Leif Nelson, University of California, Berkeley, USA

We argue that the illusion of explanatory depth is attenuated not only by explanations of the focal item itself but also by explanations of other entirely different things implying the existence of a domain-agnostic process. We then show that this holds for relatively difficult but not easy explanations.

Effect of Missing Marketing Promotions on Future Consumption

Ilana Shanks, Florida State University, USA

This research examines how missing a marketing promotion acts as a cue to consumers to increase future consumption. Two studies demonstrate that missing a marketing promotion results in consumers intending to increase their food consumption during the next visit. This effect is moderated by deprivation.
When Small Predicts Large: The Effect of Initial Small Contributions on Subsequent Contributions to a Crowdfunding Project

Yael Steinhart, Tel Aviv University, Israel
Leilei Gao, Chinese University of Hong Kong, China
Tingting Fan, Chinese University of Hong Kong, China

Large donations are considered to be vital for crowdfunding success. Herein large-scale field data and lab experiments show that counterintuitively small (rather than large) initial donations increase subsequent donations. This effect is mediated by the lay belief that small (vs. large) donations are likely to be from strangers (vs. friends).

Effort Type Predicts Preferences for Material or Experiential Goods

Christopher A. Summers, University of South Carolina, USA
Eva C. Buechel, University of South Carolina, USA
Gustavo Schneider, University of South Carolina, USA

We propose that effort type can predict consumers’ preferences for rewards. In three studies we show that physical effort leads to a greater preference for material rewards whereas mental effort leads to a greater preference for experiential rewards. Our results identify effort type as an antecedent to consumer preference.

“Broken Eggs” and “Good Eggs”: Understanding “Post-IVF” Consumer Ambivalence Through Autography

Jennifer Takhar, Novancia Business School, France

This visual and narratological analysis of IVF consumption through autography/visual memoir demonstrates the multiple representational advantages afforded by the genre for consumer research; notably it allows privileged access to elusive experiential consumer “veracity”. It also elucidates deep consumer ambivalence about IVF that is indissociable from its normalization as a technology.

The Merits of Happy Consumption: Positive Affect and Psychological Ownership

Carina Thürridl, Wirtschafts University, Austria
Bernadette Kamleitner, Wirtschafts University, Austria
Ruta Ruzeviciute, Wirtschafts University, Austria
Stephan Dickert, Queen Mary University of London, UK
Sophie Süssenbach, Wirtschafts University, Austria

The feelings consumers experience during consumption can have powerful effects but can they also influence how possessive one feels towards the consumed? In this paper we examine whether positive affect experienced during brand consumption can instill a sense of ownership for the consumed brand subsequently leading to intended repeat consumption.

Preemptive Social Influence: (Not) Choosing Personal Favorites in Shared Consumption?

Yijie Wang, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
Dongjin He, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
Yuwei Jiang, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

Consumers are less likely to choose their personal favorite option when making decisions for shared consumption. This effect is weakened when consumers believe that they are similar to others or there is a high-power distance in the society and is strengthened when they share consumption with their close friends.
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